

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Business Studies

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Terenure College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Templeogue Road Terenure Dublin 6W
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	60570H

Date of Inspection: 03-10-2019



**An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna**
Department of
Education and Skills

SUBJECT INSPECTION

Subject Inspections report on the quality of work in individual curriculum areas within a school. They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of the subject in the school.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated learning and teaching in Business Studies under the following headings:

1. Teaching, learning and assessment
2. Subject provision and whole-school support
3. Planning and preparation

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Dates of inspection	2 and 3 October 2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and key staff• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during eight lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and deputy principal

School context

Terenure College is a voluntary secondary school, with an enrolment of 689 male students. Business Studies is a core subject in the Junior Cycle programme. Business education is provided in the compulsory Transition Year (TY) programme. All three business subjects are offered to students in Leaving Certificate. Junior Cycle Business Studies is the focus of this evaluation.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning was good overall; the quality ranged from very good to good in the majority of lessons, while practice was satisfactory in the remainder.
- In all lessons, teachers used questioning strategies that were explorative and encouraged students to think in a critical manner; student answers reflected good use of business terminology and exemplars, and knowledge of topical business and economic affairs.
- While the quality of assessment was good overall, there was scope in most lessons to extend formative assessment practices and the range of homework modes for students.
- Subject provision and whole-school support for business education in the school is very good.
- The organisational and collaborative practices of the business department are very good; however, planning for the new Business Studies specification requires further development.

Recommendations

- All business teachers should use a variety of appropriate teaching methodologies and expand the use of digital technology to underpin the development of students' key skills, knowledge and understanding.
- To support the development of students' learning, teachers should assign a broader range of homework tasks to students.
- Formative assessment practices, such as the use of learning intentions, success criteria and the tendering of written formative feedback to students, should be extended by business teachers.
- Collaboratively, teachers should extend the Business Studies plan to include 'Units of Learning' that detail the intended range of rich learning experiences and assessment approaches to develop key skills in students.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- Teaching and learning was good overall. The quality ranged from very good to good in the majority of lessons, while practice was satisfactory in the remainder of lessons. Of particular merit in all lessons was the very good use of questioning strategies that were explorative and encouraged students to think in a critical manner.
- In the very good lessons, teachers successfully used teaching strategies that engaged and enthused students in their learning. In these lessons students successfully developed key skills, knowledge and understanding. In some lessons, there was overemphasis on instructional teaching and note-taking. In lessons where scope for development was identified, teachers should broaden the range of teaching methodologies used to support the development of key skills in the student learning experience.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers provided students with opportunities to work in pairs or small groups. Co-operative learning was particularly effective where the task was coherent and well planned, providing very good opportunities for students to further develop their key skills and knowledge through discussion and the concluding plenary session. There is potential to further expand co-operative learning activities in lessons, where appropriate. In addition, activities such as project work, debates and presentations could be established in all class groups so as to further involve students in leading their own learning.
- At the commencement of most lessons teachers shared learning intentions with students. Where best practice was identified, teachers explained what students were expected to be able to do and know and included the success criteria which students could use to evaluate their own learning. At the conclusion of some lessons, the intended learning was reviewed through good student questioning. These good practices should be extended.
- In some lessons, teacher checking in with students on their progress was a strong feature; the very good circulation during students' activities helped teachers to give individual support and guidance where required. In these lessons teachers were very aware of students' learning needs.
- In almost all lessons, teachers' explanation of concepts and business theory was very good and was linked to current business and economic issues. Students exhibited very good comprehension of subject matter. It was praiseworthy that students displayed a depth of knowledge on topical business and economic affairs and were proficient in providing exemplars to explain concepts.
- Teachers' use of digital technology was effective as a presentation tool but its use as a learning tool needs to be extended. In lessons where very good practice was observed, presentations were enhanced with visuals and the playing of well-chosen video clips that reinforced student learning. To extend this dynamic use of technology in business education, teachers should use visual exemplars such as video clips, case studies, websites, television extracts and interactive resources, wherever appropriate.
- In a small number of class groups, students were encouraged to use the internet as a research tool as part of their homework assignments. The recent establishment in the school of peer observation and a mentoring group to increase teacher digital proficiency is a good development.

- The student voice was a strong feature in many lessons. Students had opportunities to present their homework and outcomes of co-operative learning activities to their peers. In some lessons, the very good student and teacher discussions on subject material aided the development of students' key skills. In a small number of lessons, the student voice could have been strengthened.
- In all lessons observed, there was very good use of teacher questioning to embed knowledge, to check progression and to develop class discussions. Questions asked by teachers were mainly higher-order and student answers reflected good use of business terminology and knowledge.
- A review of a selection of journals indicated that students' homework in some class groups regularly consisted of reading or learning notes. To further support the development of students' key skills, teachers should broaden the range of student homework tasks such as research and project-based tasks, and the appraisal of relevant business-related television programmes and media content.
- Assessment of students' work is through a mix of self-assessment, whole-class corrections and teachers' review of work. There were a few examples of written formative feedback observed on students' tests. There is scope to further develop and extend the provision of written formative feedback on students' work.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Subject provision and whole-school support for business education in the school is very good. However, business teachers do not have their own base classrooms and this diminishes the potential to develop visual learning environments. The provision of at least one specialist business area should be considered by senior management.
- The business department is using the information from the school's special educational teachers (SET) to ensure they are aware of the special educational needs of students. There is good communication between the school's SET and the business department with regard to the educational needs of students.
- To meet the changes to assessment in the Junior Cycle programme and to increase parents' understanding of the new assessment framework, the school is developing the way that it reports to parents.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The organisational practices of the business department are very good. The use of a shared electronic folder facilitates communication, collaboration and the sharing of business-related teaching resources within the business department.
- Business Studies teachers work in a collaborative and supportive way and are committed to the continued development of business education.
- Teachers have regular professional contact with each other through formal and informal meetings. The minutes of the regular business subject department meetings revealed the range of topics discussed. It is advisable that the agenda for meetings should include a greater focus on the discussion of teaching methodologies and student learning strategies.

- Subject planning for the new Business Studies specification requires further development. A three-year plan aligns the topics to be taught with the chapter of the textbook and the corresponding learning outcomes in the specification. To ensure students benefit from the full range of intended experiences, all business teachers should familiarise themselves with the planning resource materials on the Junior Cycle for Teachers website. Collaboratively, teachers should extend the Business Studies plan to include 'Units of Learning' that detail the intended range of rich learning experiences and assessment approaches to develop key skills in students.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and deputy principal at the conclusion of the evaluation.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

- The Board of Management of Terenure College welcomes the Inspection and the ensuing Report. It notes the affirmation of the good quality of teaching and learning:
“Students exhibited very good comprehension of subject matter. It was praiseworthy that students displayed a depth of knowledge on topical business and economic affairs and were proficient in providing exemplars to explain concepts.”
- We also welcome the recommendations for ongoing improvements that are made as our
“Business Studies teachers... are committed to the continued development of business education.”

Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

- The Business Studies teachers will continue the ongoing work of collaboratively unpacking the Subject Specification. Increased use will be made of resources from the Junior Cycle for Teachers website. This work will be aided by the use of teacher’ Professional Time (for Junior Cycle planning) and by use of the Business Department One Note folder.
- A current focus of Business Department’s ongoing reflection and planning is the extension of formative assessment practices and the broadening of the range of homework tasks assigned.
- Work on the school’s Digital Plan, which is being undertaken in conjunction with the PDST, is nearing completion. The ongoing implementation of the Digital Plan will expand and develop the use of digital technology to support teaching and learning.

THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	Very good applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is outstanding and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	Good applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	Satisfactory applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	Fair applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	Weak applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;