

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

Subject Inspection in Home Economics

REPORT

School name	The High School
School address	Danum Zion Road Rathgar
Roll number	60670L

Date of Inspection: 04-02-2020



**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 Home Economics 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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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	03-02-2020, 04-02-2020
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal, deputy principals and home economics teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during four lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principals and home economics teachers

School context

The High School is a co-educational fee-charging secondary school under the trusteeship of the Erasmus Smith Trust. The school has a current enrolment of 728 male and female students. The school provides the Junior Cycle programme, the Leaving Certificate programme as well as a compulsory Transition Year (TY) programme. Home Economics is offered as an optional subject in each of the programmes offered.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was very good; lessons ranged from very good to good.
- Commendably, assessment for learning and the assessment of learning were very evident in lessons.
- Senior cycle students were not provided with sufficient opportunities to be active in their learning.
- The overall quality of subject provision and whole school support is good; student voice is not sought to inform the construction of subject option bands at junior cycle.
- Collaborative practice is of a very high standard; some programmes of work do not explicitly outline the range of skills students should develop.

Recommendations

- In all lessons, students should be provided with opportunities to be active in their learning as appropriate, differentiated resources should be provided to enable all students to fully participate in activities.
- Senior management should survey incoming first-year students and their parents to ascertain optional subject preferences and use this information to construct subject bands.
- Learning outcomes for all programmes of work should be inclusive of the cognitive, practical and procedural, and soft skills which students should develop.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was very good; lessons ranged from very good to good.
- Teachers created learning environments which were very affirming and encouraging.
- Spot demonstrations, whole-class teaching and one-to-one support were used effectively in practical lessons, and teacher modelling of skills was of a high standard. In a food studies lesson, having demonstrated practical skills, very good practice was observed when the teacher assessed students' knowledge and understanding of the key stages necessary to undertake a practical task. This strategy helped to ensure that students could outline how to complete practical tasks and also supported them in achieving success in their practical work.
- Students co-generated success criteria in a practical textiles lesson and at the end of the lesson students were provided with the opportunity to reflect on and articulate how they utilised the success criteria when completing their work. This highly effective practice could be extended to all lessons.
- Students asked relevant questions in all lessons, and this reflected their positive engagement with learning.
- Assessment of learning and for learning was evident in all lessons. In all instances, teachers revisited previous learning which had taken place and assessed students' knowledge and understanding before new material was introduced. Learning intentions were shared with students and discussed in all lessons. At the end of lessons, teachers revisited learning intentions, provided students with an opportunity to reflect on their achievement of the intended learning and assessed students' attainment of the planned learning. In the majority of lessons, students were provided with the opportunity to reflect and record what they had learned and what they found most interesting using an exit-note strategy. These practices support learners to take ownership and responsibility for their learning, and this is very good.
- In lessons where scope for improvement was made, it is recommended that additional opportunities are provided for senior cycle students to be active in their learning. Where appropriate, differentiated resources should be provided to support students to fully participate in activities.
- Good evidence of formative written feedback was evident on students' work. Some examples of exemplary practice were evident when students were required to reflect on the written formative feedback provided on their work and record how they would apply the learning gained to improve their future work. This approach should be extended to all classrooms.
- In all lessons, teachers provided opportunities for students to recognise the integrated nature of learning in Home Economics and students were supported to make links between their learning in theoretical and practical lessons.
- In all lessons, teachers recorded keywords on the board, and these words were referred to during lessons. Highly effective practice was evident when a student was invited to share with the class and record on the board a subject-specific term which was used in answering a question. Best practice was evident when students were required to use the key words

identified in the lesson as part of their written work, and this could be extended to all lessons.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole school support is good.
- Commendably, senior management encourages and supports teachers to partake in relevant continuing professional development.
- Student voice is not sought to inform the construction of subject option bands for incoming first-year students. It is recommended that senior management survey incoming first-year students and parents to ascertain optional subject preferences and use this information to construct subject bands.
- The allocation of time for junior and senior cycle Home Economics is in line with the syllabus and or specification guidelines. Effective timetabling arrangements are in place.
- An annual formal meeting between the home economics department and senior management is not currently scheduled. It is therefore recommended that the principal meets with the subject department annually to discuss what is working well in teaching, learning and assessment in Home Economics, and the progress made in areas identified for development by the subject department.
- Home economics facilities consist of two well-maintained and resourced kitchens. Teachers have created classrooms which are print-rich environments and display very professionally presented collages of photographs of students' work and students at work in home economics lessons.
- The school has a health and safety statement in place; however, this does not contain a risk assessment template for the home economics facilities. It is recommended that senior management in consultation with the home economics department develops risk assessment templates for both kitchens. As textiles and food studies practical work are both undertaken in the kitchen, the templates should reflect the current dual-purpose nature of the home economics classrooms. An audit of the home economics facilities using the risk assessment templates should be undertaken annually by teachers and findings shared with senior management.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Teacher collaborative practice is of a very high standard. Teachers share their expertise and seek continuous improvements in learner outcomes and experiences.
- Minutes of subject department meetings are filed. Commendably, actions to address and progress the areas discussed are agreed.
- Teachers have designed and implemented common programmes of work and share a variety of good resources which were evident in students' folders. Some programmes of work contain learning outcomes which are inclusive of the broad range of skills which students should develop. It is recommended that learning outcomes across all programmes of work

are further developed to outline the cognitive, practical and procedural, and soft skills which students should develop.

- It is very good practice that the subject department has created a concise assessment framework for all year groups. Practical assessments are scheduled at junior cycle, and an aggregate result consisting of a practical assessment grade and a written examination paper grade is shared with parents via school reports.
- Commendably, teachers have sought student voice in the evaluation of the TY home economics module and feedback reflects very positively on the module. Some suggestions are being considered including the possibility of extending the allocated time to the module.
- Good progress has been made in designing units of work for junior cycle. Teachers have adapted the planning templates provided by the Junior Cycle for Teachers. The units of work can be further progressed by aligning learning outcomes with modes of assessment. This will support teachers to ascertain if the intended learning has taken place on the completion of a unit of work. To further support individual planning documents, teachers should plan for the differentiated learning intentions which reflect the needs of learners in individual class groups.
- The design brief process is well integrated into programme planning, and this supports the development of students' critical thinking skills. Students' ability to evaluate their work was of a high standard.
- Commendably, state examination results are analysed, compared to national norms and reflected on.
- An action plan which outlines how the subject department is engaging with ongoing improvements to support high quality teaching and learning should be devised. This time-bound plan should outline agreed targets, strategies and a review processes.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principals and home economics teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

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 of quality 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;