

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Business and Economics

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	St Patrick's College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Cullies Cavan Co. Cavan
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	61060M

Date of Inspection: 14-11-2018



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agus Scileanna
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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 and 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

Date of inspection	14-11-2018
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 8 class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Saint Patrick's College Cavan is a Catholic secondary school for boys which operates under the patronage of the Diocese of Kilmore. Currently there are 726 students enrolled. The programmes provided are the Junior Cycle, Leaving Certificate and an optional Transition Year (TY) programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good; in a small number of lessons very good practice was observed.
- A heavy emphasis is being placed on notetaking across the subject department.
- Regular reports are issued to parents to inform them of students' progress but these do not fully reflect the range of students' learning experiences.
- Highly effective practice is evident across the business department where teachers of business organise educational visits to local enterprises and encourage students to partake in a range of enterprise activities.
- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support for the business subjects is very good.
- The quality of planning and preparation within the department is good. The coordination of the subject is undertaken by one teacher and this is rotated on an annual basis with a positive level of collaboration evident by most teachers across the subject department.

Recommendations

- Students' understanding of the subject area would increase if they were required to phrase key points themselves.
- To increase parents' and students' understanding of the assessment framework that supports junior cycle Business Studies, reporting systems should be developed that reflect the range of student learning experiences and the descriptors used with classroom-based assessments and certificate examinations.
- Greater levels of collaboration by all members of the business department would facilitate a more effective level of subject planning and build capacity within the department.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching and learning was good overall with some very good practices evident in a small number of lessons.
- Learning intentions were shared and displayed to students in all lessons during the evaluation. Teachers were consistent in their use of learning intentions and, in highly effective lessons, they revisited these planned learning intentions in order to assess students' understanding and knowledge.
- In all lessons observed, the interactions between students and teachers were very respectful and teachers set high expectations of their students.
- Teachers modelled enthusiasm and enjoyment of subject matter. In all lessons, the use of exemplars which related to the real business world were well selected and developed students' understanding of business life.
- The overall quality of assessment was good. Oral questioning was the dominant methodology but was used well to check students' progress, knowledge and understanding. There is scope to develop and embed assessment for learning (AFL) methodologies throughout the business department in order to further develop teacher's practice.
- In the majority of lessons, effective pair and group tasks allowed for meaningful discussion and productive student engagement. Students had a clear understanding of their roles within the group when undertaking such tasks.
- Homework was set in all lessons during the evaluation. However, students are not regularly recording homework in their journals. The levels of homework completion were very high and teachers had high expectations in relation to students' work.
- Teachers of business organise educational visits to local enterprises and encourage students to partake in a range of enterprise activities. This is very good practice. Very positive student award schemes are displayed recognising student achievement in academia from the National University, Maynooth.
- A stimulating learning environment that included print-rich displays was evident in the majority of classrooms. Best practice was observed when teachers facilitated collaborative learning which provided opportunities for students to display their own completed work.
- In lessons where media clips were played, they were very effective in enhancing and reinforcing student learning; there is scope to expand this good practice across the department.
- In Economic lessons, students engaged with an online media platform to share notes and to engage in further research as part of homework assignments. This was very good practice.
- There were some examples of note making. However, a heavy emphasis is being placed on notetaking. Students' understanding of the subject area would increase if they were required to phrase key points themselves.
- Student attendance was very good throughout the evaluation. Highly effective levels of classroom management was observed with exemplary student behaviour evident in all lessons.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support for the business subjects is very good. Time allocated to all business subjects across the school is appropriate.
- Business Studies is a compulsory subject at junior cycle. All three business subjects, Accounting, Business and Economics are offered to students at senior cycle. The Business module within the TY programme is well designed where students study Economics and Business as a core subject.
- Very good resources are provided in subject-based classrooms including data projectors, desktop computers, internet access, a number of whiteboards and visualisers.
- Regular reports are issued to parents. However, in order to increase parents' and students' understanding of the assessment framework that supports junior cycle Business Studies, reporting systems should be developed that reflect the range of student learning experiences and the descriptors used with classroom-based assessments and certificate examinations.
- Business teachers have actively engaged in recent subject specific continuing professional development (CPD) and some teachers are active members of their subject organisation, the Business Teachers Association of Ireland (BSTAI).
- A member of the business department has been identified to lead and facilitate Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings in line with best practice.
- Professional time is provided to every teacher in the department and the deployment of all teachers is in line with their qualifications, skills, knowledge and interest.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The quality of planning and preparation within the department is good. The coordination of the subject is undertaken by one teacher and this is rotated on an annual basis with a positive level of collaboration evident by most teachers across the subject department.
- There is a high level of planning evident for junior cycle business studies within the school which is contributing in a positive way to the delivery of the new specification.
- Regular subject department meetings are held with extensive minutes recorded.
- The business team makes effective use of an electronic platform where resources and planning materials are meticulously organised, stored and available to all teachers. These resources are regularly updated by all members of the subject department.
- Data regarding the number of students taking business subjects in the certificate examinations and student attainment are reviewed annually against the national norms for the subject. Senior and junior cycle higher level uptake is consistently high. However, attainment for business and accounting over the past number of years should be monitored closely to improve learner outcomes.
- Currently, the business department plan does not contain any reflective component. Subject planning within the business department would further benefit from reflective practice with an evaluation section at the end of each identified learning area and the development of an action plan which would identify short, medium and long term goals for the business department.

- School management facilitates access for all students to study the subjects on offer and change level at senior cycle if required.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject 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;