

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

**Subject Inspection in Home Economics**

**REPORT**

<b>School name</b>	Loreto Secondary School
<b>School address</b>	Granges Road Kilkenny
<b>Roll number</b>	61580P

**Date of Inspection: 14-01-2020**



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Department of  
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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 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

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	14-01-2020, 15-01-2020
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal, deputy principal and home economics teachers</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during seven lessons</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and home economics teachers</li></ul>

### School context

Loreto Secondary School is a voluntary secondary school with 1002 female students. It is under the trusteeship of the Loreto Education Trust. The school offers Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, the Leaving Certificate Applied and the established Leaving Certificate.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good, with instances of very good practice observed in all lessons; students had limited opportunities to be independent in their learning in some lessons.
- Teachers differentiated questions appropriately and one-to-one support was provided in most lessons; other differentiation strategies were not explicitly utilised in the lessons observed.
- Evidence of detailed marking and correcting of students' work was observed; written formative feedback is not regularly provided.
- The overall quality of subject provision and whole school support for Home Economics is very good.
- Home Economics is a very popular subject in the school; teachers are to be highly commended for their ongoing promotion of the subject through co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- The overall quality of collaborative practice is very good.

#### Recommendations

- Teachers should utilise approaches to enable students to be more independent in their learning.
- When planning lessons, teachers should consider how the individual needs of students could be best supported through the use of strategies including differentiated tasks, worksheets, learning intentions and homework.
- Regular written formative feedback should be provided on students' work to support improvement.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good; with instances of very good practice observed in all lessons.
- In all lessons, teachers had high expectations for students' achievement, and this was communicated to students.
- Very respectful interactions between teachers and students was a feature of all lessons visited and this created positive learning environments. Teachers displayed a very good understanding of their students' needs and high quality one-to-one support was evident in most lessons.
- Teachers' enthusiasm and interest in Home Economics was evident in lessons, and this positively impacted on students' engagement in their learning.
- In the planning of lessons, teachers had invested considerable time in creating well-designed resources including food studies evaluation sheets, laminated pictorial guides to support students when undertaking practical skills and digital presentations.
- In all lessons, teachers recorded learning intentions on the whiteboard and these were discussed with students. This is good practice. In some lessons, teachers revisited learning intentions, and asked students to reflect on their attainment of the intended learning. It is recommended that all teachers revisit learning intentions and assess students' attainment of the intended learning during lessons.
- Homework was assigned in all lessons observed, and regular assigning of homework was evident. In the assigning of homework, emphasis is placed on revising learning from lessons and preparation for upcoming class tests. Very good practice was observed when homework tasks provided students with opportunities to engage in independent research and develop higher order thinking skills. This very good practice should be extended.
- Some lessons and students' copybooks revealed an over-reliance on note-taking and in some instances, students were provided with questions and suggested answers. Students could be facilitated to be more independent in their learning by providing further opportunities for all students to apply their learning, use success criteria to assess their work, identify their strengths and areas for development, and further develop note-making skills so that new learning can be considerably condensed.
- Teacher's use of questioning to assess and support learning was very good. Questions were differentiated, well distributed and provided students with opportunities to make co-curricular links. When planning lessons, it is recommended that teachers consider how students could be further supported and challenged through utilising strategies such as differentiated tasks, worksheets, learning intentions and homework.
- Students diligently implemented hygiene and safety procedures in all practical lessons.
- In some lessons, a greater balance was needed between teacher and student voice so that students are facilitated to orally articulate their learning, and share their ideas and opinions. Teachers should create further opportunities for students to develop their oral literacy skills. This could include providing opportunities for students to summarise and articulate their learning, peer teaching, engaging in peer assessment and sharing oral formative feedback arising with their peers.
- Evidence of regular and detailed marking of class tests and corrected coursework was observed. While some examples of written formative feedback were in evidence, in general,

this is an area for development. Students need regular and developmental feedback on their written work so that they can improve.

## **2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole school support for Home Economics is very good.
- Students have very good access to the subject. All first-year and TY students study Home Economics and this supports students to make informed decisions when choosing subjects. Subject option bands are generated based on students' preferences and this is good practice.
- Timetable provision for Home Economics is in line with the syllabus and specification guidelines.
- Home economics facilities consist of three very well-resourced and maintained kitchens.
- Senior management supports a culture of continuous improvement in teaching and learning. Teachers are supported to avail of continuing professional development opportunities and whole-school structures such as those to support the implementation of school self-evaluation targets are proving effective.
- A whole-school health and safety statement is in place and it is positive that the home economics department was consulted in the formation of this policy. Risk assessment templates for Home Economics are in the initial stages of being drafted. Currently, kitchens are utilised as dual-purpose classrooms for the teaching of food and textiles studies. It is recommended that the possibility of assigning an existing classroom to be designated as a textiles studies classroom is investigated. If this is not feasible, the risk assessment templates should reflect the dual-purpose nature of the home economics facilities.

## **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The overall quality of collaborative practice is very good. The home economics department consists of six teachers who are highly committed and have worked diligently to establish Home Economics as a high profile subject in the school.
- The position of subject coordinator rotates on an annual basis. This is commendable as teachers are provided with the opportunity to develop leadership capacity.
- Teachers collaborate to create opportunities for students to display their learning in a variety of contexts such as the Christmas Bake Off. In addition, teachers create meaningful learning opportunities for students through the organisation trips with a Home Economics focus.
- Records of subject department meetings and resources are stored on the school's online platform. It is commendable that meetings are inclusive of matters pertaining to teaching, learning and assessment in addition to day-to-day organisational matters.
- Most programmes of work are inclusive of learning outcomes and this good practice should be extended.
- Good progress is evident in planning for Junior Cycle Home Economics. Units of work have been designed using the Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) templates. Teaching methodologies, key learning and resources which are aligned to specific learning outcomes have been created. To further develop the units of work created, modes of assessment should be

aligned to the learning outcomes so that students' attainment of planned learning outcomes can be ascertained.

- It is commendable that all teachers are active members of the Association of Teachers of Home Economics.
- To support ongoing development, it is recommended that teachers create a time-bound action plan which is inclusive of areas for development, agreed strategies, assigned roles and review processes.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy 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
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;