

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

**Subject Inspection in Guidance**

**REPORT**

<b>School name</b>	Salesian College
<b>School address</b>	Celbridge Co Kildare
<b>Roll number</b>	61661P

**Date of Inspection: 13-11-2019**



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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 Guidance 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.

## **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>	12-11-2019 & 13-11-2019
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and key staff</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during four lessons</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal, deputy principals and guidance counsellors</li></ul>

### School context

Salesian College is a Catholic voluntary secondary school for boys and operates under the trusteeship of the Salesians of Don Bosco. Current enrolment is 702 students. It offers the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY), the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was good, but learning intentions were not always explicit, and opportunities for higher-order questioning and student engagement were not always fully exploited.
- A key feature of the guidance service is the accessibility and approachability of the guidance team which the students appreciate and value.
- The quality of provision and whole-school support for Guidance is very good; there is a highly commendable integrated, whole-school and collaborative approach taken to supporting students.
- There is scope to expand the careers element of the guidance modules in TY and fifth year.
- Planning, preparation and organisation in the guidance department are very good; the quality of record keeping in the department is exemplary.
- There is a highly commendable, well-established practice of self-evaluation and accountability in the guidance department that includes a regular audit of how effectively the school's guidance resources are being used, with a view to ongoing improvements to the service.

#### Recommendations

- Teachers should share very clear and specific learning intentions with their students at the start of lessons, and revisit the learning intentions at the end in order to assess and consolidate learning.
- Teachers should ensure that the appropriate balance is achieved between teacher-led activity and student engagement.
- Students should be challenged to expand more fully on their answers through greater use of higher-order questioning.
- The guidance modules in TY and fifth year should be extended to include more career guidance activities, such as career explorations, course investigations and reviews of college open days.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good, but learning intentions were not always explicit, and greater opportunities for higher-order questioning and student engagement were not fully exploited in some lessons.
- All of the lessons were well planned and well structured. Resources were used effectively to support learning and these included colourful visuals, digital presentations, work sheets and reflection tasks. Commendably, all of the lessons observed began with an assessment of prior learning, involving a *think, pair and share* activity that engaged students' initial interest.
- In half of the lessons observed, the learning intentions were clearly communicated to students from the outset and were revisited at the end to consolidate learning. In the other lessons, general learning intentions were shared with the students, but they were not explicit enough. It is recommended that teachers share very clear and specific learning intentions with their students at the start of lessons and revisit the learning intentions at the end in order to assess and consolidate learning.
- All lessons visited were characterised by very respectful and positive relationships between students and their teachers. Commendably the teachers moved around the room, assessing students' progress and supporting them individually in their learning.
- The majority of lessons were delivered at an appropriate pitch and at a measured pace to facilitate students to process and reflect on their learning. In one lesson, however, efforts were made to cover too much material in the limited time available.
- The most effective lessons observed were characterised by very good student engagement as students worked purposefully on assigned tasks, either individually or in groups. In these lessons students demonstrated confidence in expressing themselves and listening to the contributions of others.
- In half of the lessons observed the teachers' voice predominated; not enough time was devoted to facilitating student activity and discussion, and the learner experience was quite passive. It is recommended that teachers ensure that the appropriate balance is achieved between teacher-led activity and student engagement in lessons.
- Students' progress during lessons was checked predominantly through the use of questioning. In all lessons a small number of very good examples of higher-order questions were observed. These questions challenged, probed and facilitated deeper learning. Students' answers otherwise were quite brief and there was scope to encourage them to further develop their responses. It is recommended that teachers further extend the use of higher-order questions in lessons in order to offer greater challenge to students to expand on their answering and deepen their learning.
- The guidance department utilises an appropriate range of psychometric tests to help students develop a good understanding of their strengths and interests. Standardised assessment takes place in first year and fifth year. Year heads lead initiatives to support academic tracking and monitoring, while the guidance department tracks the initial destinations of students after their Leaving Certificate.
- It is notable that a number of students were seen to approach the guidance counsellors at the end of lessons with additional personal queries and requests for appointments which were facilitated very efficiently. In their interactions with the inspector, senior students praised the approachability, accessibility and support of the guidance team.

## 2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of provision and whole-school support for Guidance is very good. Very good pastoral structures are in place and there is a highly commendable integrated, whole-school, and collaborative approach to supporting students.
- The guidance team includes one full-time guidance counsellor and a recently appointed part-time guidance counsellor who work very well as a team. Students also benefit from additional supports provided by the school chaplain and the coordinator for special educational needs (SEN).
- A weekly lesson in Guidance is appropriately timetabled for all students in sixth year, while short modules are provided in TY and fifth year on such topics as subject options, preparation for work experience, personal motivation and goal setting. The content of these modules is quite limited. It is recommended that these modules be extended to include additional career guidance activities such as career explorations, course investigations and reviews of a college open days.
- Commendably Guidance provision is being further extended to students at junior cycle. Third-year students benefit from a guidance module and participation in the Junior Achievement Career Success programme. The school has been partnered with a number of global companies and third-year students have been given access to a digital platform aimed at enhancing their personal and vocational skills and their understanding of the world of work.
- A comprehensive induction programme has been put in place for incoming first-year students. They are assisted in settling into their new school by their *Ceangail* mentors and student *Cinnirí* who organise activities such as the “First Year Night-In”, a very popular fun evening aimed at developing new friendships.
- Students in TY and LCA benefit from a work experience programme which is very effectively managed and co-ordinated. Valuable links are maintained with past pupils and parents who provide students with interesting and varied work placements, as well as mock interviews for all sixth-year students.
- It is positive that senior-cycle students have been facilitated in the past to attend a career and course exhibition which is organised collectively by a number of schools in the Maynooth and Celbridge area.
- The school has two autism spectrum disorder (ASD) classes and close links have been established with the ACRE (A Community Rethinking Education) project on the school campus, which the National Learning Network also uses as a base. This inter-community collaboration is highly commended.
- During the evaluation, very close collaboration and communication were evident between the guidance department and the SEN department, the student support team and a wide range of staff, including year heads. Effective links have been established by the school with the relevant support agencies.
- The school community is commended on the very wide range of activities it provides to promote student wellbeing.

### **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Planning, preparation and organisation in the guidance department are of a very high quality. Record keeping in the department is exemplary and shows due consideration for ethical issues, such as confidentiality and the security of test materials.
- The school's guidance plan and all guidance-related policies, including policies relating to critical incidents, anti-bullying and data protection, are reviewed regularly and are up-to-date.
- Communication with students and parents is effective. However there is scope for the guidance department to make greater use of social media to convey information. The guidance section of the school website is under-utilised and could be developed further.
- There is a highly commendable, well-established practice of self-evaluation and accountability in the guidance department that includes a regular audit of how effectively the school's guidance resources are being used, with a view to ongoing improvements to the service.

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

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.

## 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
<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;

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**



## **Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report**

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## **Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.**

Salesian College and the Guidance and Counselling Department welcome the very positive findings of our Subject Inspection Report which recognises and affirms the high standard of work being done and whole school guidance provision.

In particular we welcome that it was noted that we work very hard to ensure we are accessible and approachable for the students who are at the centre of our service.

In response to the findings on the classes observed we would like to say that we welcome the recommendations given and will continue to evaluate, review and reflect on our teaching.

We would however like to add the following:

1. In relation to the class that was used for the evaluation, the teachers were teaching a class on the Central Applications Office (CAO) process with a group of capable and engaged sixth year students. It is the school's position that the learning intentions were clearly given at the start of all lessons and recapped at the end of the class either orally or written on the board and we believe the class understood the intentions very well.
2. The teachers also observe best practice with regard to reflective practice and assessment for learning and this includes using higher order questioning. In the lessons observed however we believe that there was limited opportunity to do so due to the factual nature and practical content of the CAO material covered.
3. We acknowledge the very good practice observed and noted in this report.
4. While Salesian College has over 700 students and we do not have a full allocation for Guidance, the work and practices observed are as a result of a small department, up to recently with only one Guidance Counsellor.
5. It is important to note the standards achieved through the work of a very small department are excellent in the context of only a teaching allocation of .97 for Guidance.