

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Home Economics

REPORT

School name	St David's Secondary School
School address	Kimberly Road Greystones Co Wicklow
Roll number	61830M

Date of Inspection: 12-03-2019



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 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 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	11 & 12 March, 2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal, deputy principal and key staff• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during four class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and relevant staff

School context

St. David's Secondary School is a co-educational voluntary school with a current enrolment of 570 students. Home Economics is an optional subject at Junior Cycle and at Leaving Certificate level. Home Economics is also offered as part of a compulsory Transition Year (TY) programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was very good; lessons ranged from good to very good.
- A student-centred approach to learning was evident; interactions were affirming and supportive.
- The Home Economics department is innovative and designs and implements strategies and resources to seek continuous improvements in teaching and learning; but these strategies and resources were only well utilised in some lessons.
- Good quality formative feedback was evident on students' work; opportunities for students to self-assess their own written work were not evident.
- The overall quality of whole-school support and subject provision was very good; very effective support for teacher professional development is evident.
- The overall quality of planning was very good but a TY assessment framework has not yet been developed.

Recommendations

- The Home Economics department should outline a plan to introduce the innovative strategies and resources which seek continuous improvements in teaching and learning across all classrooms.
- Students should be supported to self-assess their own written work.
- An assessment framework and accompanying success criteria should be developed for ongoing and summative TY assessment.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was very good; lessons ranged from good to very good.
- A student-centred approach to learning was evident; interactions were affirming and supportive. Teachers have high expectations of students' work and effectively communicate these to students.
- Learning intentions were shared with students in all lessons. Best practice was evident when learning intentions were phrased in terms of what students should know, understand and be able to do. In some lessons, learning intentions were revisited and assessed. This very good practice should be extended to all lessons.
- It is very good practice that a departmental approach to teaching key skills such as literacy and numeracy has been agreed and implemented. Key words have been identified for many year groups and these words are shared with students via teacher handouts. It is positive to note that the subject department plans to extend this practice to all year groups. A very effective revision handout for third-year students outlines learning intentions and key words for each section of the course and students use this document to self-assess their progress and focus their revision.
- Digital technology was used effectively by teachers. In practical lessons, visual presentations were well utilised to support students' learning. In a theory lessons, it was positive to note that students had an opportunity to use digital technology when researching the cost of ingredients. A common approach to the costing of ingredients has been adopted by teachers.
- Students were given the opportunity to work independently and in pairs. Think-pair-share activities were well structured and feedback was sought by teachers, recorded on the board and discussed so that students had an opportunity to process the information.
- Very good teacher questioning was evident. Questions were well distributed and generally well directed. Students were encouraged to extend answers and utilise higher-order thinking skills in the answering of questions.
- Excellent teacher-created resources were evident in student folders and in planning documentation. Booklets have been created for first-year students to enable them to record their learning in a structured format. Good note-making techniques were evident in the booklets and students mirrored these techniques when recording their own learning and generating notes.
- An examination of copybooks revealed a range of practice in how students record their learning at junior cycle level. It is recommended that the subject department agree an approach in relation to the recording of practical evaluations. Senior cycle students' copybooks revealed that they regularly generate their own notes. This is very good practice.
- Good quality formative feedback was evident on students' work and students reported being familiar with marking schemes from certificate examinations. To build on this good practice, students should be provided with the opportunity to self-assess their work.
- Highly effective in-house examination procedures were noted. Common in-house examination papers mirror the cognitive demand and structure of summative assessment. In some classes, having completed in-house examinations and class tests, students complete a

reflective task to ascertain where progress has been made and identify areas for improvement. This highly effective practice should be adopted by all teachers.

- In the teaching of practical lessons, very clear instructions were given to students. Very good routines were evident and due attention was given to safety and hygiene.
- Very good practice was evident in a first-year practical lesson when students evaluated their progress, identified skills learned and recorded the success criteria for the completion of the procedural skills learned.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of whole-school support and subject provision was very good.
- Senior management encourage staff to develop their teaching, learning and assessment practices through participation in continuing professional development. A forum for staff to share practices that have proven successful at improving students' learning is provided at staff meetings. This is very good practice.
- Students have very good access to Home Economics. Option bands are generated based on student preferences at junior and senior cycle and this is good practice.
- In all instances, timetabling allocation for Home Economics is in line with specification and syllabus guidelines. A very good distribution of lessons is evident across the week and this aids continuity in teaching and learning.
- TY Home Economics is timetabled as a rotating module. Currently, some class groups do not have adequate access to the subject. It is positive to note that this has been discussed with senior management and plans are already in place to extend the duration of subject modules for the next academic year.
- Home Economics facilities comprise of two kitchens. These rooms are very well maintained and resourced. A risk assessment template has been created and it is used for an annual risk assessment. It is recommended that this template be extended to reflect the multipurpose nature of the kitchen and the annual risk assessment should be shared with senior management.
- Deliberate efforts are made to create stimulating learning environments for students. Pictures displaying students' participation in co-curricular events were displayed in the classroom. The adjoining corridors displayed student work and celebrated a student's participation in a national cookery competition.
- The Home Economics team are involved in a range of extra-curricular wellbeing activities which provide teachers with the opportunity to integrate some of the values associated with Home Economics into other areas of school life.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Teachers collaborative planning and preparation are very effective. It is very good practice that the role of subject coordinator rotates on an annual basis.
- Very good individual planning was evident in all lessons observed.

- The home economics department is innovative and has designed a number of highly effective strategies and resources which are evident in some classrooms. Teachers should agree a timeframe within which these strategies and resources will be evident across all class groups.
- Programme plans are in place for all year groups. Highly effective practice is evident in the creation and reviewing of first-year plans.
- At senior cycle level, some modifications to lesson sequence should be adopted to allow for an incremental and integrated approach to the development of students' theoretical and procedural skills. In time, topic specific strategies and assessment modes should be included in all programmes of work.
- Minutes of meetings are duly recorded and it is positive that teaching and learning topics feature as an integral part of the agenda and topics discussed.
- The design brief process is integrated into programme planning from first-year onwards. It is very positive to note that one of the home economics teachers has collaborated with a teacher from another subject department to investigate ways in which the design brief process can be integrated across the Junior Cycle programme and to support students to develop problem-solving skills.
- A TY plan is in place which outlines the skills students should develop. An assessment framework and accompanying success criteria should be developed.

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
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;

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 St. David's Co-educational Secondary School welcomes the very positive observations in the report including the following:

Evidence of a student-centred approach to learning.

Evidence of the effective use of digital technology.

Evidence of very good teacher questioning.

Evidence of good quality feedback on students' work.

Evidence of highly effective in- house examination procedures were noted.

Evidence of very clear instructions given to students in the teaching of practical lessons, including very good routines and evidence of due attention to safety and hygiene.

Evidence of very effective collaborative planning and preparation by the department.

Evidence of very good individual planning in all lessons observed.

Evidence that the Home Economics department is innovative.

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 Board welcomes the recommendations set out in the inspection report and has agreed to the following:

That the subject department agree an approach in relation to the recording of practical evaluations.

That all teachers adopt the use of a reflective task which students complete post in-house and class tests to ascertain progress and identify areas for improvement.