

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

**Subject Inspection in English**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Coláiste Einde
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Threadneedle Road Galway County Galway
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	62981P

**Date of Inspection: 23-01-2019**



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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 English 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

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	22, 23 January 2019
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal, deputy principal and key staff</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during seven class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### School context

Coláiste Éinde is a co-educational post-primary school situated in Galway city, with a current enrolment of 786 students. It participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the Department of Education and Skills' action plan for educational inclusion. The school offers the Junior Cycle programme, Junior Certificate, Junior Certificate Schools Programme, Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and an optional Transition Year (TY).

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good, with very good practice observed in many lessons.
- Learning intentions were shared with students in all lessons observed; in some lessons, the learning intentions were expressed in terms of the content that the teacher would cover and were not focused on the planned learning for students.
- The quality of assessment was very good.
- Teachers have developed a range of approaches for the Collection of the Student's Texts at junior cycle.
- Homework was assigned in all lessons that were observed; examination of students' journals revealed inconsistency in the recording of homework.
- The quality of planning and preparation at subject department level is very good.

#### Recommendations

- Learning intentions should focus on what students are expected to learn or do and should support the assessment of students' learning and progress.
- It would be worthwhile designing a department-wide methodology for the development of the Collection of the Student's Texts.
- A consistent approach to the recording of homework should be agreed and implemented at whole-school and subject department level.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good with very good practice observed in many lessons.
- Lessons were well planned and a variety of resources was used to extend students' learning experiences. In some lessons, a range of tasks and resources had been prepared to make the planned learning accessible to all students and high levels of interest, participation and progress were evident. In a small number of lessons, the variety of resources was limited and students did not engage purposefully with the learning tasks. The very good practices observed in relation to lesson planning, resource selection and task design should be extended to all lessons.
- Learning intentions were shared with students in all lessons observed. Good practice was observed where learning intentions described what the students were expected to learn or do and were complemented by clear success criteria for the assessment of learning. In other lessons, the learning intentions were expressed in terms of the content that the teacher would cover and were not focused on the planned learning for students. Learning intentions should focus on what students are expected to learn or do and should support the assessment of students' learning and progress.
- Active learning methodologies were used in all lessons observed. Students were given opportunities to work in small groups, in pairs or individually depending on the specific tasks that were assigned. Where instructions were clearly communicated and roles and responsibilities for group tasks were assigned and understood, students worked purposefully and completed tasks successfully. In a small number of lessons, there was scope for further differentiation and scaffolding to cater for the varying needs and abilities of all students.
- Some written work examined during the evaluation showed very high levels of achievement, however, standards of presentation varied widely. It would be worthwhile implementing standards for the presentation of written work in keeping with the high expectations that the school has for all of its students.
- The quality of assessment was very good. Teachers used a range of techniques to support students in assessing their own and each other's learning and progress. In one lesson, the teacher shared high-quality exemplars of students' work with the whole class group using digital technology; this good practice which helped students to identify the features of quality is commended.
- Teachers have engaged very positively with the assessment requirements for Junior Cycle English. Subject learning and assessment review (SLAR) reports indicate that teachers have evolved an effective approach to support student learning and improvement through this process.
- Teachers have developed a range of approaches to support students' engagement with the process of writing and in the development of the Collection of the Student's Texts. In one instance, carefully drafted and redrafted work was observed that had been produced over the three years of junior cycle. It would be worthwhile agreeing a department-wide approach to the development of the Collection of the Student's Texts that would specify the range of genres and the number of items to be included in each junior cycle year; requirements for extended pieces of writing; a contents page to support students to keep track of their work; guidance on drafting and redrafting with a view to avoiding multiple

drafts of the same piece of work; and practical direction about storage and the physical format of the Collection.

- The subject department has engaged with literacy development over many years. It is very positive that practices such as vocabulary development, keyword identification and reading initiatives, including a paired reading project with first-year and TY students, continue to be actively engaged with. Evaluation of the impact of these practices is now recommended as part of the ongoing review of the whole-school DEIS plan for school improvement.

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

- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support is very good. Teachers attend relevant continuing professional development (CPD) events with the support and encouragement of management. Engagement with CPD programmes for junior cycle is continuing.
- All year groups have adequate provision on the timetable, although, in a small number of instances, classes are timetabled so that students do not experience a proportionate spread of English lessons across the week. For example, students in one class group have five single periods of English across three days, with no English lesson on the other two days. Management should ensure that lessons are distributed across the week as evenly as possible, to enable students to develop and consolidate the necessary English-related skills and competences.
- Homework was assigned in all lessons that were observed. Examination of a selection of homework journals showed inconsistency in the recording of homework, however. A consistent approach to the use of homework journals would support student learning at all levels and should be agreed and implemented at whole-school and subject department level.
- Provision for students with special educational needs (SEN) is managed through a variety of approaches including team teaching, support teaching, small group settings and one-to-one teaching with a qualified special education teacher. The SEN co-ordinator provides information for teachers outlining students' needs and support strategies. This multi-faceted approach, which maximises students' experience of inclusive learning opportunities, is commended.
- Teachers support a wide range of activities including public speaking, essay writing competitions, school magazine production, theatre trips and film making to enable students to develop the skills and attitudes for lifelong learning and to promote subject-specific learning. Such ongoing engagement is highly commended.

## **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The quality of planning and preparation at subject department level is very good.
- There are comprehensive minutes of meetings indicating a good level of engagement with pedagogical issues. Teachers collaborate effectively through sharing resources; frequent informal meetings and discussions; scheduled subject department meetings; and the development of common summative assessments, as appropriate, for senior-cycle and junior-cycle students. The subject plan and schemes of work, commendably, include teacher reflections and commentary.

- It is positive that analysis and reflection on state examination results are recorded in the subject plan. Teachers of English are committed to ensuring that students experience success commensurate with their abilities and efforts.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

## **Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report**

We welcome and acknowledge the findings of this very comprehensive, detailed subject inspection report.

The findings as outlined are a fair and accurate reflection of the quality of teaching displayed by our committed, hardworking, innovative English Department. The teachers in this Department engage in collaborative planning and reflection on their teaching and learning on an ongoing regular basis. The need to ensure that all learning intentions should focus on the planned learning for students and should support the assessment of their learning is widely acknowledged within the Department.

The teachers are very willing to adopt other suggestions made within the report on how they may further develop and enhance best practices in delivering the English Curriculum allowing for further differentiation and scaffolding within lessons to cater for the needs of all students in accessing the subject.

## **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 school acknowledges the inconsistency of recording homework in students' journals and has taken measures to revisit and implement school policy on the use of homework journals for the recording of homework.
- The school endeavours to distribute English classes as evenly as possible across the week when timetabling.

## 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;