

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

Subject Inspection in English

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Presentation College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Headford County Galway
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	63040Q

Date of Inspection: 01-03-2019



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 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 did not meet the requirements in relation to 3 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, the school furnished evidence of compliance with these requirements before the inspection had completed.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Dates of inspection	28 February and 01 March 2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with deputy principals 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 deputy principals and relevant staff

School context

Presentation College is a voluntary co-educational post-primary school located in the town of Headford under the patronage of Catholic Education an Irish Schools' Trust (CEIST). The school offers Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the Leaving Cert Applied Programme. At the time of the evaluation, there were 758 students enrolled in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was very good
- Teachers demonstrated very high levels of subject-specific knowledge and extensive and insightful formative assessment was used in many instances to support students' learning and improvement; the application of advice for improvement was not always evident in students' work.
- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support for the subject is good.
- In junior cycle, class groups are banded according to ability in English, Irish and Maths from first year onwards.
- The overall quality of subject planning and preparation is good and schemes of work have been developed for each year; the schemes of work should now be further enhanced so that they can be used as working documents to guide teaching and assessment for all units of learning.
- A variety of approaches to the development of the Collection of the Student's Texts was evident, including some very good individual practices.

Recommendations

- Strategies to support students' engagement with oral and written feedback should be developed and implemented.
- The school should carefully review and adjust its practice of class group formation in junior cycle with a view to encouraging all students to have the highest realistic expectations.
- Schemes of work should be further developed to link units of learning and the associated learning outcomes with specific methodologies, formative and summative assessment tasks and resources and to provide space for reflective commentary.
- Teachers should agree a department-wide approach to the development of the Collection of the Student's Texts.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was very good.
- In many lessons, students were actively engaged and responded positively to carefully chosen resources including contemporary and classical texts to support the learning intentions. In a small number of lessons, there was scope to further develop the range of resources used to enable all students to engage with the learning.
- Students demonstrated very good knowledge and some good-quality written work was seen in copybooks. However, the quality of presentation of written work varied widely. To support the development of students' skills and practices in this area, the school should consider the development and implementation of agreed whole-school standards.
- Teachers demonstrated very high levels of subject-specific knowledge and extensive and insightful formative assessment was used in many instances to support students' learning and improvement. The application of advice for improvement was not always evident in students' work. It is now timely to consider strategies to support students' engagement with oral and written feedback.
- There was a commendable focus on creative writing in junior and senior-cycle lessons. Teachers demonstrated high levels of skill in their teaching methods and in their support for students. It emerged in discussion that the sharing of teaching strategies in this area was not formally engaged with. It is advised that items related to teaching and learning, such as the teaching of creative writing, be added to the agenda of subject department meetings, where teachers could collaborate formally.
- Students were facilitated to grow as learners through respectful interactions with each other and with the teacher. Differentiation was achieved through individual support and well-designed group-work tasks. Opportunities for students to explain homework to each other, to undertake peer assessment using carefully constructed success criteria, and to read and analyse instructions supported them in developing a sense of ownership of and responsibility for their learning.
- In some lessons, there was evidence of students being encouraged to negotiate their own learning by actively participating in the selection of the texts to be studied. This practical acknowledgement of student voice is commended; it is recommended that all such opportunities be explored with a view to increasing students' autonomy as learners.
- Students' work was displayed on the walls of many classrooms. Such very good practice encourages students to take pride in their own and each other's work.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support for the subject is good and timetabling provision is appropriate.
- The subject is well resourced and supported by senior management. Teachers have engaged extensively with continuing professional development (CPD) and, commendably, have personally engaged with further education.
- The subject department currently comprises ten teachers; the majority teach both junior and senior cycle and rotate between levels ensuring that teachers' skills and knowledge are developed in line with good practice.

- TY classes are mixed ability. In fifth year, higher-level and ordinary-level class group formation is based on TY and junior cycle achievement, teachers' professional judgement and student preference. In junior cycle, class groups are banded according to ability in English, Irish and Mathematics from first year onwards. The school should carefully review and adjust this practice with a view to encouraging all students to have the highest realistic expectations.
- The team of English teachers work in a committed and enthusiastic manner to extend students' experience of English through a number of whole-school and extra-curricular activities including reading initiatives, debating, drama, theatre trips and input from guest speakers.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall quality of subject planning and preparation is good. Extensive informal collaboration between subject department members takes place throughout the year and formal meetings are held periodically.
- The subject department plan has been compiled and developed over a number of years and contains a wide range of documents and resources. As online subject department materials are now being developed, the structure of the subject plan should be considered with a view to the plan becoming a strategic working document and to enable students to access relevant sections as appropriate.
- Schemes of work have been developed for each year. As working documents, they could now be further enhanced so that they can be used to guide teaching and assessment for all units of learning. To this end, schemes of work should be further developed to link units of learning and the associated learning outcomes with specific methodologies, formative and summative assessment tasks and resources and to provide space for reflective commentary.
- Subject learning and assessment reviews (SLARs) have resulted in reflective reports to support teachers' ongoing engagement with the English Junior Cycle learning outcomes.
- A variety of approaches to the development of the Collection of the Student's Texts was evident, including some very good individual practice. It would be worthwhile for teachers to agree 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 as well as the requirements for extended pieces of writing, a contents page to support students to keep track of their work, guidance on drafting and redrafting, and practical direction about storage and the physical format of the collection. A similar approach could also be applied to support skills development and assessment in TY.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the deputy principals 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 the positive and constructive findings of the subject inspection report.

Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

Strategies to support students' engagement with oral and written feedback are being further developed by the English department.

All First Year English classes are now mixed ability. This year, the Second Year English classes have also been divided into mixed-ability groups, encouraging all students to have the highest realistic expectations.

Schemes of work are being further developed with regard to the recommendations.

The English department is currently developing a department-wide approach to the Collection of Student Texts to provide more clarity and to keep improving standards.

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;