

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

**Subject Inspection in Home Economics**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Loreto Secondary School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Pembroke Hill Ballynagee Wexford.
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	63660A

**Date of Inspection: 31-01-2019**



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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 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

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	30 and 31 January, 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 five class periods; two doubles, three singles</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to deputy principals and relevant staff</li></ul>

### School context

Loreto Secondary School is an all-girls school with a current enrolment of 780 students. Home Economics is provided as an optional subject at Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate. The subject is a core component of the 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 and some exemplary practice was observed.
- Students were highly motivated to engage in and enjoy their learning in Home Economics; a very purposeful and supportive environment was created by teachers.
- Learning intentions were clear and shared with students in lessons; however, only on some occasions these intentions were revisited to consolidate and assess learning.
- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support for Home Economics is very good; senior management promotes a continuous culture of improvement in teaching and learning.
- Good formative feedback was evident on students' work; opportunities were provided for students to engage in self-assessment, however, at times students were unsure of success criteria.
- The overall quality of subject planning is good; individual planning for lessons was very good; however, programme plans lack some necessary details.

#### Recommendations

- Teachers should revisit and assess students' attainment of learning intentions during lessons and at the end of lessons provide opportunities to consolidate learning.
- Teachers should share success criteria with students and in time students should co-generate success criteria with teachers; this will enable students to engage in highly effective self-assessment.
- The subject department should work collaboratively to expand programmes of work to include learning outcomes, teaching methodologies, resources and assessment modes to be utilised.

## 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 with some exemplary practice observed.
- Teachers modelled enthusiasm and enjoyment in learning, and thereby created a learning environment where students were motivated to engage in and enjoy their learning.
- Student behaviour was exemplary and students were able to work independently and collaboratively in a very purposeful and productive way.
- Clear learning intentions were shared with students in all lessons. In some lessons, the teacher revisited these intentions and assessed if students had attained the intended learning. This practice should be extended to all lessons. To further this good practice, students should be encouraged to self-assess their attainment of learning intentions. This will further encourage students to take ownership of their learning.
- Teachers fostered a student-centred approach to learning. In lessons, skilful questioning, using think-pair-share and group work activities, enabled teachers to gather and collate students' existing knowledge of a topic. New information was introduced and explained and this facilitated an incremental approach to learning.
- Digital media technology was used effectively to support teaching and learning through the use of clear digital presentations, images to enhance the acquisition of procedural skills and an appropriate use of a video clips to display abstract concepts such as the homogenisation of milk. For example, when teaching the culinary uses of eggs, a digital presentation was effectively used to scaffold students' learning. The presentation, in conjunction with a well-designed teacher handout facilitated students to actively generate their own notes. This is highly effective practice and should be extended.
- Students implement good procedures for storing worksheets. A review of students' copybooks indicated some variation in how students record their learning. The home economics department should agree and implement a system that encourages students to record their learning so that it can be easily referenced.
- In most instances, as a strategy to improve literacy, teachers highlighted key words. Best practice was observed when teachers displayed these words on the board, requested students to record key words, explained these words during the lesson and assessed students understanding of these words at the end of the lesson.
- Spot demonstrations were of a very high standard and were utilised very effectively to develop and refine students' practical skills. Very good monitoring of classwork was evident and oral feedback was delivered. To provide a framework for formative feedback and to enable students to effectively self and peer-assess work, success criteria should be shared with students.

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

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support for Home Economics is very good.
- All students have very good access to Home Economics which is an optional subject at junior cycle and senior cycle. It is good practice that option bands are generated based on students' preferences. It is positive that Home Economics is now a compulsory subject in TY, supporting all students to make an informed subject choice at senior cycle. Senior management should monitor and review class size in TY Home Economics to ensure high quality learner experiences.
- School management promotes a culture of on-going improvement in teaching and learning.
- There are three specialist rooms; two kitchens and one textiles classroom. The home economics team has displayed considerable commitment and enthusiasm in managing and overseeing the new facilities to ensure that they are optimum learning environments.
- The risk assessment templates that are currently in use are not sufficiently detailed and should reflect the multipurpose nature of rooms. An annual risk assessment review should be completed by teachers, signed, dated and shared with senior management. These should be added to the whole-school health and safety statement which is near completion.
- All teachers are members of the Association of Teachers of Home Economics (ATHE) and have attended recent Junior Cycle in-service to support the implementation of the new specification for Home Economics. This has been recorded in department planning documentation.

## **4. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The overall quality of subject planning is good; individual planning for lessons was very good; however, many programme plans are in need of review.
- Good engagement is evident in planning for the newly introduced junior cycle. It is positive to note that teachers reflect and evaluate practice. These reflections have been recorded on first year units of work which can be used to inform future planning to enhance teaching and learning.
- Other plans of work are in need of review. Programme plans should include learning outcomes, teaching methodologies, resources and assessment modes to be utilised. This will facilitate a collective vision of teaching, learning and assessment shared practice.
- Members of the newly formed home economics team are skilled subject-specialists, highly organised and proactive. It is commendable that a 'strengths and challenges' analysis completed by the Home Economics department has informed the focus of an action plan. Understandably, much of the focus of the action plan was on the organisation of new facilities. There is now scope to extend the focus of the action plan to include strategies that continuously seek improvements in teaching and learning.
- It is positive to note that an incremental approach to utilising the design brief process in textiles is in place for students from first year onwards. Careful planning will ensure that all classes will have the opportunity to fully apply the design brief process in the making of a textiles item. Aspects of the design brief process are integrated in food studies from first

year onwards. Planning should ensure that students have the opportunity to incrementally experience all aspects of the design process.

- It is very good practice that minutes of weekly meetings are recorded and shared with senior management. To progress this good practice, teaching and learning should routinely feature on meeting agendas.

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.

## 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;

# **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 formally welcomes this very positive subject inspection report and places on record its deep appreciation of the work and commitment of Home Economics teachers, students and senior management.

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

Subject planning will continue to place a major emphasis on the development of teaching and learning. As a consequence, all recommendations to further improve very good practice will be embraced in full.