

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Guidance

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	De La Salle College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Newtown Waterford
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	649500

Date of Inspection: 20-11-2018



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 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.

The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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	19-11-2018 and 20-11-2018
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of relevant documents • Discussion with principal and key staff • Interaction with students • Meeting with members of the student support team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation of teaching and learning during four class periods • Examination of students' work • Feedback to principal, deputy principals, and guidance counsellors

School context

De La Salle College is an all-boys voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of Le Chéile with a current enrolment of 1103. The school provides Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, Leaving Certificate Applied, and the established Leaving Certificate programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- Overall, teaching, learning and assessment were of a high quality with best practice noted during lessons where students engaged in walking debates, challenging group work and very good reflection on learning activities.
- Overall guidance provision is good with two full-time guidance counsellors effectively leading the guidance curricular programme and providing valuable one-to-one support for students.
- TY students participate in a very good weekly guidance programme while other students receive guidance inputs through modular programmes which are not as comprehensive or effective.
- A highly effective student support structure is operating in the school, junior and senior cycle year heads play a very active role in managing student welfare.
- It is commendable that there is a highly effective whole-school approach to guidance planning; an extensive guidance plan has been prepared, as well as an annual review of the guidance programme and identification of guidance priorities for development until 2021.
- The school has been actively involved in a number of valuable action research whole-school guidance projects exploring areas such as factors contributing to student wellbeing, and the transition from junior cycle to senior cycle.

Recommendations

- Senior management should review the current modular timetabling arrangements for sixth year guidance lessons with a view to allowing students access to more guidance inputs and full access to their Physical Education programme.
- The guidance department should review the curricular content of the junior cycle guidance programme and select potential education and career exploration areas of learning that could be included in the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Framework.
- As part of a differentiated and targeted strategy the whole-school guidance planning team should develop a distinct compensatory modular guidance programme for fifth-year students who did not participate in TY and therefore missed out on the valuable TY guidance programme.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- Overall, teaching, learning and assessment were of a high quality with best practice noted during lessons where students engaged in walking debates, challenging group work, and very good reflection on learning activities.
- Teachers created positive and supportive learning environments which encouraged students to make significant contributions to lessons. In some rooms, the furniture arrangements facilitated students to work collaboratively, quickly and with ease and for the teacher to circulate to support students, while in other rooms it was more difficult to organise and monitor group work.
- Teachers effectively planned lessons. A variety of resources including worksheets and slideshows were successfully used to support learning and engage students in discussions about career skills, work experience, future education options, personality traits, and career self-awareness.
- Most students engaged purposefully with the activities. Best practice was observed when the level of challenge was appropriate and sufficient time was allocated by the teacher to the task.
- Students were observed working purposefully both individually and in pairs. They demonstrated good proficiency in online guidance-related career and education research. Given the limited number of lessons in the modular programmes, it is recommended that students are given further research to complete independently and in advance of lessons in order to facilitate more time for discussion and analysis of the results.
- Students indicated high levels of education and career motivation, citing Law, Accounting, Pharmacy, Veterinary Medicine and Civil Engineering among their interests. They exhibited a good understanding of the education and training pathways.
- In-class assessment of learning was generally effective. Teachers successfully used assessment for learning strategies. These included an activity where students considered what they would like to know at the outset of the lesson and generated appropriate questions about the topic. Students were observed effectively reflecting on their learning, identifying progress made and any remaining gaps in understanding. This is good practice.
- The guidance department uses an appropriate range of guidance-related psychometric tests to support students in self-assessment of their career interests, personal values, abilities and aptitudes.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Overall guidance provision is good. There are two full-time guidance counsellors who effectively lead the guidance curricular programme and provide valuable one-to-one support for students. Students are further supported by one-to-one meetings with the chaplain.
- Many subject teachers support students in making subject choice decisions and provide in-class activities and out-of-school visits that promote careers and further education, especially in Science and Mathematics.
- TY students participate in a very good weekly guidance programme while other students receive guidance inputs through modular programmes which are not as comprehensive or effective. Sixth year students participate in a guidance module for seven weeks during

Physical Education lesson time. In particular, senior management should review the current modular timetabling arrangements for sixth year guidance lessons with a view to allowing students access to more guidance inputs and full access to their Physical Education programme.

- A highly effective student support structure is operating in the school, junior and senior cycle year heads play a very active role in managing student welfare. In addition, the three deputy principals each liaise with one junior and one senior cycle year head. This is very good collaborative team work.
- The co-curricular guidance programme is good. Speakers from various colleges, training centres and career sectors visit the school. Talks are arranged at lunchtime to facilitate all interested students who wish to attend.
- Teachers and students provide a very good range of activities to support holistic development as well as positive mental and physical health. These include mentoring and buddy programmes, TY La Sallian leaders programme, relaxation and meditation for first-year students, youth male choir, chess club, debating, and a wide range of sports clubs.
- There is a very valuable induction programme for incoming first-year students. A dedicated member of staff supports the transition, meets each student individually and assists parents and students with any difficulties which may arise during the transition phase.
- Both guidance counsellors demonstrate a very good commitment to continuing professional development and have attended a large number of beneficial training events in all three aspects of guidance: personal, educational and career. It is positive that senior management supports regular attendance by both guidance counsellors at guidance counselling supervision.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- It is commendable that there is a highly effective whole-school approach to guidance planning. There is an extensive guidance plan indicating Guidance for all, some and a few students which also includes whole-school teaching and learning strategies and approaches to improve literacy, numeracy and assessment. An annual review of the guidance programme has enabled guidance priorities to be identified for development until 2021. This short and long term planning is very good practice.
- The school has been actively involved in a number of valuable action research whole-school guidance projects exploring areas such as factors contributing to student wellbeing, and the transition from junior cycle to senior cycle.
- There is scope to improve the current curricular programme for junior cycle students which is limited to a small number of guidance inputs. As yet no area of learning in guidance has been identified by the guidance team for inclusion in the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Framework. The guidance department should review the curricular content of the junior cycle guidance programme and select potential education and career exploration areas of learning that could be included in the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Framework.
- Some students do not participate in TY and miss out on the valuable TY weekly guidance programme. As part of a differentiated and targeted strategy, the whole-school guidance planning team should develop a distinct compensatory modular guidance programme for fifth-year students who did not participate in TY.
- Management of student guidance files is in line with best practice guidelines regarding data protection, student file storage and file destruction.

- Guidance-related policy development is very good with an up-to-date critical incident management plan, anti-bullying policy, and wellbeing policy.

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 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;