

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in English

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Temple Carrig Secondary School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Temple Carrig Greystones
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	68081J

Date of Inspection: 12-09-2019



**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 met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Dates of inspection	11 and 12 September 2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Meeting with subject co-ordinator• Interaction with students• Examination of students' work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning in seven single and two double lessons• Feedback to individual teachers• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and the English department

School context

Temple Carrig Secondary School is a co-educational school, established in Greystones in 2014 under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin. The school offers the Junior Cycle programme, a compulsory Transition Year, the established Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme. The school's first student intake has now entered sixth year and current enrolment is 814.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- Teaching observed was overall of very good quality, and thorough lesson preparation provided well-structured and supportive learning opportunities.
- Students were engaged and motivated, and overall attained a high standard of work in the lessons observed.
- English is well resourced, and co-curricular provision greatly extends students' experience of the subject.
- The timetable makes good time provision for English, but the distribution of lessons for some junior cycle class groups is not satisfactory.
- Individual and collaborative planning for English is highly effective; the subject department is very well co-ordinated, and reflective practice has been solidly embedded in its processes.

Recommendations

- Teachers should use the very good professional collaboration already in place to further develop effective classroom approaches to the teaching of Shakespearean drama, and to consider ways to strengthen students' sense of responsibility for improving their own learning.
- In designing the school timetable, senior management should ensure the best possible distribution of English lessons throughout the week for all junior cycle class groups.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Nine lessons, including two senior cycle double lessons, were observed, covering all years, levels and programmes, and involving seven of the eight subject teachers. The teaching observed was very good overall, and teachers demonstrated a commendable knowledge of and love for the subject. They were generally very open to considering ways of further developing their practice.
- Very good teacher preparation for lessons was noted. Both materials and activities were well planned and thought through, and informed by a clear sense of the desired learning. Highly effective practice involved the sequencing of lesson activities to bring about deeper student engagement with texts, topics and concepts.
- Classroom interactions were positive and supportive, and teachers effectively modelled an enthusiastic engagement with language and literature in their presentation and investigation of material.
- Skilful questioning was noted in many instances. Directed questions meant that all students were included, and a good range of questions, from basic to probing, prompted students to deeper responses and higher-order thinking. Teachers should consciously ensure that their questioning techniques allow students to develop and extend their opinions and explanations, both to enhance their oral and written communication skills and to deepen their understanding of what constitutes a valid personal response.
- Lesson topics and texts included poetry, drama, film, and both expressive and critical writing. While no single teaching approach dominated, all lessons gave students opportunities to work together and to engage actively with the material. Lesson activities were generally well selected to provide purposeful and productive learning opportunities.
- Shakespearean drama was the focus of a number of lessons. In all of these, teachers paid very close attention to the text to ensure that students understood the language; a senior cycle lesson developed into a rich discussion of dramatic situation and motive, but junior cycle lessons focused on the text more as poetry than drama. While students need to be able to follow the text sufficiently to get a sense of plot and character, it is important that the drama and theatre of the play are given due prominence. To this end, the English department should collectively consider how to further develop effective classroom approaches to the teaching of Shakespearean drama.
- Teachers' use of technology was enhanced by students' access to individual tablet devices, and was generally effective in developing and supporting students' learning. To build on existing practice, teachers should increasingly exploit the potential of technology to foster students' ownership of and responsibility for learning, and to extend the range of material available to assist learning.
- The profile of students in the school justifies high expectations of attainment. In the lessons observed, students demonstrated good levels of vocabulary, an ability to express sophisticated ideas, and a positive disposition towards their school work. An atmosphere of good-humoured diligence prevailed. Students' engagement in learning and attainment of the intended learning was good or very good in all lessons.
- As the evaluation took place early in the school year, the number of students' assignments in folders and copybooks was still small. However, substantial assignments have been completed already, and students' work from previous years was well maintained and accessible to them for revision and consolidation of learning.
- The English department assesses students' work diligently and regularly. Constructive formative feedback is consistently given, and students are made familiar with junior cycle

descriptors and features of quality. More exam-style marking also features quite prominently. Teachers should be wary of over-using this approach or using it too early, as it may not assist students to engage in improving and developing their work.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The time allocation for English in the school timetable is good in all years. However, distribution of lessons across the week for a number of junior cycle class groups is not satisfactory, with the allocation of four lessons timetabled over three consecutive days in some cases, and a triple English lesson in the case of one class group. Such deficiencies should be made good as quickly as possible and, in future timetable design, senior management should ensure the best possible distribution of English lessons throughout the week for all junior cycle class groups.
- English is taught in mixed-ability base class groups throughout. A small level-specific group taking ordinary level may be formed for Leaving Certificate, and placement in this group is by agreement with students, parents and teachers, in line with good practice.
- Deployment of teachers to the subject is very good overall. The majority of teachers of English take both junior and senior cycle class groups, and have a substantial portion of their timetables allocated to English. This enables teachers to view the subject as a continuum of knowledge and skills development from first to sixth year, and this is especially valuable in the context of curriculum change at junior cycle.
- The school provides stimulating learning environments for English. The majority of teachers of English have their own base rooms, all rooms have digital equipment, and most are big enough to provide flexible learning spaces for students to work in groups and to circulate.
- A very good range of co-curricular activities is offered, extending students' experience of English beyond the classroom.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The English department has established highly effective practices that support individual and collaborative planning of very good quality. Co-ordination is distributed among three department members, each with a specific role. Meetings are held very regularly and encompass both organisational and developmental aspects of subject delivery and practice.
- The department plan demonstrates a high degree of reflective practice and a commitment to high standards in teaching, learning and assessment. Planning for junior cycle is based on a good and growing knowledge of the potential of the subject specification to provide rich learning opportunities, and the Transition Year programme is a well-constructed bridge between junior cycle and Leaving Certificate.
- A high level of discussion and collaboration has resulted in the creation of very good year plans, including specific differentiation measures, common assessment practices as far as possible, and the development of effective moderation practices, informally as well as formally through subject learning and assessment review (SLAR) meetings.

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 school was delighted to receive this extremely positive inspection report and found the whole process very affirming. We are considering the two recommendations which were made and are grateful for them.

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

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