

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Science

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Le Cheile Secondary School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Hollystown Road Tyrellstown Dublin 15
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	68083N

Date of Inspection: 22-03-2018



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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 Science 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.

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 2 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, the school has subsequently furnished evidence of compliance with these requirements.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Date of inspection	22-03-2018
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and key staff• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during four class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Le Chéile Secondary School, Tyrrelstown is in its fourth year of operation and caters for a rapidly increasing urban multi-cultural student population, currently standing at 446 students. The school is offering senior cycle to students for the first time in the current school year, including an optional Transition Year programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- Examples of good or very good practice were evident in all the lessons observed and, overall, the quality of teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to very good.
- The best lessons were characterised by clear learning intentions, the use of clear and precise language and terminology, and well prepared tasks for students to complete.
- There was a very positive teacher-student relationship in all the lessons observed.
- The quality of whole-school support for the sciences is very good.
- Teachers generously give their time to facilitate a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities
- The science department is well organised and manages both the day-to-day work of implementing the science curriculums and planning for increasing student numbers.

Recommendations

- It is important that teachers use clear and precise language and terminology during lessons when explaining points of theory and when preparing students to carry out tasks.
- Students should be well prepared in advance to complete tasks and be clear regarding what is expected of them.
- In order to set and maintain standards for content and presentation, there is a need to provide more high-quality written developmental feedback on students' written work.
- It is recommended that the science department extends its work to planning for improvements in curricular outcomes for students.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- Examples of good or very good practice were evident in all the lessons observed and, overall, the quality of teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to very good.
- The best lessons were characterised by clear learning intentions that were appropriately shared with students, the use of clear and precise language and terminology, and well prepared tasks for students to complete. In addition, in the more accomplished lessons, students were well prepared to complete tasks and were clear regarding what was expected of them. It is important that all teachers use clear and precise language and prepare students appropriately to carry out tasks.
- The lessons were well prepared and planned, with appropriate content and a logically sequenced structure. Appropriate pauses to consolidate learning were built in to the lessons and, in the best lessons, the learning was well reviewed and summarised at the close. It is recommended that such a review be carried out at the end of all lessons.
- Teachers worked hard to make lessons student centred and to promote active learning and, in all but a few instances, were successful. For example, in one lesson, the use of group tasks to encourage and support independent learning was excellently managed and students responded accordingly and took ownership of the learning process.
- Teacher movement, during lessons, was generally very good, and involved monitoring and supporting students, assessing their progress and bringing about a differentiated approach to teaching and learning. In two instances, outcomes for students were differentiated also, allowing students to achieve to the best of their ability.
- The quality of teachers' questioning of students varied from satisfactory to very good, with a variety of lower-order and higher-order questions used.
- Students were particularly well challenged in two of the lessons observed, and they responded very well with good support from their teachers. The quality of interaction in these lessons was very good and higher-order discussions featured prominently, giving students very good opportunities to demonstrate the quality of their learning.
- There was a very positive teacher-student relationship in all the lessons observed, students engaged very well in the learning process and they made good contributions to the lessons.
- Teachers were very affirming of students' efforts in class. However, in order to set and maintain standards for content and presentation, there is a need to provide more high-quality written developmental feedback on students' written work.
- The laboratories have been well developed as attractive learning spaces. Students' project work and charts are displayed in the laboratories. In addition, the displays of students' work and of science-related material in the corridors outside the laboratories are very good and serve to promote the sciences.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of whole-school support for the sciences is very good.
- Science is a core subject for first-year students and an optional subject for the remainder of junior cycle. Uptake in second and third year is very good, laying a firm foundation for progression to the sciences in senior cycle.
- Science is a core subject in Transition Year and the proportion of students taking a science subject in senior cycle is very encouraging.
- Laboratory accommodation is very good and all science lessons are held in a laboratory.
- Timetabled allocation to Science is in line with syllabus requirements.
- Senior in-school management has facilitated teachers' continuing professional development and teachers have availed of relevant opportunities.
- There is a good system in place of formative and summative assessment of students, and of reporting on their progress to students' homes.
- Teachers generously give their time to facilitate a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities to promote the sciences and to enhance students' learning.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- A well-organised science department manages the day-to-day functions of planning for curriculum implementation. Planning for the anticipated growth in student numbers is also underway.
- The members of the subject department meet frequently, both formally and informally, and records of meetings indicate that curricular and pedagogical matters are discussed in addition to on-going arrangements to manage the work of the department.
- Overall planning is good and the science folder contains common schedules for course delivery, which also facilitates the use of common assessments to the greatest extent possible. There are also references to interventions to support students with additional educational needs.
- It is recommended that the science department extends its work to planning for improvements in curricular outcomes for students. Strengths and weaknesses in provision should be identified, targets for improvement set on the basis of evidence gained, and actions described and implemented to achieve the stated targets.

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 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.

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 quality of the school's provision in 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;