

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in English

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil Na Tríonóide Naofa
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Doon Co Limerick
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	68121S

Date of Inspection: 06-02-2018



WHAT IS A 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.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Date of inspection	06-02-2018
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 7 class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Scoil na Tríonóide Naofa is a co-educational voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of Catholic Schools, an Irish Education Trust (CEIST). The school offers a range of programmes including the junior cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), and the Leaving Certificate (Established). The school was established in 2013 and there are currently 607 students in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- Overall, a very good quality of teaching, learning and assessment was observed during the evaluation.
- Information and communications technology (ICT) was used effectively by English teachers, but opportunities to explore the use of visualisers in English should be expanded.
- English teachers' classrooms were generally of a very high quality, and some further expansion of this good practice should be explored.
- Overall, there is very good subject provision and whole school support for English.
- There is very good planning and preparation in the English department.
- There has been diligent and professional engagement with the new junior cycle English specification on the part of the English department, and this should be further developed as experience with the new specification continues to grow.

Recommendations

- The school should provide visualisers for English classrooms, within the constraints of available resources.
- Vocabulary displays should be included in all English classrooms.
- A number of areas should be advanced in the context of continued planning for and implementation of the new junior cycle English specification.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- Overall, a very good quality of teaching, learning and assessment was observed during the evaluation. Relationships between teachers and students were very good in all lessons observed. Very good clarity with regard to the learning underway was achieved in lessons, very frequently through the sharing of clear learning intentions.
- Information and communications technology (ICT) was used effectively by teachers. In this context, it is recommended that the school should provide visualisers for English classrooms, within the constraints of available resources. This tool will be very useful in facilitating teacher modelling of writing and the explicit teaching of assessment in English.
- Very good practice in supporting student reading was observed. Pre-reading activities were used in a number of lessons, linking texts to students' prior learning or to their out-of-school lives. In one instance, comprehension strategies to support student reading were displayed in the classroom, which is very good practice, and there was evidence that this incorporated an effective link to students' prior learning in primary school. As an extension of this approach, it is suggested that the English department should visit a local primary school with a view to further accessing the prior learning of students in the areas of vocabulary, comprehension and writing.
- There was a very good balance of teacher talk and student talk in almost all lessons. In these lessons group work operated successfully and enhanced student engagement. On one occasion, further potential to encourage cooperation and exploratory talk was observed. In this instance specific co-operative learning strategies might have been considered to match the activities underway. It is suggested that the English department should examine the explicit teaching of group work in first year, and undertake a subject department discussion of a number of co-operative learning strategies and what they offer in support of active listening, exploratory talk, and opportunities for students to work with others.
- A very good feature of teachers' approaches to the assignment of writing tasks in numerous lessons was the integration of language assignments with the study of literature, thus using literature as a model for students' own writing. Beyond this, models were used in lessons and these included examples of teachers' own writing. Writing was regularly assigned in lessons with consistent evidence of teacher monitoring and the provision of feedback. This feedback will be further developed through the English department's involvement in Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings in the near future. With regard to the collection of the student's texts in junior cycle, a number of areas are worthy of consideration through the development of a brief English policy in this area: the incorporation of a collection of texts as part of first years' experience of writing should be pursued; the storage of the collection should be considered; and modes of feedback for pieces of writing should be expanded, particularly with a view to increasing the emphasis on action taken by students arising from feedback.
- Teachers' classroom environments were generally of a very high quality. As a minor extension of this very good work, it is recommended that vocabulary displays should also be included in all English rooms. This was already evident in some classrooms and would serve to further raise students' word consciousness and highlight the importance of imagination and specificity in the use of vocabulary in the subject.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Overall, there is very good subject provision and whole school support for English. There is very good provision for English on the school timetable. English classes in junior cycle and TY are organised on the basis of mixed ability, while classes in fifth year and in sixth year are organised with mixed ability within levels. This is very good practice.
- The English department has accessed training on the new junior cycle English specification and, in addition, members of the English department have engaged in additional continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities.
- The school has engaged in the first cycle of school self-evaluation (SSE). Evidence of the English department's involvement in support of the literacy school improvement plan was observed. In addition, the school has now moved to engage with effective feedback in the new cycle of school self-evaluation. This work should continue to be advanced.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- There is very good planning and preparation in English, supported by teachers' collective practice. Individual planning for lessons was very good.
- Very good work has been undertaken in the development of a comprehensive subject department plan. The plan incorporates an annual developmental action plan. In addition, there is evidence of considerable diligence and professionalism in the department's engagement with the new junior cycle English specification. Thematic units of work have been developed and it is advised that these should continue to be reviewed as experience of the new specification continues to grow. It is recommended that the following areas should be advanced in the context of continued planning in this area: an increased focus on key learning outcomes in second-year and third-year plans; greater specificity with regard to the summative assessments to be utilised during or at the end of each unit of work, linking these more clearly to key learning underway; continued consideration of how different modes will be reported to parents from first year; and implications for traditional junior cycle assessment arrangements as a result of the incorporation of classroom based assessments (CBAs) in junior cycle English.
- English department plans for senior cycle are of a very good quality. In the case of planning for fifth year and sixth year, it is suggested that a note highlighting the practice of the department with regard to the study of three comparative texts in ordinary level senior cycle should be added to underpin existing good practice in this area.

4. CHILD PROTECTION

During the evaluation, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The school principal is aware that revised child protection procedures for primary and post-primary schools came into effect on 11 December 2017 and arrangements are in place to begin the process of implementing these procedures.
2. The name of the designated liaison person for child protection matters was prominently displayed near the main door of the school / in the school's reception area.
3. The school has a Child Protection policy in place.
4. All teachers are aware that they are mandated persons and of their responsibilities in that regard.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the 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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

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

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management have reviewed the contents of the report and acknowledge its very positive content and take consideration of its recommendations.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

The Board will review and investigate the purchase of equipment mindful of financial resources. The Board will support the English Department in the implementation of the other recommendations.