

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

Subject Inspection in Business Studies

REPORT

School name	Bremore Educate Together Secondary School
School address	Naul Road Balbriggan County Dublin
Roll number	68262N

Date of Inspection: 31-01-2018



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 Business Studies 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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Date of inspection	31-01-2018
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 two one-hour lessons.• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and relevant staff

School context

Bremore Educate Together Secondary School was established in 2016 under the trusteeship of Educate Together. The school is operating in temporary accommodation prior to its proposed move to new purpose-built accommodation in May 2018. Currently, it is providing the Junior Certificate programme for 145 students.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning observed during the evaluation was good.
- All lessons were very well planned with learning intentions introduced and displayed on the board.
- There were some examples of note making but a heavy emphasis was being placed on note taking; this practice indicated that there is scope to develop independent learning skills.
- Homework was assigned in all lessons visited, however, the correction of homework is an area for attention that should be addressed.
- The highly effective practice of modelling students' work was observed in one lesson; this should be developed within the department as it would allow students to view a piece of work in real time and engage in active constructive feedback.
- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support is very good; the arrangements for first-year students to sample Business Studies as an optional subject are also very good.

Recommendations

- The development of effective feedback through the school's online platform is an area to develop in assessing students' work across the business department; this strategy would focus students' attention more on advice about how to improve their learning.
- Independent learning skills should be developed by introducing students to the skill of phrasing key points in their own language; this practice would also develop students' understanding of the subject area.
- Modelling of students' good quality work should be extended across the business department and the tablet devices should be widely used for this purpose; this approach would help to develop students' self-assessment skills.
- The business department should agree a strategy for trialling methodologies in class that members have explored in continuing professional development (CPD); more extensive use

of peer mentoring, as used in the *Droichead* model, would assist in the development of the department's practice in this area.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching and learning observed during the evaluation was good.
- Every student has a tablet device; teachers have created their own lesson content through the online platform which they share with the students.
- All lessons were very well planned with learning intentions introduced and displayed on the board. Good practice in some cases saw success criteria shared with students to guide the attainment of the learning intentions, and a review of progress made in that respect towards the end of the lesson. Revisiting the learning intentions should be a more consistent part of the learning experience.
- Homework was assigned in all lessons during the evaluation. However, consistent practice in correcting homework is an area for attention that should be addressed through the whole-school teaching and learning strand of the SSE process.
- The language register of Business was very well addressed by the teachers in the lessons observed and students were comfortable in using it.
- The development of effective feedback through the online platform is an area to develop in assessing students' work across the business department. Focusing students more on advice provided to them about how to improve their learning would help address learning needs well.
- Very effective group and peer work was observed in all lessons. Students worked successfully in a collaborative manner.
- There was evidence in lessons of teachers placing a strong emphasis on the development of business literacy skills through the creation of a financial key word document; this good practice is closely aligned to the school's SSE literacy plan.
- It is very good practice that students are encouraged and supported to engage in enterprise education. The school has engaged recently in the local enterprise competition and students have experienced success in that regard.
- A vibrant print-rich display was evident in the subject-based classroom. There were good displays of the students' own work.
- There were some examples of note making but a heavy emphasis was being placed on note taking. By phrasing key points in their own language, students' understanding of the subject area would increase.
- The highly effective practice of modelling students' work was observed in one lesson; this strategy should be developed within the business department. It would allow students to view a piece of work in real time and engage in active constructive feedback. As identifying and affirming students' work are key to developing self-assessment skills, the use of the tablet devices should be maximised to support this.
- The school has registered for the *Droichead* programme for newly qualified teachers (NQTs), and peer mentoring and lesson observation have been established as supports for NQTs. Such highly effective practice should be extended to develop teaching and learning within the business department.

- Students' participation in classroom activities was monitored closely by teachers. Good circulation by the teachers among the students improved the participation level. Teachers were alert to providing one-to-one support to students where needed. Classroom management was very good in all lessons and student behaviour was exemplary.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support is very good. Business Studies is an optional subject within the school. All incoming first-year students have an opportunity to study the subject for three weeks as part of a sampling programme of optional subjects.
- Business Studies is provided on an option band against four other subjects. In line with good practice, the option bands are generated by carrying out surveys of the students' subject choices prior to entry and on completion of the subject-sampling programme.
- Resources in the subject-based classrooms are very good, with data projectors, tablet devices, white boards, and internet access provided.
- A shared learning platform is in use that allows teachers to collaborate and share resources with one another and with their students.
- Some teachers are active members of their subject association, the Business Studies Teachers Association of Ireland (BSTAI). It is recommended that all teachers become familiar with the professional development opportunities provided by membership of the subject association.
- School management is supportive of the subject and a very good time allocation is provided across the two years for the subject.
- Teachers are encouraged and facilitated to attend CPD activities by senior management.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall quality of planning coordination and evaluation of the subject is very good. Planning clearly takes students' additional learning needs into account and very positive work has been completed in preparing a small number of students on the Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LP); a programme designed for students with a high moderate to low mild general learning disability and made up of priority learning units and short courses.
- Individual lesson planning was very good. Teachers prepared their own materials due to its being a tablet school and therefore not using a textbook. Collaboration is strong across the business department.
- The subject plan clearly sets out the learning outcomes for students which are linked to the new junior-cycle statements of learning. It would be worthwhile to hyper-link these resources and assessments to the planning documents as the school has high-quality information and communications technology (ICT) resources and is an interactive tablet-enabled school.
- The business department should agree a strategy for trialling methodologies in class that teachers have explored in CPD. The implementation of peer mentoring would assist in the development of the department's practice in this area.
- Formal subject department meetings are held regularly with documented minutes recorded.
- Professional time is provided for the coordination of the junior-cycle business specification.

- Planning documentation includes a good awareness of strategies to be used to address students' additional educational needs. Language support is provided, for example, to students with English as an additional language (EAL).

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.
3. The school has a child safeguarding statement 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, deputy principal and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

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 welcomes the many positive observations made by the Inspectorate. The board is pleased that the report recognises that the “quality of teaching and learning observed during the evaluation was good”. In particular, it was pleased that “the overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support is very good.” The board notes “very effective group and peer work was observed in all lessons. Students worked successfully in a collaborative manner.” The board commends the teachers’ strong emphasis on the development of business literacy skills and the vibrant print-rich display and displays of the students’ own work in the classroom. The board commends the “highly effective practice of modelling students’ work observed” and looks forward to establishing this practice in the school. The board is pleased that “Classroom management was very good in all lessons and student behaviour was exemplary.”

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

The board notes the findings and commits to implementing the recommendations.

The development of effective feedback through the school’s online platform is an area to develop in assessing students’ work across the business department; this strategy would focus students’ attention more on advice about how to improve their learning. The school has engaged CPD for all staff in the use of the schools online platform. The board will continue to support this CPD with a particular emphasis on assessing students work as the school grows and develops. The school is committed to developing a common assessment model for all lessons. Assessment is one of the areas the school is looking at for school self-evaluation. The board has commenced the development of a homework policy.

Independent learning skills should be developed by introducing students to the skill of phrasing key points in their own language; this practice would also develop students’ understanding of the subject area. The board notes the findings and commits to implementing the recommendation as part of the overall Oral Literacy Development in the school.

Modelling of students’ good-quality work should be extended across the business department and the tablet devices should be widely used for this purpose; this approach would help to develop students’ self-assessment skills. The board looks forward to further establishing this practice in the school. The school currently sets time aside in staff meetings to share good practice. Time will be set aside to share this good practice with other teachers. Through subject planning meetings and the JCT Professional Development Time, planning for the modelling of students’ good-quality work will be encouraged on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

The business department should agree a strategy for trialling methodologies in class that members have explored in continuing professional development (CPD); more extensive use of peer mentoring, as used in the Droichead model, would assist in the development of the department’s practice in this area. The board notes the findings and commits to implementing the recommendation. As noted in the report Bremore Educate Together Secondary School currently participates in Droichead process. The school also operate an open door policy for shared learning among staff and engage in external Professional Learning Networks. The Board commits to further promoting collaborative practice, DPD and peer mentoring as the school grows and develops.

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;