

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in English

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Edmund Rice College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Mill Road Blanchardstown
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	68306H

Date of Inspection: 24-09-2019



**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.

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

Date of inspection	24-09-2019
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 three lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Edmund Rice College is a co-educational, Catholic voluntary secondary school under the patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. The school first opened its doors to students in 2017 and has a current enrolment of 135 students. The school is currently in temporary accommodation and offers the Junior Cycle.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from good to very good; instances of excellent practice were in evidence, especially where students were facilitated to engage in exploratory discussion.
- Interactions between teachers and students were supportive and students were regularly affirmed.
- While a few examples of differentiated teaching methodologies to support students with varying needs were observed, in general, this is an area for development.
- Teachers utilised varied and interesting teaching methodologies to engage students in their learning.
- Some good examples of formative feedback were in evidence but students would have benefited from more opportunity to engage in substantial writing assignments.

Recommendations

- The subject department needs to share practices on, and agree common approaches to, the teaching of a process approach to writing and students should have more opportunity to engage with extended writing pieces.
- All students should be enabled to attain required learning outcomes through carefully planned differentiation.
- Teaching approaches that integrate content and language learning should be used to support students with English as an additional language (EAL).

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from good to very good, instances of excellent practice were observed when teachers skilfully linked studied texts with students' own experiences.
- Interactions between teachers and students were supportive, positive and respectful. Students were frequently affirmed and classrooms displayed print-rich environments where the subject was celebrated. This contributed to classrooms that were conducive to learning.
- A good feature of all lessons observed was the clarity with which the learning to be achieved was communicated to students through the sharing of learning intentions. In the best lesson, these were expressed in student-friendly language and revisited at the end of the lesson so that learning was consolidated. However, the merit of students writing out the intended learning should be revisited.
- Very good practice in engaging the interest and attention of students was noted in some lessons such as the use of starter activities; varied and interactive teaching methodologies; the explicit linking of texts with students' own experiences and interests and the use of props to support students in exploring oral language development. The sharing of such practices should take place at team level.
- In some lessons there was very clear evidence of students' enjoyment of learning. This was most obvious when students had the opportunity to engage actively in their learning and when students were facilitated to share their opinions and learning with their peers. Approaches that encourage the student voice within classroom exploratory discussion should be shared among teachers.
- In the best lesson, the teacher invited student participation and response to the texts being studied. In order to support students response to texts teachers should encourage very close and careful reading, and should develop students' understanding of the concept of the valid response by asking them to refer to texts to explain and support their views.
- Some good examples of differentiation were in evidence in classrooms such as when some key words were provided to EAL students and when individual help was given during pair or group work. However, in general the use of differentiated teaching methodologies and activities that could offer appropriate levels of challenge and support to students of mixed ability is an area for development. Moreover, teachers should explore how some students, particularly those whose first language is not English, would benefit from the explicit teaching of vocabulary.
- Individual, group and pair work were regular features of English lessons. Effective practice was observed where students were assigned specific roles within groups, supporting accountability, and given ample time for feedback.
- In many of the lessons observed, students had opportunities to assess and reflect on their learning and, in one example, share their reflections with the class which is very good practice.
- The in-class assessment practices observed were effective in gauging understanding and guiding lesson pace. In one lesson, peer assessment was well managed, and was valuable in developing students' ability to critique their own and others' work constructively. Consideration should be given to facilitating further opportunity to engage students in critical thinking through the use of higher-order questioning.

- There were good examples of information and communications technology (ICT) use in lessons observed, such as the use of video clips and research homework assignments and interactive presentations. Extending opportunities for the creative use of ICT in the English classroom should be explored.
- Some very good examples of formative feedback that supported student improvement were in evidence in sample copybooks. However, students need to engage more often with substantial writing assignments and should be supported in doing so by the use of graphic organisers and practice with the drafting process.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- There is good whole-school support and provision for English, including the areas of timetabling and class organisation. Teachers have good access to digital technology to support teaching and learning.
- The school-wide focus on reflection as part of the school self-evaluation (SSE) process is commendably reiterated in classroom practice.
- Teachers should be facilitated to engage in continuous professional development (CPD) on supporting students whose first language is not English and on extending differentiated teaching strategies to support students of all abilities.
- The school encourages reading through an annual Literacy Week and the future development of a school library is a key priority. Students are also facilitated to engage with the subject outside the classroom through extra-curricular activities such as debating and a drama club.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The school has been in existence for a relatively short time and in this context, a very good beginning has been made to developing teachers' collective practice in the area of planning and preparation. Teachers have discussed material to be covered and common schemes with a thematic approach are reflective of the key skills of the Junior Cycle specification.
- In the context of planning for senior cycle, the newly formed English team should liaise with neighbouring schools regarding the development of and planning for Transition Year (TY) and senior cycle. This process should form part of a new developmental section of the department plan.
- To support the range of abilities, and for students whose first language is not English, it is advised that the department engages in more detailed planning for differentiated resources, such as audio books, and for differentiated methodologies such as structured co-operative learning and the use of images to support learning.

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 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.

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 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 of Edmund Rice College welcome the positive observations around Teaching and Learning reported by the Inspector during the recent Subject Inspection for English. The Board is particularly pleased that instances of excellent practice were in evidence during the inspection. Good examples of formative feedback were highlighted and this is especially pleasing as this is the schools' current SSE focus. The Board also welcomes that the report highlights the positive interactions between teachers and students.

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 of Management supports the English Department in addressing the recommendations made in the Inspection Report.

Where necessary the Board will support Continuous Professional Development for teachers in the areas of differentiation and supporting students who have English as an additional language.