

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

**Subject Inspection in Business**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Coláiste Chiaráin
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Summerhill Athlone County Roscommon
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	68325L

**Date of Inspection: 09-10-2019**



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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 Business 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; a response was not received from the board.

## **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

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	8 & 9 October 2019
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and key staff</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during six lessons</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### School context

Coláiste Chiaráin is a co-educational voluntary secondary school serving Athlone and its hinterland. It was established in 2017 following the amalgamation of St. Joseph's College and St. Aloysius College. It has a current enrolment of 462 students. The school offers the following programmes: Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was good, and this included very good practice in some lessons.
- Learner experiences were characterised by productive engagement, interest and positivity.
- Very effective practice was observed when teachers shared and revisited the intended learning with students in some lessons, as this provided students with a clear focus on what they should be able to do at the end of the lessons.
- Some written formative feedback for improvement was evident in students' copies as a key strategy for developing student learning.
- The overall quality of subject provision and whole school support is very good, and Accounting, Business and Economics are offered at senior cycle.
- The overall quality of planning within the business department is good and teachers' collaborative planning is facilitated through an online platform; action planning and reflective practice require attention.

#### Recommendations

- Teachers should adopt a common approach to the use and assessment of learning intentions in all lessons across the business department.
- The provision of written formative feedback for improvement to students should be further developed by all business teachers.
- Teachers should extend the action plan to identify short, medium and long-term goals for the business department.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT**

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was good; this included very good practice in some lessons. In all lessons observed, the interactions between students and teachers were very respectful, and this facilitated a positive learning environment.
- Learner experiences were characterised by productive engagement, interest and positivity. In all lessons, students interacted purposefully with teachers and peers on topical business themes.
- In all lessons, and in keeping with good practice, learning intentions were shared with students. In highly effective lessons, the teacher revisited the intended learning at the end of the lesson to assess students' understanding. Strategies to assess the achievement of planned learning intentions need to be progressed and embedded in all lessons. It is recommended that all teachers in the business department establish a common approach to the use and assessment of learning intentions.
- A strong emphasis is placed on the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills, as outlined in the subject plan. Teachers worked diligently to ensure that students fully understood the key words and terms used on the resources provided during the evaluation.
- In the majority of lessons, group tasks allowed for meaningful discussion and productive student engagement. In one highly effective lesson, roles such as writer, speaker and researcher were assigned within the groups; this approach supported students' engagement and productivity when undertaking the tasks. Opportunities for students to be actively involved in their learning should be incorporated into all lessons.
- Good use of every day real-life examples engaged students and allowed them to make meaningful links between school and the business world.
- While there was evidence of formal checking of students' homework, there were very few written formative feedback comments noted in students' copies. It is recommended that teachers provide more developmental written feedback to students. Providing students with high-quality written formative feedback is a key strategy for developing students' learning.
- Teachers provided one-to-one support to students, including oral feedback where appropriate.
- There was good use of questioning in all lessons. There was a good balance between differentiated, global and targeted questioning. In some lessons, very effective practice was noted when high-order questioning strategies were used which had the beneficial impact of developing and deepening students' understanding.
- Formal reporting of Business Studies to parents uses the grading system used in the certificate examinations. It is recommended that all teachers in the department now use this terminology when reporting on all in-class examinations. This will ensure that students become familiar and fluent with the language.
- Differentiation strategies are well developed within the department and are a focus for the school self-evaluation (SSE) process; their use was noted particularly in the teaching approaches selected and homework assigned.

### **2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- The quality of whole-school support and subject provision is very good. Timetabling of the subject across all years and programmes is appropriate, with option bands for both junior and senior cycle based on subject choice.

- There is good uptake of business at both junior and senior cycle, with Accounting, Business and Economics provided at senior cycle. Business Studies is an optional subject at junior cycle. First-year students complete an eight-week sampling programme enabling them to make an informed subject choice.
- Business provision in TY involves a rotating module of Accounting, Business and Economics, which allows students to experience and gain valuable insight into the three senior-cycle business subjects.
- Enterprise education is strongly supported within the school. Commendably, a year-long elective module in enterprise has been devised for the TY programme. Students have the opportunity to participate in numerous enterprise activities and experiences with external organisations and businesses.
- Digital resources appropriate to supporting positive student learning experiences are available, and students' access to them is facilitated. The layout of all classrooms visited supports and facilitates collaborative practice.

### **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The overall quality of planning within the business department is good. A newly developed shared online platform is in use that allows teachers to collaborate and share resources within the department and with students.
- The coordination of the subject is undertaken by one member of the subject department and this role is rotated which allows for capacity building. Collaboration is strong across the business department with formal subject department meetings held regularly and minutes recorded.
- Discussions at business department meetings generally focus on organisational matters. It is suggested that deliberations on the effective use of teaching methodologies and assessment strategies that will further enrich student experiences be included going forward.
- The quality of the subject plan is good overall. It contains well-developed schemes of work for each year group and programme. However, it does not contain any reflective component currently. Subject planning would further benefit from reflective practice with an evaluation section at the end of each identified learning area.
- It is praiseworthy that the business department has started an action plan. Teachers should extend the plan to identify short, medium and long-term goals for the business department.
- Teachers are facilitated by management to access opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD). A formal system is in place for teachers to share new learning from attendance at CPD events. This is good practice as it provides another method for capacity building to occur within the department.

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 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
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;