

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

**Subject Inspection in Guidance**

**REPORT**

<b>School name</b>	St. Kevin's Community College
<b>School address</b>	Fonthill Road Clondalkin Dublin 22
<b>Roll number</b>	70042L

**Date of Inspection: 05-12-2019**



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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 Guidance 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

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	04-12-2019 and 05-12-2019
<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 three lessons</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and guidance counsellor</li></ul>

### School context

St Kevin's Community College operates under the auspices of Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB) and participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. Current enrolment is 378 students. The college offers the Junior Cycle, Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good; there was scope for greater use of learning intentions and differentiation in some lessons.
- The quality of provision and whole-school support for Guidance is good, but guidance provision to students in sixth year and in junior cycle requires attention.
- The TY work experience programme is very well coordinated, but the TY community work programme is not adequately monitored, and at the time of the evaluation a significant minority of LCA students had yet to find a work placement.
- The school community is commended on the range of activities it provides to promote student wellbeing.
- The quality of individual planning, preparation and organisation in the guidance department is very good, but the guidance plan does not explicitly refer to the school's DEIS targets.
- Record keeping in the department is of a very high quality; the guidance counsellor conducts a regular audit of the department's work and prepares an annual report for the board of management.

#### Recommendations

- Teachers should plan for the more effective use of learning intentions in lessons and ensure that the resources used are sufficiently differentiated to meet the needs of all students.
- School management, in consultation with the guidance counsellor, should ensure that the guidance modules in sixth year are scheduled in a more consistent and regular manner.
- The guidance department should review the curricular content of the junior cycle guidance programme to include a unit of learning in relation to career exploration.
- School management and the programme coordinator should ensure that all LCA students secure worthwhile work placements in a timely fashion and that there is greater oversight of the TY community work programme.
- The whole-school guidance plan should be reviewed to include more detailed references to how Guidance contributes to the achievement of the school's DEIS targets.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the lessons observed was good. The relationships between the students and their teacher were observed to be respectful, encouraging and supportive.
- All of the lessons observed were well planned and well structured. However, the learning intentions were not always shared with the students or revisited later to consolidate the learning. It is recommended that teachers plan for the more effective use of learning intentions in lessons.
- At times students appeared confused by some of the terminology used during the teacher's presentation. There was scope to highlight and pre-teach key words at the start of lessons, in line with the school's literacy strategy.
- A range of successful strategies was used in a lesson to actively engage students in their learning through individual and collaborative tasks. Commendably, students' prior learning was assessed through an effective group task. Following clear guidelines and instructions, the students then completed an interest inventory and their own independent research on line. It is positive that the teacher moved around the room, assessing students' progress and supporting them individually in their learning. However, there was scope to deepen and consolidate the learning by extending classroom discussion in a minority of lessons.
- It is a positive development that the guidance department has produced its own set of guidance workbooks for senior cycle students. An examination of the resources demonstrated a strong emphasis on routes to higher education, in line with the school's focus on promoting higher expectations for all students. While references were made to Post Leaving Certificate courses (PLCs), apprenticeships and the world of work, there was scope to further develop this section. It is recommended that teachers ensure that the resources used are sufficiently differentiated to meet the needs, abilities and interests of all students.
- A good range of psychometric assessment instruments is used effectively by the school to assist students in the selection of appropriate education and career choices. The guidance counsellor compiles a list of the destinations of all senior cycle students after they have left school, in line with good practice.

### 2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of provision and whole-school support for Guidance is good. The students benefit from the services of a full-time guidance counsellor and part-time chaplain who support students in a dedicated manner. One-to-one guidance counselling is a key aspect of the guidance counsellor's work.
- Guidance is appropriately timetabled in TY, fifth year and LCA. In sixth year the guidance counsellor borrows classes from subject teachers for guidance lessons and career talks as the need arises. It is recommended that school management, in consultation with the guidance counsellor, ensures that the guidance modules in sixth year are scheduled in a more consistent and regular manner.
- The current guidance programme for junior cycle students is limited to guidance counselling and a small number of guidance inputs. It is recommended that the guidance department review the junior cycle guidance programme to include a unit of learning encompassing career exploration, as part of Junior Cycle Wellbeing.

- Work experience is an integral part of the TY, LCA and LCVP programmes in the school, but the quality of oversight varies. Commendably, teachers act as mentors for TY students during their three weeks of work experience, and the placements are very effectively monitored and evaluated.
- This year TY students have also been encouraged to volunteer in a charity or community setting on a Thursday afternoon, but monitoring of this programme is not sufficient to ensure all students are participating. It is recommended that school management and the programme coordinator ensure that there is greater oversight of this community engagement.
- LCA students are timetabled for work experience one day a week, but at the time of the evaluation a significant minority of LCA students in both year groups reported that they had not yet found a work placement. It is recommended that school management and the programme coordinator put the necessary arrangements in place to ensure all LCA students secure worthwhile work placements in a timely fashion.
- It is positive that senior cycle students benefit from the Business in the Community scheme. Close links have been established with local companies who assist students with CV preparation, mock interviews, on-site visits and work experience. Students also avail of the supports provided by the Clondalkin Access Network and the South Dublin County Partnership. Commendably, they are accompanied to a wide range of education and career fairs, college open days, seminars on apprenticeships and the world of work.
- A comprehensive induction programme is in place to ensure a successful transition for students into the post-primary school. This includes Easter and summer camps, a student mentoring programme and subject sampling.
- In line with good practice, weekly student support team meetings are attended by senior management, the guidance counsellor, the special educational needs coordinator, and the key personnel involved in home-school-community-liaison, school completion and positive behaviour supports. Effective links have been established with the relevant support agencies.
- The school community is commended on the range of activities and supports it provides to promote student wellbeing, often on an informal basis. Consideration should be given by the school to establishing a Wellbeing team on a more formal basis.

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

- Planning, preparation and organisation in the guidance department are of a very good quality. All guidance-related policies are in place and up to date.
- The guidance counsellor plays a key role as coordinator of action planning for successful transitions and progressions, a key theme in the school's DEIS plan. However, the guidance plan does not refer explicitly to the school's DEIS targets. It is recommended that the guidance plan be reviewed to include more detailed references to how Guidance contributes to the achievement of the school's DEIS targets.
- Record keeping in the department is of a very high quality. It is commendable that the guidance counsellor conducts a regular audit of the department's work and an annual report is presented to the board of management.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and guidance counsellor 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 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;