

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

**Subject Inspection in English**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	St. Kevin's Community College
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Fonthill Road Clondalkin Dublin 22
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	70042L

**Date of Inspection: 29-11-2016**



### **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. Learning, teaching 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 DURING THIS INSPECTION

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	29-11-2016
<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 seven class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

St. Kevin's Community College is an inclusive school with an enrolment of 341 students. It operates under the auspices of the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB) and participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action plan for educational inclusion. The college offers Junior Certificate (JC), Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), the Transition Year (TY) programme, Leaving Certificate (LC), Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- Interactions among students and between students and teachers are respectful and positive and support a productive learning environment.
- There are some very good examples of constructive and formative feedback but more widespread consistency is needed across the English team.
- The subject and the team are very well supported by an impressive library and enthusiastic school librarian who actively promotes reading for pleasure in the school.
- There is evidence of collaboration within the English team but formalisation of important aspects of subject planning are needed.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strategic implementation of differentiated teaching strategies and activities are needed in all lessons in order to cater for the varying needs and abilities of students.
- Students need to be given further independent and active learning opportunities.
- Subject planning needs to reflect collaboration in the areas of summative assessment practices and schemes of work for the purpose of improving students' learning.
- The analysis and subsequent documentation of attainment in summative and state examinations to inform planning for improvement should be included in the subject plan.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning in the school was generally good. Instances of very good and excellent practice were also in evidence.
- Teachers have engaged in a range of continuing professional development activities and recognise how intrinsic this is to their work.
- Relationships and interactions in classrooms are positive and respectful, supporting a productive learning environment.
- Teachers through their own enthusiasm for, and enjoyment of their subject area, motivate students to engage in and enjoy their learning.
- In the majority of lessons observed, teachers identified and prepared in advance resources suitable for the specific learning intentions of each lesson and subsequently shared these with their students. In the best lessons, learning intentions were referred to as the lesson progressed and were reviewed so that learning was consolidated. The employment of these good practices in all English lessons is encouraged.
- It is recommended that English teachers meaningfully differentiate content and activities in order to cater for the varying needs and abilities of students.
- Teacher exposition was the dominant methodology in the majority of lessons observed which in turn led to a significant degree of student passivity. It is recommended that teachers maintain a balance between their own input and productive student participation and response. To this end, the discussion and implementation of active-learning methodologies at subject team level is urged.
- In addition to this, it is recommended that students be given more opportunities to take responsibility and negotiate their own learning and so increase their autonomy as learners.
- Teachers used a range of questioning techniques effectively to create a mind-set at the beginning of class which is good practice.
- In some lessons, the use of *show-me* boards was observed to assess student learning which is commendable. Wider use of such assessment-for-learning methodologies is encouraged.
- In the lessons observed, teachers regularly provided students with constructive oral feedback. However, more consistency regarding the provision of meaningful formative feedback on students' written work across the department is encouraged.

### 2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The English team is supported by the school. This can be seen in the whole-school SSE initiatives that encourage teaching that is engaging and challenging and promote a culture of learning in the school.
- Timetabling allocation in English is in need of review so that classes avoid having the subject twice in the same day.
- The senior management team supports teachers' continuing professional development as a means of improving teaching and learning in the school.

- The subject is very well supported by an impressive library and a committed school-librarian who works in conjunction with the English team to promote co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that actively promote reading for pleasure.

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

- There is evidence of some collaboration among the English team members but significant aspects of this collaboration, particularly regarding subject planning, needs to be formalised.
- Teachers recognise the value of building whole-staff capacity and are willing to share their expertise with other teachers in the school. This can be seen in the rotation of the role of the co-ordinator and the sharing of resources.
- Schemes of work, at both junior and senior levels, need to reflect collaboration at subject team level as a means of improving student learning across the department.
- Subject planning at senior cycle should ensure that learning outcomes are linked with teaching methodologies and assessment practices.
- The English team need to approach assessment as a collaborative endeavour in order to support students' learning. To this end, a systematic implementation of common house examinations should take place as soon as possible.
- There is some evidence that is indicative of the team's engagement with assessment data from the state examinations. However, there is significant scope for improvement in how that data is analysed and used to set targets and plan for improvement.
- The English team plan collaboratively with the school self-evaluation (SSE) team and the JCSP team for activities that specifically aim to enhance literacy on a whole-school basis. However, the implementation of literacy initiatives inside the classroom is an area for development.

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; 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 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;