

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in English

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Lucan Community College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Esker Drive Lucan Co Dublin
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	70080T

Date of Inspection: 22-11-2016



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

Dates of inspection	22-11-2016
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 eight class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Lucan Community College is a multi-denominational, co-educational school under the aegis of Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board. It serves a large suburban catchment area and has an enrolment of 873 students. The school offers a compulsory Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), in addition to the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning observed was either good or very good. Instances of excellent practice were evident in some lessons.
- Interactions in classrooms were respectful and positive and supported a productive learning environment.
- Most classrooms promoted a print-rich environment that promoted the subject and celebrated students' work.
- Students were given opportunities to reflect on their learning and to assess their progress.
- The English team offers an impressive range of co-curricular and cross-curricular activities that promote student engagement in the subject.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should maintain a balance between their own input and productive student participation and response by providing students with more active-learning experiences.
- More regular provision of constructive and developmental feedback on students' work is needed.
- The English team should collectively further develop a system of common assessments in the house examinations.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The teaching and learning in the lessons observed ranged from good to very good with instances of excellent practice noted in some lessons.
- In all lessons observed, interactions among students and between students and teachers were respectful and contributed to a positive learning environment.
- Teachers generally had high expectations of students' work and behaviour, and communicated these expectations effectively to students.
- Almost all classrooms displayed a print-rich environment that promoted the subject and celebrated students' work.
- In the best lessons, teachers designed and prepared in advance a sequence of learning tasks and activities suitable for the specific learning intentions of the lessons.
- Lessons were generally well planned. Learning intentions were used in most lessons to frame the lesson content and learning activities. However, teachers are encouraged to return to those learning intentions during and toward the end of lessons, to consolidate the learning.
- In the majority of lessons, students were motivated to learn and this was often linked to having a clear sense of attainable learning outcomes.
- Teacher exposition was the dominant methodology in the majority of lessons visited. Therefore, it is recommended that students are given more opportunities to work independently and collaboratively in a purposeful manner. This could be achieved by developing good practices for effective group work and achieving a balance between the teacher's input and students' activity.
- In many lessons teachers used global and targeted questions effectively to assess learning. One teacher made use of the 'lollipop stick' strategy to good effect.
- Students should be given more opportunities to ask more questions and, where possible, be facilitated to suggest possible solutions. This will bolster their belief in themselves as learners and allow them the confidence to risk incorrect responses and accept that mistakes are part of the learning process.
- Assessment for learning strategies, specifically in the area of student reflection, were noted in many lessons which is commendable.
- Teachers should formulate, at subject team level and in collaboration with the whole-school homework and assessment policy, guidelines that support wider use of formative feedback for students.
- In the best lessons, teachers purposefully developed literacy skills, corroborating the good school self-evaluation initiatives set out by the Language and Literacy Committee. More consistent implementation of these good practices is encouraged across the department.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Overall, there is good provision for English on the school timetable.
- The principal, with the support of the Literacy, Language and Numeracy team, uses the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) process to promote literacy in learning and facilitates teachers to engage with this as a structural process with a focus on improving teaching, learning and assessment.

- The school promotes the view that the teaching and learning of English extends beyond the classroom and offers students an impressive range of cross-curricular and co-curricular activities.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Teachers recognise that continued professional development and collaboration are intrinsic to their work and teachers actively and productively engage with continuous professional development.
- Teachers are willing to share their expertise with others in the interest of building whole-staff capacity, evident in the rotation of both the position of subject coordinator and the teaching of different programmes. To develop this good practice further, teachers should ensure that teaching and learning are the primary focus of subject team meetings. Consideration should also be given to ways of sharing some of the good practices observed, such as peer observation.
- Though collaboration among the team has been noted, particularly in the area of subject planning at junior cycle level, there is scope for improvement in other areas. For example, teachers should discuss collaboratively senior cycle schemes of work and how best to link course content with learning outcomes and assessment practices.
- Further development of common house exams is also recommended so that English teachers can demonstrate that their approach to assessment, at both junior and senior levels, is a collaborative endeavour that supports students' learning and facilitates planning for improvement.

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

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 of Lucan Community College welcomes the English Subject Inspection report. It acknowledges the findings of the report in particular the quality of teaching and learning observed, the respectful and positive interactions in the classrooms, the print-rich environment in the rooms and the reflective learning opportunities for students.

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

- 1 The English department will discuss and devise a plan to develop a more formal system of common assessment in the house examinations –beginning with some Tear group house exams Summer 2017.
- 2 The English Department members will make a conscious effort to revisit learning objectives during and towards the end of lessons.
- 3 To help students to work independently and collaboratively the English Department members will make a conscious effort to include group work where appropriate in lessons throughout the academic year.
- 4 English Teachers will work on a strategy to given students more opportunities to ask more questions in class to help them to risk incorrect responses and accept that mistakes are part of learning process.
- 5 The English Department will work to formulate a policy of formative feedback for students re work where appropriate.
- 6 The English Department will continue to work to implement any initiatives set out by Language and Literacy Committee as has previously been the case.
- 7 Time will be assigned in English Subject Department meetings for the discussions of issues in relation to teaching and learning and the sharing of resources and the continuation of good practice already established in classrooms to date.
- 8 The English Department have agreed to use a range of different questioning methods (e.g. use of lollipop sticks) in classes where appropriate to facilitate teaching and learning.

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
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;