

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

**Subject Inspection in Geography**

**REPORT**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Ainm na scoile /<br/>School name</b>       | Marino College                            |
| <b>Seoladh na scoile /<br/>School address</b> | 14-20 Marino Mart<br>Fairview<br>Dublin 3 |
| <b>Uimhir rolla /<br/>Roll number</b>         | 70250S                                    |

**Date of Inspection: 01-05-2018**



---

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

## **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>Date of inspection</b>  | 01-05-2018   |
| <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 class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul> |

### School context

Marino College operates under the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb). It comprises a post-primary school with a current enrolment of 246 (114 girls and 132 boys), and a college of further education with 339 students on a separate campus. The school offers the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), optional Transition year (TY), the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and the Leaving Certificate programme. Marino College participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- Teaching, learning and assessment were good overall; some areas for improvement were identified in relation to facilitating greater student engagement with learning and providing sufficient challenge for all students.
- In almost all lessons, questioning was used effectively to establish the level of students' prior knowledge, introduce new concepts, and assess learning.
- Subject provision and whole-school support for Geography is satisfactory overall; student access to the subject at junior cycle is in need of review.
- Due to technical difficulties with students' tablet devices, a minority of students could not access their geography text book and some of their work.
- Overall, collaborative planning and preparation for Geography are good; the geography teachers meeting formally and informally and work well as a team.
- The senior-cycle schemes of work are satisfactory; the teaching of some topics does not always follow a logical sequence and the time allocated to the teaching of some topics is insufficient.

#### Recommendations

- Teachers should allow sufficient opportunity within lessons for students' individual or collaborative engagement with the content.
- Teachers should be more cognisant of students' ability and stage of learning and should plan activities and assessment which include appropriate levels of challenge for all.
- Senior management in consultation with geography teachers should review current access to Geography and consider providing a short taster programme to facilitate more informed subject choice in the junior cycle.
- School management should ensure that the current issues experienced by students in relation to their tablet devices are addressed as a matter of urgency.

- The planned teaching programme in senior cycle should be reviewed to ensure a logical progression of topics and the current time allocation to teaching certain topics should be amended in line with the syllabus guidelines.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

- Teaching, learning and assessment in the lessons observed were good overall; areas for improvement were identified in relation to facilitating greater student engagement with learning and to providing sufficient challenge for all students.
- Very effective student participation and learning were observed in most lessons. Students engaged individually or collaboratively through use of mini white-boards or pair work followed by peer assessment. These effective strategies aided students' understanding and allowed them to consolidate their learning. In a few instances, however, there was less effective student participation with students being overly passive in their learning.
- Questioning was used effectively in almost all lessons to establish students' prior knowledge, introduce new concepts and assess learning. In a few instances, a variation in questioning strategies would have facilitated greater inclusion of all students.
- Student learning and progression were observed to be less effective where there was an over-emphasis on teacher delivery of the content, with students note taking in the main. In these instances, limited opportunities were provided for students to engage with the key learning and to progress their understanding. Teachers should allow sufficient opportunities within lessons for students to actively engage and develop a deep understanding of the topics studied.
- Learning intentions were shared effectively with the students. However, there was scope to use the learning intentions more effectively to guide and assess learning.
- In all lessons, very good student behaviour was observed and positive interactions between students and teachers were evident.
- In a few instances, students were suitably challenged through questioning and activities. However, there was scope in almost all lessons to further challenge students. Teachers should be more cognisant of students' ability and stage of learning and should plan activities and assessment which include appropriate levels of challenge for all.
- The written work reviewed showed effective monitoring and correction in all lessons. Most effective practice was noted where students were provided with detailed formative comments to progress their learning. Teachers should further extend this good practice on longer pieces of written work.

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

- Subject provision and whole-school support for Geography are satisfactory, overall. Timetabling in both junior and senior cycles is in line with syllabus guidelines. There is a good provision of resources, with teacher-based classrooms equipped with suitable information and communications technology (ICT) resources.
- TY students study Heritage Studies for two periods a week throughout the year. Currently, the module has insufficient time allocation for Geography. The geography teachers should amend the current TY programme and offer equal weighting to Geography within the

module to ensure that students get a broad geographical experience and to help promote uptake of the subject in senior cycle.

- Geography is an optional subject in both junior and senior cycles. However, it is not provided for first-year students currently. Students choose their subjects prior to entering first year. Senior management in consultation with geography teachers should review current access to Geography in junior cycle; a short taster programme should be considered to facilitate more informed subject choice in the junior cycle.
- Students use tablet devices for learning, accessing textbooks and, in some instances, for submitting work. During the inspection, a minority of students did not have access to their tablet devices due to technical difficulties. Senior management should address this issue as a matter of urgency.

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

- Overall, planning and preparation for Geography are good. Teachers' collaborative planning is effective; the geography teachers plan formally and informally for teaching the subject, including providing opportunities for students to engage in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. A shared electronic folder is used for teachers to plan and share resources.
- Commendably, teachers are participating currently in a team-teaching pilot programme. Through engagement with continuing professional development (CPD), they are exploring different models of this provision best suited to meeting the needs of the students.
- It is very good practice that the geography teachers plan collaboratively in conjunction with the learning support team for setting subject specific targets for students with special educational needs (SEN).
- Valuable opportunities to engage in geographical investigations and local field studies have been provided for students of some year groups. The geography department should extend this very good practice and build these opportunities into schemes of work for each year group, to afford all students a broader geographical experience.
- Schemes of work in junior cycle are of a good standard. However, planning for implementing the new junior-cycle specification has not yet begun. Geography teachers should plan collaboratively to implement the new specification.
- The senior cycle schemes of work are satisfactory. Teachers have adopted a non-linear approach to the delivery of the syllabus; while, in general, this is good practice, topics in some instances lack a logical progression. The time allocated to the teaching of some topics is insufficient at present and is having a negative impact on learner experience. The planned teaching programme for senior cycle should be reviewed to ensure a logical progression of topics and the current time allocation should be amended in line with the syllabus guidelines.

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.

## **Appendix**

School response to the report

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

### **Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The main findings were very positive, including:-

- Teaching and learning were good overall
- Questioning was used effectively
- Subject provision is satisfactory
- Collaboration and preparation for Geography are good
- Very good practice that the geography teachers plan collaboratively and in conjunction with learning support team
- Geographical investigations and field trips are provided
- Team teaching is being engaged with and supported through CPD

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

The board welcomes the recommendations in the report and commits to the implementation as follows:

Subject provision will be reviewed in the next academic year.

Management are creating a plan to aid parents replace some of the older tablets, this is in conjunction with the company that manages the devices.

The subject department, in conjunction with school management, are examining subject planning for Senior and Junior Cycle. They have attended the in-service relating to the new Junior Cycle and look forward to implementing the new approaches.

## 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;   |