

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Home Economics

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Coláiste Gleann Lí Post Primary School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Clash Tralee
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	70550H

Date of Inspection: 16-11-2016



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 Home Economics 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	15 and 16 November 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 two class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Coláiste Gleann Lí is a co-educational, second-level school managed by Kerry Education and Training Board (ETB), with a current enrolment of 143 students. It is part of the Delivering Equality of Educational Opportunity (DEIS) action plan for educational inclusion. Junior cycle students follow the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) and senior cycle have the option of Leaving Certificate or Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching in observed lessons was good.
- Classroom atmosphere was conducive to learning, supported by very good teacher-student relations.
- Provision and support for Home Economics are good, with some areas for development identified.
- Home Economics is a popular choice amongst students, with almost half of all current students studying the subject.
- Extensive teacher resource files are testament to the time and energy devoted to planning and preparing for teaching and learning.
- A variety of assessment modes are planned and provided for, particularly in junior cycle.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Further consideration should be given to: the use of effective questioning; the management of class discussions; and the staging of teacher inputs during practical, food-studies lessons.
- Timetabling in senior cycle should be reviewed to ensure that the exploration of the Leaving Certificate food studies assignments can be accommodated as intended for fifth year and sixth year groups and also to ensure that students in both year groups have the sufficient opportunity/contact time to engage with other aspects of the syllabus.
- Records of work completed as part of formal planning time should be maintained, to include documentary evidence associated with evaluation and review activities undertaken by the subject department.
- Programmes of work could be further developed in line with the advice offered in the report.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching in observed lessons was good. The implementation of recommendation and suggestions provided below will further support student learning.
- Students were informed of the plan for each lesson. It was positive that this was grounded in learning intentions that emphasised student participation and learning.
- Significant efforts were made to make learning interesting, relevant and fun for the students.
- A highly student-centred approach was evident, with questioning noted as the key involvement strategy. It is recommended that further consideration be given to the use of questioning, with a particular focus on the management of student answering.
- Discussion was also regularly used to involve students. It was recommended, with a view to ensuring a fuller realisation of stated learning intentions, that this strategy be better managed.
- Collaborative learning opportunities were provided in all lessons. Related tasks were carefully planned and organised, well managed and thoroughly processed.
- In practical food studies, it was evident that students would have benefited from a more staged delivery of direction and support.
- There was a positive key word emphasis in all lessons, with some attention also paid to the development of students' numeracy skills.
- Review and recapitulation activities punctuated lessons, highlighting the teacher's consciousness of the importance of checking for understanding before progressing on. Students demonstrated good learning at these junctures.
- It was recommended that better provision be made for the inclusion and participation of students for whom English is a second language.
- Classroom atmosphere was conducive to learning, supported by very good teacher-student relations. Classroom displays celebrated and acknowledged students' participation, learning and achievement.
- It was noted that there is scope for more teacher correction of homework assignments, to include greater provision of formative comment.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Provision and support for Home Economics are good, with some areas for development identified.
- Home Economics is a popular choice amongst students, with almost half of all current students studying the subject.
- Overall, timetabling is very good. However, the co-timetabling arrangements in senior cycle should be reviewed to ensure that the exploration of the Leaving Certificate food studies assignments can be accommodated as intended for fifth year and sixth year groups and also to ensure that students in both year group have the sufficient opportunity/contact time to engage with other aspects of the syllabus.
- Access to Home Economics is very good, enhanced by: a subject-sampling programme at the beginning of first year; senior cycle subject bands that are informed by student preferences; and the placement of traditionally female or male associated subjects on different bands. While subject bands are set at junior cycle, pre-entry surveys are periodically used to verify that the majority of students are accommodated.
- A suitably qualified and experienced teacher teaches the subject.

- The subject is well resourced, although it was advised that the positioning of the information communication technology (ICT) hardware in the home economics kitchen needs further consideration.
- The well-constructed, subject-specific section of the school's health and safety statement should be amended to reflect the dual-purpose nature of the room. It follows that class rules should then be amended accordingly.
- Management is committed to supporting the continuing professional development (CPD) of all teaching staff. It is clear that the home economics teacher engages in ongoing CPD related to Home Economics, teaching and learning and providing for students with special educational needs (SEN).

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Good quality planning and preparation was evident in subject department planning, programme planning, and lessons.
- It was advised that the subject department maintain records of all formal subject department work undertaken. These should provide details of the areas under enquiry or consideration, the related decisions, and the resulting action plans.
- There is scope to strengthen the documentary evidence associated with evaluation and review activities undertaken by the subject department, be that, for example, the analysis of students' progression and achievement, or the identification of the subject's strengths, areas for development, opportunities or potential threats.
- Programmes of work are in place for all year groups, and these possess a number of positive features. It was highlighted that these are working documents and should, therefore, be treated accordingly. Regular annotation, which would inform annual review, was suggested for consideration.
- It was noted that programmes of work could be further developed to provide more topic-specific information relative to resources, methodologies, assessment and homework. It was suggested that the end-of-year 'blitz' approach to senior cycle journal completion be kept under review, and that provision be made for greater variety in relation to junior cycle, practical, textile studies projects. It was advised that it would be beneficial to reconsider the programme plan for the current combined fifth and sixth year class.
- Extensive teacher resource files are testament to the time and energy devoted to planning and preparing for teaching and learning.
- It was suggested that students be encouraged and supported to systematically file the very valuable materials that they are provided with.
- A variety of assessment modes are planned and provided for, particularly in junior cycle. It is very positive to note that it is intended that the grade provided on future Christmas and summer reports will be aggregated to reflect students' achievements in the different examinable components of the subject.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject teacher 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
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;