

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Business subjects

REPORT

School name	Glenart College
School address	Coolgreaney Rd Arklow Co Wicklow
Roll number	70740M

Date of Inspection: 06-03-2020



**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 Business subjects 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 of the school 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

Dates of inspection	05 & 06-03-2020
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 double and one single lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Glenart College is a co-educational school with a current enrolment of 431 students. The school is involved in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action plan. The school offers Business Studies in the Junior Cycle programme and Business in the Leaving Certificate. Business education is compulsory in the school's optional Transition Year (TY) programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed ranged from very good to good; a highly student-centred learning environment enabled students to effectively engage in and enjoy their learning.
- In junior cycle lessons, there was clear evidence that students' key skills were enhanced through well-planned lesson activities.
- Business teachers are using good formative assessment practices to guide students in their learning; further enhancement of these practices and the consistent assignment of homework are areas to be further developed.
- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support for business education is very good.
- The very good planning, reflective and collaborative team-work within the business department supports the provision of rich learning experiences for students.

Recommendations

- To further enhance formative assessment practices, the development of success criteria linked to learning intentions and the review and consolidation of lesson content should be used more widely.
- Business teachers should collectively decide and implement consistent practice in the assignment of homework and ensure that students are afforded a variety of homework tasks.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching and learning as observed ranged from very good to good. The highly student-centred learning environment provided in lessons enabled students to engage in and enjoy their learning.
- All lessons were well planned and provided a good structure to facilitate incremental learning. It was evident that, in the planning of lessons, business teachers took cognisance of students' identified learning styles to ensure the lesson activities both engaged and motivated students in their learning. Throughout the evaluation, a good range of teaching methodologies including pair work, role play, group tasks and student-teacher discussions was observed.
- In all lessons, teachers' articulated learning intentions centred on what the student would learn in the lesson. The linking of learning intentions to success criteria that focus on how students could demonstrate the learning achieved is an area that could be further developed. As some lessons concluded, students reflected on what they learned and set goals for their next lesson. This very good practice should be used more widely throughout the business department.
- Teachers skilfully made tangible links between lesson content and business activity in the local, national and international economy. Students are also sometimes encouraged and supported to participate in enterprise activities in the school, such as the school's Christmas fair day. At senior cycle, teachers have forged very good cross-curricular links between Business and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.
- Good digital video resources were used in lessons. In a Junior Cycle lesson, students demonstrated good digital technology skills while completing their classroom-based assessment.
- In junior cycle lessons, there was clear evidence that skills such as communication, working with others, managing self and using digital tools were being enhanced through lesson activities.
- Classroom management in all lessons was very good. Relationships and interactions in the classroom were supportive of productive student learning. As students worked on tasks, teachers circulated checking on their progress and provided good one-to-one support.
- The student voice was a strong feature in most lessons. In a small number of instances, further opportunities for students to articulate their views and knowledge could be provided. In all lessons, students demonstrated high levels of interest and participation and were competent in reporting and presenting the outcomes of their learning activities.
- In all lessons, teachers used good questioning strategies that allowed students to make links with prior learning, demonstrate their knowledge and share viewpoints. In a small number of lessons, higher-order questioning strategies were used effectively to develop students' critical thinking skills. Very good practice was observed in a lesson where the teacher and students in partnership modelled a typical answer to a question.
- Homework was assigned in all lessons observed. However, a review of student journals and copybooks indicated that the assignment of homework is not always consistent. It is advisable that students receive an appropriate quantity and variety of homework tasks to embed and develop their learning, understanding and key skills. Business teachers should

consider their practice in homework allocation and aim for consistent practice throughout the business department.

- Formative assessment practices such as providing students with feedback on their work are well advanced within the business department. Very good practice was observed where students' homework and assessments was returned with affirming and formative written comments which provided students with direction as to how they could improve their work.
- Students are encouraged to take certificate examinations at the highest level subject to ability. Teachers review students' attainment in certificate examinations. It is advised that student attainment should also be reviewed using base-line assessment data available in the school.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support for business education is very good. Management's support for co-curricular activities such as business-related educational trips and links with local businesses helps to foster a positive learning culture in business education.
- All first-year students have the opportunity to sample Business Studies in a short taster programme. The uptake of Business Studies is increasing. Most students continue to Leaving Certificate with business education from Junior Cycle, as do a number of students who have experienced business education in TY.
- In most classrooms, very good business materials were displayed on walls for the range of subjects and topics being taught. The group seating formats in all classrooms was good as it enabled students to engage in co-operative learning activities.
- The use of digital learning technologies by teachers is actively promoted by senior management. The business department's shared electronic folder is a very good repository of information, planning documentation and resources to support teaching and learning in the classroom. Currently, an online platform to share resources with students is in development.
- Teachers are facilitated by management to access opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD). During the evaluation it was evident that outcomes from whole-school CPD in formative assessment and active learning methodologies are being embedded in teaching and learning practices in business education. Teachers are member of their subject association, the Business Studies Teachers' Association of Ireland which facilitates networking opportunities with business teachers in other schools.
- To increase parents understanding of the assessment framework that supports the Junior Cycle programme, reports to parents have been developed to reflect the Junior Cycle specification and assessment guidelines. Good assessment for learning principles underpin the school's assessment policy which is currently in development.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The very good planning, reflective and collaborative team-work within the business department supports the provision of rich learning experiences for students.

- Subject department meetings are held regularly and a range of relevant topics including teaching and learning are discussed by the business team. Commendably, business teachers regularly reflect on what is working well in the provision of business education in the school and what aspects require further development.
- The overall business subject plan is comprehensive and is a very good reference document on how business education is enacted in the school. Of particular merit are the detailing of teaching and learning strategies for students with additional educational needs and the business department's planned actions to progress DEIS action targets, including classroom practices to progress the school's improvement targets in numeracy, literacy and formative assessment.
- The detailed curriculum subject plans developed for the delivery of each business subject are of a very high quality. Teachers have made use of and adapted Junior Cycle for Teachers resource materials materials to suit their own context, including the needs and abilities of students in both Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate. The detailing of specific learning experiences and resources for each unit of learning is particularly good in the Business Studies curriculum plan. Commendably, teachers use the curriculum plans as working documents, wherein reviews and comments are made on the success or otherwise of learning experiences.
- The business module within the TY programme is well designed. From a review of planning documentation and in discussion with TY students, it was evident that business education is delivered in a way that supports the key aims and objectives of the TY programme. The module emphasises the development of students' enterprise skills and business knowledge. As Enterprise is the core element in Business Studies and in TY, future planning for TY business modules may need to be adapted to build upon students' learning experiences from Junior Cycle.

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 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
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;

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 Glenart College welcomes the recommendations set out in the inspection report as a means of developing and expanding on the existing good practice of the Business team. The Board was very pleased that the high standard of teaching, learning and assessment was acknowledged.

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 Business Department and all other subject departments will continue its collaborative work on developing consistent practice in the assignment of homework.