

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

**Subject Inspection in Business**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	St. Anne's Community College
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Killaloe County Clare
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	70901K

**Date of Inspection: 11-03-2020**



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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 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; a response was not received from the board.

## **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>Dates of inspection</b>	10 & 11 March 2020
<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 five lessons</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### School context

St. Anne's Community College, Killaloe is a co-educational post-primary school with a current enrolment of 560 students. It is operated under the auspices of the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LMETB). The school offers the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational programme (LCVP) along with the Leaving Certificate programme.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was good with highly effective practice observed in some lessons.
- Student learning experiences were most positive when teachers used active learning methodologies which facilitated students to take ownership of their learning.
- There was evidence in all lessons observed of teachers placing an emphasis on the development of students' business literacy and numeracy skills.
- Subject provision and whole-school support are very good; there is good uptake of business at junior and senior cycle with Accounting and Business offered at senior cycle.
- Enterprise education is strongly supported within the school; students have the opportunity to participate in numerous enterprise activities and experiences.
- The overall quality of planning within the business department is satisfactory; the development of junior cycle units of learning requires attention and the TY business plan needs further development.

#### Recommendations

- Teachers should optimise all opportunities for students to be actively involved in lessons and take ownership of their learning.
- At junior cycle, teachers should devise units of learning based on strands and learning outcomes from the Business Studies specification with additional detail for all year groups.
- The TY business plan and scheme of work need to be further developed to reflect the work presently undertaken and to include a greater emphasis on Accounting and Economics with a view to increasing students' participation and experience of business subjects at senior cycle.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was good with highly effective practice observed in some lessons. Teachers demonstrated a high level of pedagogical knowledge.
- Active and collaborative methodologies allow students to take ownership of their learning; highly effective examples were noted when students worked in groups to design a poster based on consumer rights while, in another lesson, students peer assessed and provided oral feedback on the work. In some lessons, opportunities for students to be actively involved in their learning were not optimised. It is recommended that more opportunities for students to become actively involved in their learning be incorporated into lessons.
- Good use of everyday real-life examples engaged students and allowed them to make meaningful links between themselves and the business world. In one lesson, students used scrapbooks to collate topical business articles from newspapers; this is highly effective preparation for classroom-based assessments (CBAs).
- Supported by the school self-evaluation (SSE) focus, learning intentions were presented at the outset of all lessons either orally or displayed on the board. In some lessons, highly effective use of learning intentions was noted where time was taken to discuss the intentions and progress was reviewed. Strategies to assess the achievement of planned learning intentions need to be progressed and embedded in all lessons.
- Teacher questioning was good in all lessons observed. There was a mix of oral and written questions, with oral questions well dispersed in all lessons. The appropriate use of higher-order and lower-order questioning supported differentiation in the mixed-ability lessons.
- Identifying and affirming students' work that is of good quality is key to preparing them for self-assessment and provides another way to help students prepare for their CBAs. Greater modelling of students' work should be considered as it would allow students to view a piece of work in real time and engage in active constructive feedback.
- Learners were supported by lessons that were well planned and prepared. In all lessons observed, the interactions between students and teachers were very respectful, thus promoting a positive learning atmosphere
- Formal reporting of Business Studies to parents uses the same grading system as in the certificate examinations. It was noted during the evaluation that some teachers use this terminology when reporting on all in-class examinations. This is good practice as it ensures that students become familiar with the language.
- Homework was assigned in all lessons during the evaluation and included a range of formats including written and learning tasks. Some written feedback for improvement was evident in students' copies. It is recommended that this highly effective practice be extended and embedded across the business department. Providing students with high-quality written formative feedback is a key strategy for developing students' learning.
- There was evidence in all lessons observed of teachers placing a strong emphasis on the development of students' business literacy and numeracy skills as outlined in planning documents.
- A stimulating learning environment, that included colourful displays of student generated work, was evident in all base classrooms which were recently assigned to the Business teachers. Also noteworthy was the Business noticeboard in the school corridor which is used to display students' work and inform all students about key business news events.

- Teachers have engaged actively in subject-specific continuous professional development (CPD).

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

- The quality of whole-school support and subject provision is very good. School management is very supportive of the subject and an appropriate time allocation is provided across junior and senior cycle. Timetabling for the subject is good across all years with the option bands for junior and senior cycle based on student choice.
- Business Studies is an optional subject at junior cycle. Students select the subject prior to entering the school in first year. Thereafter, flexibility is provided to students who wish to transfer to or from other subjects.
- There is good uptake of business at junior and senior cycle with Accounting and Business offered at senior cycle.
- Enterprise education is strongly supported within the school. An enterprise trade fair is an annual event on the school calendar. Students have the opportunity to participate in numerous enterprise activities and experiences with external organisations.
- Digital resources appropriate to supporting positive learning experiences are available, and access to them is facilitated.

## **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The overall quality of planning within the business department is satisfactory.
- The coordination of the subject is undertaken by one member of the subject department and this role is rotated which allows for capacity building. Collaboration is strong across the business department with formal subject department meetings held regularly and minutes recorded. The agendas for business departmental meetings should include a stronger emphasis on the discussion of teaching methodologies along with practical matters.
- Adequate planning is present for junior and senior cycle business subjects, with a teacher review section included in all schemes of work.
- For improved subject planning and preparation at junior cycle, it is recommended that teachers collaboratively devise units of learning based on the strands and learning outcomes of the Business Studies specification with additional detail for all three year groups.
- There is scope to develop the TY business plan and scheme of work to ensure that activities taking place presently in the TY business programme are documented and recorded. The range of topics should also be reviewed and extended to include a greater emphasis on Accounting and Economics with a view to increasing students' participation and experience of business subjects at senior 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
<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;