

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

**Subject Inspection in Home Economics**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Coláiste Na Carraige
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Carrick Co. Donegal
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	71150T

**Date of Inspection: 21-10-2019**



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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 Home Economics 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>	21-10-2019
<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 lessons</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### School context

Coláiste na Carraige is a co-educational school under the auspices of Donegal Education and Training Board. Current enrolment is 214 students. The school provides the Junior Cycle, Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and an optional Transition Year (TY). Coláiste na Carraige is participating in the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme and this year is providing one subject through the medium of Irish to first-year students. Home Economics is an optional subject at junior and senior cycle and is a core component of TY.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good, with some very good practice evident.
- In some instances, insufficient opportunities were provided for students to make connections between the lesson content and other relevant areas of learning in Home Economics.
- Students are challenged to reach their full potential and a deliberate emphasis is placed on developing learners' design, creative and evaluative skills; very positive learner outcomes are evident.
- Home Economics benefits from a very good level of provision and whole-school support; arrangements for student access to the subject need review.
- The commendable range of co-curricular activities planned in Home Economics maintains a positive profile for the subject in the school.
- The overall quality of subject planning and teacher collaborative practice is very good, though planning for Junior Cycle Home Economics is in need of further development.

#### Recommendations

- Learning intentions planned for lessons should enable students to make meaningful connections across relevant subject stands.
- In the context of on-going curriculum review, mechanisms for generating option bands should be reviewed to ensure that accessibility to Home Economics is optimised.
- To support the implementation of the Junior Cycle Home Economics specification, units of learning, which demonstrate an incremental and integrated approach to learning should be developed.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good, with some very good practice evident.
- A very good rapport was apparent in all lessons observed, with high expectations set for student achievement. Students were confident to ask and answer questions, and risk incorrect responses.
- Well-phrased learning intentions were shared at the outset of all lessons, and relevant key terminology was discussed with students. This provided for effective outcomes as students were clearly focused. Intentions were re-visited effectively as a means of assessing progress.
- In some instances the planned learning intentions provided insufficient opportunities for students to make connections between the lesson content and other areas of learning relevant to Home Economics. To provide for highly-effective learning, further consideration should be given to the range of learning intentions chosen for lessons. Planned learning intentions should enable students to make meaningful connections across relevant subject stands and to apply their learning to contexts outside the classroom. This will further support the integrated approach to teaching and learning advocated in the Junior Cycle specification and Leaving Certificate syllabus for Home Economics
- Teacher explanations were very clear and sufficiently detailed. Key terminology was very well explained and discussed. Some good use was made of information and communications technology (ICT) to present and clarify information. On occasion, there was an over-reliance on text-based information. The further use of ICT, as a means of incorporating visuals to deepen learning and to link the lesson content to experiences outside the classroom, should be considered.
- The range of teaching approaches deployed in lessons provided for a very good balance of teacher-led and student-led activity. Group work and class discussions proved effective in enabling students to co-create and apply knowledge. In one lesson, show-me-boards were well used to assess progress and present information from group tasks, and mobile devices proved very effective in enabling students to record learning from group activities.
- Good formative assessment practice was noted in lessons. Teacher questioning was well phrased. Learning was optimised when students were encouraged to provide well-developed answers to questions.
- Overall, very good routines were evident in student copybooks. Students are making some very good use of graphic organisers to manage information, therefore preventing an over-reliance on transcribing notes. The further use of this approach to note-making, as opposed to note-taking, should be considered.
- Some very good formative feedback was noted on students' written work. The further use of success criteria would support the commendable emphasis being placed on students as independent learners. It would be beneficial to review the range of written tasks assigned as homework, or as part of a written examination, to facilitate the development and assessment of students' ability to analyse and synthesise information.
- Students are appropriately challenged to reach their full potential and a highly commendable emphasis is placed on developing students' design, creative and evaluative skills in the completion of practical coursework.

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

- Home Economics benefits from a very good level of provision and whole-school support. Timetabling arrangements are appropriate, with a good spread of lessons across the week. The commendable range of co-curricular activities planned in Home Economics maintains a positive profile for the subject.
- Arrangements for student access to Home Economics should be reviewed. While a taster programme is provided in junior cycle, students have to choose Home Economics in a pre-set option band against either Materials Technology Wood or Metalwork. This arrangement is resulting in uptake of junior cycle Home Economics being much stronger among the female student cohort. The senior cycle option bands are also presenting difficulties in facilitating continuity in progression from junior cycle. In the context of on-going curriculum review, mechanisms for generating option bands should be reviewed to ensure students have optimal access to subjects.
- The home economics room is very well resourced and maintained as a vibrant learning environment. Displays of student work promote high expectations for student achievement. To optimise learner engagement and support inclusive classroom practice, it is highly commendable that the school provides students with many of the materials for practical lessons.
- Health and safety procedures, including risk assessment protocols, are well established for Home Economics. To build on existing good practice, the risk assessment template should be developed further to acknowledge fully the multi-purpose nature of the home economics room.

## **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The overall quality of subject planning and teacher collaborative practice is very good. A very good level of engagement with continuing professional development is evident. This is impacting positively on the quality of learner experiences and outcomes in Home Economics.
- Very good links have been established with the home economics department in a neighbouring school to facilitate collaborative planning for teaching and learning.
- Programme plans for Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate are well developed. The thematic approach underpinning TY Home Economics allows for a very good range of learning experiences to be provided. It is very good practice that the design brief process is planned as an integral component of Junior Certificate Home Economics.
- The programme plan currently supporting implementation of Junior Cycle Home Economics does not sufficiently facilitate integration across the various strands of the new specification. Units of learning, which demonstrate an incremental and integrated approach to learning should be developed on a phased basis. The teaching and learning principles underpinning the new specification should inform the sequence of key learning and assessment activities planned in each unit of learning.
- Student uptake of higher level in the certificate examinations is very good and very positive trends in student attainment are evident. It would be worthwhile for the home economics department to use the outcomes of a cumulative analysis of attainment trends to inform action planning for the on-going development of teaching and learning in Home Economics.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and relevant staff 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 Board of Management of Coláiste na Carraige welcomes the Report on the Subject Inspection of Home Economics which was carried out on the 21-10-2019.

The Board congratulates the members of staff concerned and also wishes to acknowledge the great work carried out by this subject department.

The Board acknowledges the comment on making connections between lesson content and other areas of learning. The Board wishes to commend the very good planning that has been carried out by this department to date in planning for the new Junior Cycle and wishes to acknowledge that this is a process which the department continually reviews.

The board wishes to echo the commendation of the positive links that the Home Economics department has established with a neighbouring school.

### **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 school has taken the following actions to date as per the recommendations of the Report.

1. Timetabling planning meetings have been carried out by senior management. Further consultation is planned in advance of the next academic year.
2. Follow up meeting has taken place with the subject department and further integration of Home Economics across the strands is planned.

## 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;