

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Business

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	St. Brigid's College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Loughrea County Galway
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	71280J

Date of Inspection: 09-05-2019



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 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	8 - 9 May 2019
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 six class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

St. Brigid's College, Loughrea is a co-educational school operated under the auspices of the Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB). It has a current enrolment of 595 students. As well as the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate programmes, the school has an optional Transition Year (TY) programme and offers the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was good.
- Student learning experiences were positive when teachers used active learning methodologies which facilitated students to take ownership of their learning.
- Formal monitoring of students' homework was evident with some written formative feedback for improvement provided to students.
- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support is very good.
- Sampling modules in Accounting, Business and Economics are offered as part of the TY programme and the uptake of all three subjects at senior cycle is very good.
- Subject planning is very good for junior and senior cycle business subjects.

Recommendations

- Teachers should avail of all opportunities to integrate active teaching methodologies and promote the student voice in all lessons.
- The provision of written formative feedback to students should be further developed by all business teachers.
- The TY business plan and scheme of work need to be developed to reflect the work presently undertaken.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was good. Teachers demonstrated a high level of pedagogical knowledge in their subject area.
- In keeping with effective practice, teachers shared the learning intentions with students in most of the lessons observed. In the highly effective lessons, the teacher revisited the learning intentions at the end to assess students' understanding fully. Revisiting and assessing learning intentions, when used effectively, inform the planning for subsequent lessons and such practice should be embedded across the business department.
- Individual teacher circulation during lessons was productive; students' progress was checked and appropriate one-to-one support was provided as required.
- Effective pair work was observed in most lessons where students worked successfully in a collaborative manner. In some lessons, there was an over-emphasis on teacher-led instruction. Teachers should include appropriate opportunities for students to engage actively in their learning during all lessons, thereby facilitating students to take ownership of their learning and become independent learners.
- Teachers made good linkages to local and topical business exemplars while explaining key concepts. Students displayed good subject knowledge and an ability to apply their knowledge to everyday business-related contexts when provided with the opportunities.
- A stimulating learning environment, that included print-rich displays of student-generated work, was evident in the business classrooms.
- Digital resources appropriate to supporting student learning experiences are available and student access to them is facilitated. In one lesson, effective practice was observed when students worked collaboratively in groups using an online resource to assess prior learning and to research product ideas.
- There was a positive teaching and learning environment. In all lessons, the interactions between students and teachers were very respectful and students' engagement with their learning was focused.
- While there was evidence of formal checking of students' homework, there were very few written formative feedback comments noted in students' copies. It is recommended that teachers provide more developmental written feedback to students, where appropriate.
- Teachers made limited use of students' work to reinforce good work practices. Within the department, modelling of students' work should be developed, including opportunities for students to view a piece of work in real time and to engage in active constructive feedback. Such approaches would be useful in preparing students for their classroom-based assessments (CBAs).
- The business department liaises regularly with the special education teacher (SET) and team teaching has been introduced this year to support business students with special educational needs. This highly effective practice reflects the schools' inclusive ethos and the school self-evaluation (SSE) focus for this year on student wellbeing.
- Teachers have engaged actively in subject-specific 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 the

junior and senior cycle for the subject. Business Studies is a core subject in first year and an optional subject thereafter.

- Timetabling of the subject is very good across all years and programmes with option bands for junior and senior cycle based on student choice. There is very good uptake of business at both junior and senior cycle, with Accounting, Economics and Business provided at senior cycle.
- Senior management encourages and supports various co-curricular and extra-curricular activities to enhance students' learning experience and foster a positive learning culture in business education. These activities include educational trips and links with local businesses and social enterprises. The business department also participates in business-related competitions where recently it has achieved international recognition.
- Digital resources appropriate to supporting positive student learning experiences are available, and students' access to them is facilitated.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall quality of planning is very good. The co-ordination of the subject is undertaken by one teacher and the role is rotated every two years. Collaboration is very good across the department and all resources are shared using an online platform.
- Formal subject department meetings are held monthly. Agendas and minutes are recorded for some of these meetings. Going forward, it is recommended that agendas and minutes are prepared for all subject department meetings and recorded in the subject plan. The agendas for business department meetings should include a stronger emphasis on the discussion of teaching methodologies and student learning strategies along with practical matters. While such discussions are reported to occur informally, a formal record of these discussions should become a part of the subject planning documentation.
- There is comprehensive planning for junior and senior cycle business. There is scope to develop the TY business plan and scheme of work using the same planning approach used in junior and senior cycle so to ensure that activities taking place in the TY business programme presently are documented and recorded.
- The subject learning and assessment review (SLAR) meetings associated with the CBAs provide teachers with an opportunity to reflect on student learning and skill development. SLAR facilitator reports are included in the subject plan; this good practice facilitates capacity building and action planning for the CBA process within the business department.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the 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

We wish to acknowledge receipt of the report from the Subject Inspection in Business, Accountancy and Economics. The feedback provided by the report affirms the many good practices within the Department. The Board of Management is encouraged by the findings but particularly the following:

- The quality of teaching and learning was good overall with many examples of highly effective practice.
- The teachers in the department are commended for the provision of the broad range of activities that support and enrich students' learning including international business related competitions like the F1 in School competition where students have represented Ireland for the last four years.
- The overall quality of subject provision and whole school support is very good.

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

- Senior management supports and encourages teachers to develop and extend their teaching, learning and assessment practices through whole school continuous professional development.
- Strategies are being developed and reviewed on an ongoing basis to encourage and promote student voice in the classroom with active learning methodologies.
- The TY business plan and scheme of work will now record all the excellent work being undertaken and evolving on a yearly basis in the school.

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;