

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in English

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Hazelwood College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Dromcollogher Co. Limerick
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	71850B

Date of Inspection: 11-12-2019



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 English 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

Date of inspection	11-12-2019
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 6 lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Hazelwood College is a co-educational school which operates under the trusteeship of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (ETB). There is a current enrolment of 569 students. The school offers the Junior Cycle programme, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme, and the Leaving Certificate (Established) (LCE).

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- Overall, a very good standard of teaching, learning, and assessment was observed, including one example of outstanding classroom practice.
- Very good use of group work and co-operative learning was frequently evident.
- In almost all instances very good learning environments were observed in English base classrooms, with an opportunity to further explore the deployment of tier two vocabulary displays.
- Written work was regularly assigned, with a number of examples of an integrated approach to the language and literature elements of the course; opportunities exist to further enhance this latter aspect of the department's practice.
- Overall, there is good whole-school support and provision for English; however, only three lessons of English per week are assigned for first-year classes.
- Overall, there is very good planning and preparation for English, with an opportunity to further enhance planning for Junior Cycle in a number of areas.

Recommendations

- The variety of vocabulary displays in English classrooms should be further expanded.
- An integrated approach to the language and literature elements of the courses should be explicitly highlighted and incorporated in schemes of work and in teachers' practice.
- A redistribution of time allocated to English in Junior Cycle should be undertaken to ensure adequate provision for the subject in first-year classes.
- A number of adjustments to the current schemes of work for Junior Cycle should be undertaken.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- Overall, a very good standard of teaching, learning, and assessment was observed. This included one example of outstanding classroom practice. Clarity with regard to the expected learning was provided for students in all lessons, generally through the use of learning intentions expressed at the outset.
- Information and communications technology (ICT) was frequently used. The adoption of a virtual learning environment to support communication of work with students was noted in one lesson. The provision of a visualiser within the English department is very positive and it is advised that further experimentation with the use of this resource could be very worthwhile, particularly if experiences are shared across the department.
- The reading of texts featured in a number of lessons. On a number of occasions, students were provided with guided reading tasks to support comprehension of the text. In addition, the explicit teaching of comprehension strategies was observed in a senior cycle lesson, including text-marking, prediction, and the accessing of prior learning to support understanding. In the context of this good practice, it is advised that the department might profitably explore curricular links with a local primary school as a means of further supporting reading and other literacy skills for first-year students.
- Discussions regarding the use of writing techniques in particular texts were observed on a number of occasions. These were managed well and students displayed a very good capacity to identify particular techniques as part of these exercises. In addition, in a number of lessons, students were readily able to discuss the impact of these techniques on the reader's experience of, and engagement with, the texts in question. Where this was less evident, the regular incorporation of higher-order questioning with regard to the impact of specific aspects of language would be of benefit.
- Very good use of group work and co-operative learning was frequently evident during the evaluation. In one instance this involved excellent use of complex co-operative learning structures. In all instances where group work was deployed, students responded well with focused, engaged activity.
- Writing was regularly assigned and monitored in lessons observed. Good work has been undertaken in developing the student's collection of texts in Junior Cycle. It is suggested that a portfolio approach to student writing should also be developed in first year, as a link to students' experiences in primary school through the process writing approach. Examples of an integrated approach to the language and literature elements of the English specification in Junior Cycle and the syllabus for senior cycle were observed. However, it is recommended that this approach should be embodied in planning and more widely deployed in practice for each year group in English, to pool departmental expertise and to ensure a wide experience of genres for students.
- In almost all instances, very good learning environments were observed in teacher base classrooms. It is recommended that, building on good practice already present in the department, tier two vocabulary displays, promoting the development of students' wordconsciousness, should now be deployed in English classrooms. This will focus students on the importance of specificity and imagination in the use of vocabulary in English.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Overall, there is good subject provision and whole school support for English. Timetabled provision for English currently consists of three lessons of English for first-year classes, five lessons of English for second-year classes, and four lessons of English for third-year classes. This allocation has arisen from a recent review of the curriculum in Junior Cycle. However, while the time allocated for the subject in Junior Cycle exceeds the minimum requirement, it is recommended that some adjustment be undertaken with regard to the allocation for first-year classes. A redistribution of time from another year group should be enacted so that students' literacy skills are fully supported during their transition from primary school. Timetabled provision for English in TY is satisfactory, while time allocated for English in fifth year and in sixth year is very good.
- Class groups are organised on a mixed-ability basis in Junior Cycle and in TY. This is very good practice. Classes in fifth year and in sixth year are also organised mainly on a mixed ability basis within levels. The consolidation of this approach in the department's policy with regard to senior cycle is advised.
- The school has focused on literacy and numeracy in past iterations of its school self-evaluation (SSE) process. The English department has included a very good section in the subject plan linking to this area. The school is now beginning to focus on the areas of effective questioning and numeracy. The English department is encouraged to include relevant links once the new SSE focus is implemented.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Overall, there is very good planning and preparation. Individual teacher planning for lessons was very good. A very well developed English subject plan is in place. Action planning and the sharing of good practice are very effectively incorporated in the department plan.
- Good work has been undertaken in developing schemes of work for the new English specification in Junior Cycle. It is recommended that, in the context of experience now garnered with regard to the teaching of the new specification, some adjustments to the current plans should be undertaken. In the case of a number of the schemes of work, greater focus on the key learning outcomes to be addressed in each unit of work should be brought to bear. In addition, assessment should be aligned with the learning identified and greater specificity with regard to the tasks to be undertaken should be enunciated in the plan.
- Time-linked schemes of work for fifth year and sixth year are in place, as well as an effective plan for LCA English and Communications. A section dealing with the department's approach to the classroom-based assessments (CBAs) would also be worth developing, highlighting key dates as well as consideration of issues such as specificity and inclusion in the area of assessment task design. In particular, a shared approach to the development of the student's collection of texts in Junior Cycle would be worth setting out to ensure the full potential of this approach can be grasped across the department. A very good plan for TY has been created.

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;