

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

**Subject Inspection in Home Economics**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Beaufort College
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Trim Road Navan County Meath
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	72010I

**Date of Inspection: 28-10-2016**



**WHAT IS A 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. Learning, teaching 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.

## SUBJECT INSPECTION

### INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

<b>Date(s) of inspection</b>	28-10-2016
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal, deputy 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 class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Beaufort College is a co-educational school under the auspices of Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB). The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the Department's action plan for educational inclusion, and it offers a broad range of curricular programmes. Home Economics is an optional subject at junior and senior cycle. Hotel, Catering and Tourism (HCT) is a vocational specialism provided as part the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was very good.
- A very good student-teacher rapport was evident; students completed tasks in a productive manner.
- There was a very good focus on developing student competences in literacy and numeracy.
- Some very good formative assessment strategies were noted in lessons: strategies that assist students to reflect on their learning could be developed further.
- The home economics team is reflective and proactive in planning for teaching and learning.
- Programme plans are well developed, with good attention to the integration of relevant key skills from the *Framework for Junior Cycle*.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- The home economics team should implement an agreed system of student notebooks that facilitates the systematic storage of and reflection on all activities from lessons.
- The range of summative assessment modes should be extended to provide for an assessment of relevant practical coursework components.
- The whole-school health and safety policy should be amended to include the specialist facilities for Home Economics; a health and safety risk assessment of each specialist room and its equipment should be conducted annually.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was very good. Teachers displayed high levels of competence in a range of pedagogic approaches that supported quality learning in Home Economics.
- The quality of advance planning and preparation for lessons was very good. Additional resources were well chosen and used effectively to reinforce learning.
- Lessons were structured to provide for very good integration of relevant concepts. Well-phrased learning intentions stimulated students' interest and focused them on the knowledge and skills to be developed. Very effective practice was evident where, at the start of the lesson, opportunities were created for students to discuss the intentions. Time should be taken in all lessons to re-visit the intentions and assess students' actual progress.
- Teachers' explanations were clear and accurate, with a conscious effort made to ensure that students understood new concepts. Some very good use was made of student-led activities such as walking debates and think, pair and share tasks to facilitate learning. In practical lessons, very good use was made of spot demonstrations to model key food preparation processes and to integrate relevant theoretical information.
- Some high-quality use of information and communications technology (ICT) was noted. Electronic slides that incorporated high-quality visual stimuli proved highly effective learning aids.
- The home economics team should review the use of text books in lessons. In some instances, the manner in which the textbook was used resulted in a considerable increase in the pace and pitch the lesson. As an alternative, consideration could be given to implementing some additional active learning strategies and to develop students' note-making skills.
- A range of agreed strategies that develop students' competences in the areas of literacy and numeracy is being implemented in lessons.
- The quality of learning experiences in the lessons observed was very good. Students remained engaged in their learning and completed tasks in a productive manner. Students displayed a very good range of procedural and culinary skills.
- Observation of students' copybooks indicated some variation in how students record and store work from previous lessons. The home economics team should implement an agreed system that encourages students to keep a notebook to include key points of information from lessons and that facilitates the systematic storage of handouts and worksheets. This notebook would prove an excellent revision tool.
- Some very good formative assessment practices were noted in the lessons observed. Teachers provided a very good level of differentiated in-class support. "Show me" boards were used in a competent manner to consolidate learning. There is scope to extend the range of formative assessment strategies in use to encourage students to reflect on their learning.
- The range of summative assessment modes should be extended to provide for an assessment of the relevant practical coursework component. The feedback provided will enable students to see the inter-relationship that exists between each assessment component.

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

- Home Economics benefits from a very good level of subject provision and whole-school support. Students have good access to Home Economics and option bands are generated based on students' preferences.
- There is appropriate timetabled provision, though consideration could be given to the arrangement of double and single lesson periods in senior cycle.
- There is a very good level of teacher engagement with continuing professional development (CPD); this is impacting positively on students' learning experiences.
- A strong inclusive ethos is evident. A very good level of communication between relevant staff assists planning for the differing learning needs of students. It is particularly commendable that all ingredients are supplied for practical lessons to optimise students' participation.
- While the specialist rooms are well resourced, the fixtures and fittings are in significant need of refurbishment. Plans are in place to address these issues. School management, in association with LMETB, should progress this project as soon as resources become available.
- Very good health and safety routines were evident in all lessons, but aspects of the formal policy need development. It was noted that the home economics rooms are not included in the whole-school health and safety statement; this should be addressed. The risk assessment templates should include the full range of activities undertaken in lessons. The home economics team should carry out an annual health and safety risk assessment of each specialist room and its equipment.

## **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The home economics team is reflective and proactive in its approach to planning for teaching and learning. Good use has been made of data to develop an action plan aimed at continuous improvement in learner outcomes in Home Economics. It would prove beneficial to refine the attainment targets set and to agree some specific teaching and learning strategies that would support the achievement of the chosen priorities.
- Programme plans are well developed. There is some scope to adjust the sequence of lessons to support students in making meaningful connections with related course concepts. The current schemes should be used as working documents to progress this work.
- It is highly commendable that the teaching team has identified how the relevant key skills from the *Framework for Junior Cycle* can be supported through Home Economics.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy 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 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. Overall, learners have access to a basic level of provision. 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;