

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Business

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	St. Patrick's College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Lacken Cross Killala County Mayo
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	72130S

Date of Inspection: 09-04-2019



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agus Scileanna**
Department of
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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 on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

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	09-04-2019
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 three class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

St. Patrick's College, Lacken Cross is a co-educational community school under the patronage of the Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education Training Board (MSLETB). The school currently provides the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme and the Leaving Certificate programme for a student body of 165.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was very good.
- A strong emphasis was placed on business literacy in all lessons observed.
- The observed teaching approaches facilitated collaborative learning; however, limited use was made of students' work to reinforce good practice.
- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support is very good.
- Enterprise is offered in TY as part of the business module with the *Finance in Action* option selected for CBA1 in junior cycle Business Studies; further development of the TY programme is warranted.
- Subject planning is good overall; some development is required with regard to the subject plans and associated schemes of works for all programmes.

Recommendations

- Modelling of students' work to reinforce good practice should be further developed to support the embedding of junior cycle key skills and to help students in preparing for classroom-based assessments (CBAs).
- The TY business programme should be reviewed with a view to broadening the students' experience of business subjects at senior cycle.
- The subject planning process needs to include greater detail on the units of learning for junior and senior cycle and a remodelled TY programme should adopt the same approach.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was very good.
- Lessons were very well prepared. Students demonstrated knowledge appropriate to their age and stage of development. In all of the lessons observed, the use of business terminology was promoted by the teacher and students were able to use subject-specific language in their contributions in lessons.
- Teachers' questioning was very good in all the lessons observed. The use of higher-order and lower-order questioning was employed appropriately for differentiation to occur in the mixed-ability lessons.
- In the majority of lessons, learning intentions were provided at the outset; this is very good practice as it provides students with a clear focus on what they should be able to do at the end of the lesson. In one lesson, the learning intentions were revisited at the end of the lesson in order to assess students' understanding. It is recommended that this practice be extended to all lessons, as outlined in the whole-school assessment policy.
- The teaching approaches facilitated collaborative learning. In all lessons, students were guided, through the planned activities, to work in pairs or groups on defined tasks with appropriate timeframes.
- Digital resources appropriate to supporting students' learning experiences are available and students' access to them is facilitated. In one lesson, students worked collaboratively in groups using an online platform. This highly effective practice enabled students to work together using the online platform outside of the class.
- The teacher supported and monitored students' progress as they completed lesson tasks and activities. High-quality oral feedback was provided to students to support their successful completion of the tasks and activities.
- There was evidence of an emphasis being placed on the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills, as outlined in the subject plan. For instance, teachers worked diligently to ensure that students fully understood the words and terms used on the resources provided during the evaluation.
- Students are assigned homework frequently. Homework takes a range of formats including written and learning. It is corrected most frequently as a whole-class activity and the teacher periodically annotates it. Completion levels are high as the teacher's expectations for homework completion are clearly established. In line with the whole-school homework policy, it is recommended that more formative written feedback be provided to students to further support their learning.
- High-quality oral feedback was provided to students on the completed homework tasks. Consideration should be given to how students may engage purposefully with oral feedback provided on homework during lessons.
- In all lessons, the interaction between students and teacher was very respectful with exemplary behaviour observed. This interaction facilitated a highly productive teaching and learning environment.
- Limited use was made of students' work to reinforce good practice during the lessons observed. Examining and sharing students' work with the class group provide a very helpful approach to further embedding junior cycle key skills and helps students in preparing for classroom-based assessments (CBAs). Greater modelling of students' work within the department is recommended as it allows students to view a piece of work in real time and engage in active constructive feedback.
- A stimulating learning environment that included print-rich displays of student generated work was evident in the business classroom.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of whole-school support and subject provision is very good. Timetabling of the subject across all years and programmes is very good, with the option bands for both junior and senior cycle based on students' choice.
- The business department has a specialist classroom and access to the computer room. The use of digital learning technologies is actively promoted by senior management. Resources are shared with students using an online platform.
- There is good uptake of business at both junior and senior cycle. Business studies is an optional subject at junior cycle. A sample programme is provided to first-year students before making their selection.
- Business is offered as the only business subject at senior cycle. Enterprise education is supported within the school and is a core element of the TY business programme. Presently, the CBA1 option at junior cycle is Finance in Action. There is now an opportunity to review the business module in TY. Such a review could include a sample programme in Accounting and Economics, with a view to broadening students' experience of business subjects at senior cycle.
- School management facilitates the engagement of students in a range of valuable co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that encourage innovation, enterprise and initiative.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall quality of planning within the business department is good.
- As a single teacher department, the preparation of the subject plan and the associated schemes of work has been the responsibility of one teacher. The business department holds the subject learning and assessment review (SLAR) meetings with business teachers from another ETB school. This practice allows collaboration with other business teachers and facilitates capacity building along with collective reflection on the CBA process.
- The SLAR facilitator's reports are included in the business plan; this is good practice as it supports future planning for the CBA process.
- Effective plans and schemes of work are available for junior and senior cycle. It is recommended that these be developed to include a more detailed description of the student activities and teaching methodologies attaching to the specific units of learning. There is also scope to develop the TY plan using the same approach used for junior and senior cycle.
- Effective co-ordination of the subject is undertaken by one teacher who has engaged actively with subject-specific continuing professional development and is an active member of the Business Studies Teachers Association of Ireland (BSTAI).

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject teacher 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;