

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Business

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Grange Post Primary School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Grange County Sligo
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	72330D

Date of Inspection: 26-03-2019



An Roinn Oideachais
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 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(s) of inspection	26-03-2019
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 four class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Grange Post-Primary School is a co-educational community school under the patronage of the Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education Training Board. The school currently provides the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme and the Leaving Certificate programme for a student enrolment of 206.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was very good.
- The learning intentions were shared effectively with students in all lessons, and highly effective practice was noted when the planned learning intentions were revisited to assess students' learning and affirm understanding.
- A strong emphasis was placed on numeracy and literacy in all lessons observed.
- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support is very good.
- Enterprise is offered in TY as part of the business module; there is scope to further develop the TY programme with a view to broadening students' experience of business subjects.
- Subject planning is very good; reflective practice is an area for further development.

Recommendations

- Strategies to assess the achievement of planned learning intentions need to be progressed and embedded in all lessons.
- The TY business programme should be reviewed with a view to broadening the student experience of business subjects at senior cycle.
- The subject planning process should be progressed to include reflective practice to support the development of an action plan with short, medium and long term goals for the business department.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was very good. Teachers demonstrated a very high level of pedagogical knowledge, competency and skill in their subject area.
- Effective group and pair work was observed in all lessons; students worked successfully in a collaborative manner that had a positive effect on learning. In a small number of lessons, there was an over emphasis on teacher-led instruction.
- Very good use of everyday real-life examples engaged students and allowed them to make meaningful links between school and the business world.
- In keeping with good practice, the learning intentions were shared with students in all observed lessons. In highly effective lessons, the teacher revisited the learning intentions at the end of the lesson to assess student understanding fully. Strategies to assess the achievement of planned learning intentions need to be progressed and embedded in all lessons.
- Students' learning experiences were positive when teachers used active methodologies that facilitated the students to take ownership of their learning and affirmed good-quality work. Excellent practice was noted during one lesson where students engaged in peer-assessment and provided formative feedback on this work.
- Formative feedback practices are well advanced within the business department. High-quality comments were evident in some student folders. Students at senior cycle are asked to reflect on their performance in trial examinations and to complete self-reflection sheets and set targets for themselves. Such highly effective practice facilitates students in becoming independent learners.
- During the evaluation, teachers made limited use of students' work to reinforce good practice. Modelling of students' work should be considered as it would allow students to view a piece of work in real time and engage in active constructive feedback. Such an approach would be very beneficial in preparing students for their classroom-based assessments (CBAs) and developing their concept of success criteria.
- There were a number of lessons where the pace was either too fast or too slow and the learning intentions were either underestimated or overestimated in the context of the time available. Effective planning for all in-class activities will address this issue.
- There was evidence in lessons of teachers placing a strong emphasis on the development of students' business literacy and numeracy skills; such practice reflects the business department's priority action, as described in the subject plan.
- In all lessons observed, the interactions between students and teachers were very respectful, facilitating a positive learning environment.
- Students' participation in classroom activities was monitored closely by teachers. Good circulation by teachers among the students improved their participation levels. Teachers provided one-to-one support to students when necessary. Homework was assigned in all lessons during the evaluation.
- A stimulating learning environment that included print-rich displays of student-generated work was evident.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of whole-school support and subject provision is very good.
- School management is supportive of the subject and an appropriate time allocation is provided across junior and senior cycle.
- Timetabling of the subject across all years and programmes is very good, with the option bands for junior and senior cycle based on student choice. Business Studies is an optional subject at junior cycle. First-year students complete a four-week sampling programme enabling them to make an informed subject choice.
- There is good uptake of business at both junior and senior cycle. Business is offered as the only business subject at senior cycle, and Enterprise is offered in Transition Year as part of the business module. Currently, the CBA1 option at junior cycle is Enterprise.
- Enterprise education is strongly supported within the school. Students have the opportunity to participate in numerous enterprise activities with external organisations and businesses.
- The layout of all classrooms supports and facilitates collaborative student activity.
- Teachers have engaged actively in subject-specific CPD and are active members of their subject association, the Business Studies Teachers' Association of Ireland (BSTAI).

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall quality of planning within the business department is very good.
- Collaboration is very good across the department and resources are shared using online platforms. The coordination of the subject is undertaken by one teacher and this role is rotated every two years.
- There is extensive planning for junior and senior cycle business. There is a need to develop the TY business plan using the same approach used in junior and senior cycle. The range of topics should also be reviewed and extended to include a greater emphasis on Accounting and Economics with a view to broadening students' experience of business subjects at senior cycle.
- Formal subject department meetings are held regularly with agendas prepared and minutes recorded. Going forward, the agenda for these meeting should include a teaching and learning item which would link with the school self-evaluation (SSE) area of focus.
- Teachers are encouraged and facilitated to attend continuing professional development (CPD). The business department should agree a formal strategy for the sharing of new learning following CPD and the trialling new methodologies, where relevant.
- The quality of the subject plan is very good overall. However, it currently does not contain any reflective component. An action plan based on a reflective component should be developed which would include short, medium and long term goals.

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;