

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

**Subject Inspection in Materials Technology (Wood) and  
Construction Studies**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Borrisokane Community College
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Borrisokane County Tipperary
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	72370P

**Date of Inspection: 09-05-2019**



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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 Materials Technology (Wood) and Construction Studies 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

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	08-05-19 and 09-05-2019
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and key staff</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during four class periods (lessons are fifty-eight minutes in duration)</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### School context

Borrisokane Community College is a co-educational post-primary school which operates under the auspices of the Tipperary Education and Training Board (ETB). The school had an enrolment of 574 students at the time of the inspection. It offers the Junior Cycle programme, an optional Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, and the Leaving Certificate Applied programme.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The quality of teaching and of learning was very good overall and teachers provided a highly student-centred learning environment in which students were motivated in their learning.
- The quality of assessment was very good, and teachers plan for both assessment *of* learning and assessment *for* learning.
- A range of teaching strategies was observed including clear instruction and demonstrations, as well as opportunities for independent and collaborative student activities; in some practical lessons, opportunities to further enhance learning were not exploited to their potential.
- Whole-school support for Materials Technology (Wood) (MTW) and Construction Studies (CS) is very good.
- Individual teacher planning and preparation and subject-group planning are very good and a high-quality, collegial and mutually supportive MTW and CS department is in place.

#### Recommendations

- Further opportunities should be sought to integrate theory into practical lessons by getting students to make notes to support their learning journey, and providing a space for them to record the formative feedback given to them by their teacher and peers.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT**

- The quality of teaching and of learning was consistently very good in all the lessons observed. The lessons were well prepared and planned, with appropriate content and a logically sequenced structure. Appropriate pauses to consolidate learning were built into the lessons and the learning was well reviewed and summarised at the close.
- Differentiated learning intentions were shared appropriately with students during the opening stages of lessons and these formed the basis of lesson content. The learning intentions were revisited at key transition points and students had a clear sense of where the lessons were going and what was expected of them.
- There were very good assessment methodologies in evidence, such as providing students with clear criteria for success and regular and very effective self and peer reflection practices. Teachers plan for assessing all relevant aspects of students' learning using both assessment of learning and assessment for learning.
- There was a notable level of one-to-one attention given to learners by teachers in the lessons observed. Subject-specific language and keywords were used consistently in the lessons. Highlighting keywords was the main literacy focus observed. Best practice was when keywords were put on the board and referred to during the lesson. To aid learner retention, they should also be recorded by the students as part of note making in all lessons.
- Teachers use a range of questioning techniques effectively for a variety of purposes including stimulating substantial student responses, facilitating deeper engagement with lesson content and extending learning beyond the lesson. Questions ranged from simple lower-order to more challenging higher-order questions and students were appropriately challenged. Distribution of questions amongst students was good.
- Excellent use of digital technology was noted in all lessons to support teaching, learning and assessment. In the best examples, technology, such as the visualiser and parametric modelling software, was utilised to view exemplars of students' work and develop modelling of practice and peer assessment.
- In the practical lessons observed, theoretical elements were referenced but students did not take any notes or make sketches. Further opportunities should be sought to integrate theory into practical lessons by requiring students to make notes to support their learning and providing a space for them to record the formative feedback given to them by their teacher and peers. Homework should be utilised to support this integrated approach.
- Students' attitudes to learning were very good and characterised by their positive approach to participation in class tasks. Teacher-student rapport was very good and this was especially evident in the ease with which students spoke with their teachers and asked for help when required.

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

- Whole-school support for MTW and CS is very good. The subjects are timetabled suitably and lessons are distributed evenly across the week.
- All first-year students have the opportunity to sample MTW from September to December, after which they choose their preferences; option bands are created to accommodate these preferences. This enables students to make their subject choices based upon their experiences, skills and aptitudes.

- Senior management is proactive in the provision of a range of whole-school continuing professional development (CPD) that includes strategies to enhance classroom teaching practice. MTW and CS teachers attend conferences and workshops regularly and have availed of relevant and varied CPD courses in order to further enrich the learning experience for their students.
- There is a very good awareness of health-and-safety issues among students. Students have appropriate access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and safe working zones are marked clearly around machines. A health-and-safety risk assessment was conducted last year by an external company and a detailed safety report has been produced. It is recommended that these risk assessments be updated annually by the subject department to ensure all potential risks are identified and reduced.

### **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Individual teacher planning and preparation and subject-group planning are very good. A high-quality, collegial and mutually supportive MTW and CS department is in place.
- The MTW and CS team makes effective use of an electronic platform where resources and planning materials are organised and stored meticulously and made available to all teachers. These resources are updated regularly by all members of the department.
- Data regarding the number of students taking MTW and CS in the certificate examinations and student attainment are reviewed annually against the national norms for the subject. Senior and junior cycle higher level uptake is consistently high.
- The quality of the schemes of work is good. A common template is used which links learning outcomes to methodologies and resources. Assessment should be linked to each unit of learning in the scheme of work for CS as opposed to being detailed separately.
- Commendably, the department has begun planning units of work for the introduction of the new Junior Cycle Wood Technology specification. The unit of work planned to date is of a good standard and developed on a shared electronic folder which allows the teachers to amend and add up-to-date resources as they become available.
- The members of the subject department meet frequently, both formally and informally, and records of meetings indicate that curricular and pedagogical matters are discussed in addition to on-going arrangements to manage the work of the department.
- Cross-curricular links have been identified and developed with the metalwork and art department; this is particularly evident in the design of the TY programme. To further develop this approach, it is advised to include the science and mathematics department with a view to promoting the school-level impact of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) partnerships on teaching, learning and assessment.
- School self-evaluation (SSE) and previous subject inspections have been used effectively to guide improvement. The MTW and CS department has outlined a commendable range of targets for development over the next number of years. These targets need to be realised in an action plan with the actions needed, target dates and assigned roles outlined so as to readily realise the development 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.

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

### **Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board of Management of Borrisokane Community College welcomes this positive report on the recent Subject Inspection in Materials Technology (Wood) and Construction Studies. The content of the report serves to affirm the hard work and dedication of the Materials Technology (Wood) and Construction Studies Department.

The Board of Management is pleased that the quality of teaching and learning was consistently very good in all lessons observed.

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

The Materials Technology (Wood) and Construction Studies Department has discussed this report and will engage with the recommendation.

As part of the whole school subject planning all subject departments will discuss the contents of this inspection report, so that all teachers and learners can benefit from both existing good practice and the inspector's recommendations.

## 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
<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. 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;