

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in English

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Newport College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Black Road Newport County Tipperary
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	72450N

Date of Inspection: 29-01-2019



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agus Scileanna
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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.

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.

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.

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	29-01-2019
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

Newport College is a co-educational, multi-denominational, post-primary school under the auspices of the Tipperary Education and Training Board (ETB). The school partakes in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the Department of Education and Skills' action plan for educational inclusion. Programmes offered by the school include the junior cycle, an optional Transition Year programme (TY), the Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA). It has an enrolment of 210 students.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The standard of teaching and learning was good, with positive and affirming relationships consistently evident.
- Teacher questioning effectively supported student learning in all lessons.
- Appropriate provision is made for assessment although some possibilities exist for improving feedback.
- Literacy supports are of a very high standard and indicate a capacity for greater development of other key skills.
- Whole-school support for English is very good with excellent support for digital learning.
- Very effective subject department planning and preparation is in place which supports collaborative planning and subject department record-keeping.

Recommendations

- In supporting the implementation of the school's improvement plan, the teachers should prioritise the greater use of written formative feedback and ensure that students respond to, and act on, that feedback.
- In building on the good practices evident in teaching and learning, the teachers should develop more extensive use of co-operative learning and sharing of practice should be a recurring item on the agenda of subject department meetings.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

- The standard of teaching and learning was good. Positive relationships and a genuine sense of care were consistently evident.
- Questioning has been a whole-school focus in recent years. In almost all lessons, there was a highly commendable realisation of the stated school aim that questioning would be 'used as a deliberate way for the teacher to find out what students know, understand and are able to do'. In one effective instance observed, the 'hot-seating' strategy encouraged students to question and think from different perspectives. In the majority of instances, teachers engaged students effectively in the lesson by activating and surveying prior knowledge.
- Effective practice was seen in those instances where teachers asked students to collaborate or to think-pair-share before answering. Such practices are beneficial in building student confidence, developing accountability, and increasing inclusion. The increased use of approaches such as extended wait time, asking students to follow up on the answers of others, and following peer discussion with 'cold calling' where students are selected at random, will build on the subject department's established strengths.
- The English department has identified feedback 'which helps students to recognize what they must do' as the next focus of its improvement plan. Good practice, such as the effective use of whole-class feedback, was observed. Overall, however, student copybooks indicated that students' written work would benefit from an increased incidence of feedback that provides specific suggestions to help achieve improvement. Written formative feedback should now be prioritised. Such feedback should be regular and diagnostic, while the plan for implementation should consider student action in response to feedback.
- The department provides good support for literacy and tracks literacy targets. Instances of the effective development of key skills included the focus on students organising their copybooks and journals.
- A significant focus for the English department is the development of students' personal responses to literary texts. In a minority of instances, a focus on notes undermined this and the encouragement of a reliance on the use of key notes and textbooks requires revision. Approaches such as teacher modelling, and the increased use of graphic knowledge organisers such as mind maps, can aid students in the organisation of their ideas and, ultimately, scaffold student written responses. Commendably, the value of individual interpretation was a common element in all lessons.
- Instances of effective co-operative learning tasks were seen which provided students with authentic ways to use academic oral language. In addition to sharing their enjoyment of such approaches, students demonstrably clarified their own thinking on the subject material when talking it through with others. It is recommended that teachers develop the more extensive use of co-operative learning as a means of developing oral language, peer-learning, and formative assessment opportunities.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- There is very good whole-school support and provision for English. Timetable provision is in line with syllabus requirements and a small core teaching team is in place. Technology provides excellent supports for classroom practice. Management endeavours to facilitate base classrooms for subject teachers and, in such instances, classrooms were stimulating learning environments providing for the development of subject-specific language and knowledge.
- Excellent co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities support the development of English-related skills and attitudes. Teachers promote personal reading and a reading room is available; commendably, students select some of the new books for the school's library. Students partake in the PDST Wellread programme, and a public speaking and debating club is run by teachers during lunchtimes.
- The school has begun the good practice of revising its assessment policy, as per Circular 15/2017. This will support student well-being by incorporating the substitution of classroom-based assessment (CBAs) for in-house examinations at particular points in students' second and third-year studies.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall quality of planning and preparation was very good. The English department plan integrates with the school action plan, a subject improvement plan is in place, and reports have been made to the board of management by the subject department.
- Subject department planning is evidently reflective and progressive. Planning for improvement is embedded in practice. A subject co-ordinator is in place with defined duties, meetings are held, and documented. The position of SLAR facilitator is rotated; this is good practice.
- Work has begun on updating schemes of work to reference formative assessment strategies. This good practice should now be developed to explicitly align formative assessment opportunities with learning outcomes and ensure that they precede summative assessments. Such planning structures can support the increased use of formative assessment in the classroom and, ultimately, support teachers and students in responding to evidence of learning.
- In recent years, a digital learning platform has been introduced. This supports collaborative planning and subject department record-keeping very effectively. It is highly commendable that significant progress has been made in both sharing and organising resources. As a means of developing this very good collaborative practice, it is recommended that subject department meetings include a regular focus on teaching and learning and that sharing practice be a recurring item on the agenda.

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 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;