

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Cigireacht Ábhair san Eolaíocht agus sa Cheimic

TUAIRISC

Ainm na scoile / School name	Meánscoil San Nioclás
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Rinn Ó gCuanach Dún Garbhán Co. Phort Láirge
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	76066J

Dáta na Cigireachta: 25-09-2018



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

This report is written in Irish. An English translation of the report is provided at the end of the report.

Tá an tuairisc seo scríofa i nGaeilge. Tá aistriúchán Béarla den tuairisc ar fáil ag deireadh na tuairisce.

CAD IS MEASTÓIREACHT ÁBHAIR ANN?

Tugann Cigireachtaí Ábhair tuairisc ar cháilíocht na hoibre i réimsí aonair curaclaim laistigh de scoil. Dearbhaítear dea-chleachtas iontu agus tugtar moltaí iontu, de réir mar is cuí, chun cuidiú le forbairt bhreise ar an ábhar sa scoil.

CONAS AN TUAIRISC SEO A LÉAMH

Le linn na cigireachta seo, rinne an cigire meastóireacht ar fhoghlaim agus ar theagasc san Eolaíocht agus sa Cheimic faoi na ceannteidil seo a leanas:

1. Teagasc, foghlaim agus measúnú
2. Soláthar ábhair agus tacaíocht scoile uile
3. Pleanáil agus ullmhúchán

Déanann na cigirí cur síos ar an gcáilíocht a bhaineann le gach ceann de na réimsí sin agus feidhm á baint acu as contanam cáilíochta na Cigireachta a thaispeántar ar leathanach deiridh na tuairisce seo. Soláthraíonn an contanam cáilíochta samplaí den teanga a úsáideann cigirí agus iad ag déanamh meastóireachta agus ag cur síos ar cháilíocht sholáthar na scoile i ngach réimse.

Tugadh deis do bhord bainistíochta na scoile ar a thuairim a léiriú ar thorthaí agus ar mholtaí na tuairisce i scríbhinn, agus beidh freagra an bhoird ar fáil san aguisín atá leis an tuairisc seo.

COSAINN LEANAÍ

Le linn na meastóireachta, rinneadh seiceáil mar a leanas ar nósanna imeachta na scoile maidir le caomhnú leanaí:

1. Tá ainm an teagmhálaí ainmnithe agus an ráiteas slánchumhdaithe leanaí ar taispeáint go feiceálach gar do phríomhdhoras na scoile / sa limistéar fáiltithe.
2. Tá ráiteas slánchumhdaithe leanaí na scoile faofa ag an mbord agus áirítear ann athbhreithniú bliantúil agus measúnú riosca.
3. Tá sé dearbhaithe ag gach múinteoir ar tugadh cuairt orthu go bhfuil ráiteas slánchumhdaithe leanaí na scoile léite acu agus go bhfuil siad eolach ar a bhfreagrachtaí mar dhuine faoi shainordú.

Bhí cleachtas na scoile ag teacht lena n-éilítear faoi gach ceann de na seiceálacha thuas.

CIGIREACTH ÁBHAIR

GNÍOMHAÍOCHTAÍ CIGREACTHA

Dátaí na cigireactha	24 agus 25-09-2018
Gníomhaíochtaí na cigireactha <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Athbhreithniú ar na cáipéisí cuí• Plé leis an bpríomhoide tánaisteach agus le príomhbhaill foirne• Caidreamh le scoláirí	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breathnú ar theagasc agus ar fhoghlaim i rith ceithre thréimhse ranga• Athbhreithniú ar obair na scoláirí• Aiseolas don phríomhoide tánaisteach agus do bhaill foirne ábhartha

Comhthéacs na scoile

Is iar-bhunscoil chomhoideachais í meánscoil San Nioclás faoi iontaobhas Bhord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Phort Láirge agus Loch Garman. Tá 146 scoláire sa scoil. Is iad na cláir atá ar fáil sa scoil ná an tSraith Shóisearach, Idirbhliain atá éigeantach agus an Ardeistiméireacht Bhunaithe. Tá an scoil rannpháirteach sa tionscnamh Comhionannas Deiseanna sna Scoileanna a Sheachadadh, plean gníomhaíochta na Roinne Oideachais agus Scileanna um chuimsiú oideachais.

ACHOIMRE AR NA PRÍOMHCHINNTÍ AGUS MOLTAÍ

Cinntí

- Tugadh cáilíocht mhaith teagasc agus foghlama faoi deara i gceachtanna eolaíochta agus ceimice; bhí samplaí de chleachtas a bhí an-mhaith san áireamh leis sin.
- I roinnt ceachtanna, bhí scoláirí rannpháirteach go gníomhach ina gcuid foghlama mar thoradh ar an úsáid a baineadh as tascanna foghlama gníomhacha fiúntacha; ba chóir níos mó úsáide a bhaint as tascanna den sórt sin.
- Bhí roinnt fianaise de mhonatóireacht a bheith á déanamh ar obair scríofa scoláirí agus ar nótaí mínithe a scríobh uirthi, cleachtas ar chóir a mhéadú.
- Tá socruithe cuimsitheacha ag an roinn don mheasúnú suimitheach, cé gur chóir roinnt machnaimh a dhéanamh orthu i bhfianaise an chuir chuige nua ar mheasúnú sa tSraith Shóisearach.
- Tá an soláthar do na hábhair eolaíochta agus an tacaíocht scoile uile ar chaighdeán an-mhaith.
- Tá cáilíocht na pleanála agus an ullmhúcháin do cheachtanna sa roinn go maith; tá tús an-mhaith curtha le plean a fhorbairt do Shonraíocht Eolaíochta nua na Sraithe Sóisearaí a theagasc.

Moltaí

- Ba chóir breis cothaithe a dhéanamh ar rannpháirtíocht ghníomhach scoláirí san fhoghlaim trí níos mó úsáide a bhaint as straitéisí cosúil le foghlaim chomhoibritheach, tobsmaointeoireacht agus forbairt meabhairmhapáí.
- Ba chóir go soláthrófaí aiseolas foirmitheach níos fearr ar obair scríofa scoláirí i bhfoirm tráchttaireacht scríofa.
- I bhfianaise rannpháirtíocht scoláirí leis na measúnuithe rang-bhunaithe (MRBanna), ba chóir don scoil meastóireacht a dhéanamh ar na cleachtais reatha mar a bhaineann le measúnú deireadh téarma ag deireadh na dara bliana agus um Nollaig sa tríú bliain d'fhonn ró-mheasúnú ar scoláirí a sheachaint.

- Ba chóir machnamh mionsonraithe ar na torthaí foghlama go léir sna snáitheanna comhthéacsúla agus an nasc atá acu leis an snáithe nádúr na heolaíochta agus forbairt príomhscileanna a chur san áireamh agus an plean eolaíochta á fhorbairt.

MIONCHINNTÍ AGUS MOLTAÍ

1. TEAGASC, FOGHLAIM AGUS MEASÚNÚ

- Tugadh cáilíocht mhaith teagaisc agus foghlama faoi deara sna ceachtanna eolaíochta agus ceimice; bhí samplaí de chleachtas a bhí an-mhaith san áireamh leis sin.
- Chuir an timpeallacht dhearfach agus shuaimhneach sa scoil le foghlaim na scoláirí. Éascaíodh rannpháirtíocht scoláirí sa phróiseas foghlama leis an gcaidreamh cuiditheach idir scoláirí agus múinteoirí. Spreagadh agus dearbhaíodh rannchuidiú ó na scoláirí.
- Bhí struchtúr maith ag ceachtanna agus bhí an luas cuí i mbeagnach gach cás.
- Roinneadh intinní foghlama le scoláirí i ngach ceacht. Tugadh fócas agus struchtúr don cheacht leis sin agus cabhraíodh le scoláirí an méid ar chóir a bheith ar eolas acu agus an méid ar chóir dóibh a bheith in ann a dhéanamh ag deireadh an cheachta a thuiscint. Ag cur leis an dea-chleachtas seo, ba chóir don roinn eolaíochta a chinntiú go ndéantar athbhreithniú ar na hintinní foghlama le linn an cheachta nó ag deireadh an cheachta d'fhonn an foghlaim a dhéanamh amach. Chuirfí le scileanna féinmheasúnaithe na scoláirí ach iad a bheith rannpháirteach sa phróiseas sin.
- Tríd is tríd, d'oibrigh na scoláirí go díograiseach le linn na gceachtanna agus ba léir go raibh spéis acu san obair.
- I roinnt ceachtanna, bhí scoláirí rannpháirteach go gníomhach ina gcuid foghlama mar thoradh ar an úsáid a baineadh as tascanna foghlama gníomhacha fiúntacha. Is cleachtas an-mhaith é sin. Ba chóir cuir chuige scoláire-lárnacha den sórt sin a leathnú amach chuig gach ceacht. Ar uairibh, moladh straitéisí cosúil le tobsmaointeoireacht agus úsáid meabhairmhapáí chun réamh-eolas scoláirí ar ábhar a ghníomhachtú.
- Moladh úsáid a bhaint as straitéisí foghlama comhoibritheacha amhail gníomhaíochtaí mata boird i roinnt cásanna chun scoláirí a spreagadh chun smaointe a roinnt agus teacht ar chomhaontú faoi ábhair, agus chun achoimre ar an bhfoghlaim a thabhairt i rith na céime athbhreithnithe den cheacht.
- Baineadh úsáid an-éifeachtach as ceistiúchán chun foghlaim scoláirí a dhéanamh amach agus chun tuilleadh forbartha a dhéanamh ar eolas agus tuiscint scoláirí trí thógáil ar an réamhfhoghlaim.
- Cuireadh le foghlaim na scoláirí sa cheacht praiticiúil a breathnaíodh mar thoradh ar an gcur chuige an-struchtúrtha a tógadh, an tacaíocht agus comhairle a thug an múinteoir, agus an plé agus ceistiúchán. Cuireadh obair phraiticiúil i gcrích ar bhealach slán agus oilte i ngach ceacht.
- Baineadh úsáid an-éifeachtach as teicneolaíocht faisnéise agus cumarsáide (TFC) agus as cláir bhána chun íomhánna físe a sholáthar agus chun príomhphointí na gcoincheap eolaíochta a bhí á mbreithniú a leagadh amach.
- Bhí roinnt fianaise de mhonatóireacht a bheith á déanamh ar obair scríofa scoláirí agus ar nótaí mínithe a scríobh uirthi. Moltar tuilleadh monatóireachta a dhéanamh ar obair scríofa na scoláirí, go háirithe ar an obair phraiticiúil. Moltar go soláthrófaí aiseolas foirmitheach níos fearr ar obair scríofa scoláirí i bhfoirm tráchttaireacht scríofa.
- I bhfianaise rannpháirtíocht scoláirí sna measúnuithe rang-bhunaithe (MRBanna), ba chóir don scoil meastóireacht a dhéanamh ar na cleachtais reatha mar a bhaineann le measúnú deireadh téarma ag deireadh na dara bliana agus um Nollaig sa tríú bliain d'fhonn ró-mheasúnú ar scoláirí a sheachaint.

2. SOLÁTHAR ÁBHAIR AGUS TACAÍOCHT SCOILE UILE

- Tá an soláthar ábhair agus an tacaíocht scoil uile ar cháilíocht an-mhaith. Is croí-ábhar sa tSraith Shóisearach agus san Idirbhliain í an Eolaíocht. Bíonn deis ag scoláirí staidéar a dhéanamh ar Bhitheolaíocht, ar Cheimic agus ar Fhisic don Ardteistiméireacht.
- Moltar an soláthar de churaclam leathan agus cothromaithe, lena ndéantar iarracht dháiríre freastal ar riachtanais na scoláirí.
- Tá an leithdháileadh ama do na heolaíochtaí ag teacht le treoirlínte na siollabas agus sonraíochtaí. Tá leithdháileadh cuí ceachtanna ag dul do gach rang-ghrúpa i rith na seachtaine, lena n-áirítear ceacht dúbailte in aghaidh na seachtaine chun obair phraiticiúil a éascú. Moltar é seo de bharr go n-uasmhéadaíonn sé teagmháil na scoláirí leis na hábhair.
- Tá na háiseanna do theagasc na hEolaíochta go maith. Tá saotharlann amháin sa scoil agus acmhainní maithe inti. Tá cur chuige an-mhaith i roinn na heolaíochta i leith na sláinte agus sábháilteachta. Tá trealamh sábháilteachta ar ardchaighdeán sa tsaotharlann agus sa limistéar ullmhúcháin.
- Tá obair shuntasach déanta lena chinntiú go stóráiltear ceimiceáin de réir threoirlínte na Roinne Oideachais agus Scileanna. Ba chóir fáisceán lasairdhíonach a cheannach chomh maith chun ceimiceáin inlasta a stóráil.
- Tá leibhéal an-mhaith TFC sa scoil, rud a thacaíonn le teagasc agus foghlaim. Tá teilgeoirí sonraí agus ríomhairí glúine ar fáil sa tsaotharlann agus sna seomraí ranga. Moltar úsáid a bhaint as amharcléiritheoir nuair is cuí mar bhealach eile chun tacú le foghlaim na scoláirí.
- Glacann múinteoirí eolaíochta páirt ghníomhach i ngníomhaíochtaí um fhorbairt ghairmiúil leanúnach. Is rud an-mhaith é sin.
- Tríd is tríd, bíonn gnóthachtáil scoláirí sna scrúduithe teastais an-mhaith.
- Is rud an-dearfach é go dtugtar deiseanna do scoláirí a bheith rannpháirteach i raon an-mhaith gníomhaíochtaí comhchuraclaim agus seach-churaclaim sna heolaíochtaí. Áirítear orthu sin, mar shampla, comórtas Eolaí Óg BT, SciFest agus Féile Ceimice Salters in Coláiste na hOllscoile, Corcaigh.

3. PLEANÁIL AGUS ULLMHÚCHÁN

- Tá cáilíocht na pleanála agus an ullmhúcháin do cheachtanna sa roinn go maith. Chuir sin leis an teagasc agus leis an bhfoghlaim éifeachtach a breathnaíodh i gceachtanna ar leith.
- Bíonn leibhéal maith cumarsáide ann ar bhonn neamhfhoirmiúil agus roinntear acmhainní go leanúnach, a bhuíochas do mhéid bheag na roinne eolaíochta, a chuimsíonn beirt mhúinteoirí. Tionóltar cruinnithe foirmiúla chun cur leis an gcomhoibriú sin. Ag tógáil ar an dea-chleachtas sin, ba chóir straitéisí teagaisc agus foghlama a phlé ag na cruinnithe sin.
- Tá obair fhiúntach déanta ag an roinn eolaíochta chun clár oibre a fhorbairt doShonraíocht Eolaíochta nua na Sraithe Sóisearaí. Tuigeann múinteoirí eolaíochta gur chóir an snáithe nádúr na heolaíochta a mhúineadh i gcomhar leis na snáitheanna comhthéacsúla. Is innmholtá gur briseadh síos na torthaí foghlama ar mhaithe le na hintinní foghlama do roinnt ceachtanna agus na gníomhaíochtaí le tabhairt fúthu a chur san áireamh. De réir mar a bhíonn forbairt leanúnach á déanamh ar an bplean eolaíochta, ba chóir machnamh mionsonraithe a dhéanamh ar na torthaí foghlama go léir agus an nasc atá acu leis an snáithe nádúr na heolaíochta agus forbairt príomhscileanna.
- Tá páirt fhiúntach glactha ag an scoil i measúnuithe rang-bhunaithe (MRBanna) agus i gcruinnithe *don Athbhreithniú ar Foghlaim agus ar Mheasúnú Ábhair* (AFMÁ). I bhfianaise méid bheag gach bliainghrúpa agus na roinne eolaíochta féin, ba chóir machnamh a dhéanamh ar oibriú i gcomhar le múinteoirí eolaíochta i scoil eile agus cruinnithe AFMÁ á dtionól. Chuirfí leis an bplé ar ghnéithe na cáilíochta le comhoibriú den sórt sin agus chabhrófaí le múinteoirí breithiúnais a thabhairt ar chaighdeán na MRBanna.

Ag deireadh na meastóireachta, pléadh dréachtchinntí agus dréachtmholtaí na meastóireachta seo leis an bpríomhoide tánaisteach agus leis na múinteoirí ábhair.

Contanam Cáilíochta na Cigireachta

Déanann cigirí cur síos ar cháilíocht an tsoláthair sa scoil agus feidhm á baint acu as contanam cáilíochta na cigireachta a thaispeántar thíos. Tugann an contanam cáilíochta samplaí den teanga a úsáideann cigirí nuair a bhíonn siad ag déanamh meastóireachta agus ag cur síos ar cháilíocht sholáthar na scoile do gach réimse.

Leibhéal	Cur síos	Sampla de na téarmaí tuairisciúla
An-mhaith	Úsáidtear An-mhaith áit a bhfuil cáilíocht na réimsí a ndéantar meastóireacht orthu ar chaighdeán an-ard. Ní bhíonn tionchar rómhór ag an líon beag réimsí atá le feabhsú ar cháilíocht an tsoláthair ar an iomlán. Do roinnt scoileanna sa chatagóir seo cáilíocht an tsoláthair ar a rinneadh meastóireacht thar cionn agus is sampla é do scoileanna eile de shárchaighdeáin soláthair.	An-mhaith; ar cháilíocht an-ard; cleachtas an-éifeachtach; le moladh go hard; an-rathúil; beagán réimsí le feabhsú; go hiontach; ar chaighdeán an-ard. Ar fheabhas: thar cionn; ar sárchaighdeán; le láidreachtaí an-suntasacha; thar barr
Maith	Úsáidtear Go maith áit inar léir go bhfuil na láidreachtaí sna réimsí a ndéantar meastóireacht orthu níos treise ná na réimsí ina bhfuil gá le feabhas a dhéanamh. Bíonn tionchar ag na réimsí ina bhfuil gá le feabhas a dhéanamh ar cháilíocht foghlama na ndaltaí. Ní mór don scoil tógáil ar a cuid láidreachtaí agus gníomhú le dul i ngleic leis na réimsí atá aitheanta ina bhfuil gá le feabhas a dhéanamh d'fhonn caighdeán <i>an-mhaith</i> a bhaint amach.	Go maith; cáilíocht mhaith; fiúntach; cleachtas éifeachtach; inniúil; úsáideach; inmholta; caighdeán maith; roinnt réimsí le feabhsú
Sásúil	Úsáidtear Sásúil áit a bhfuil cáilíocht an tsoláthair sách maith. Tá na láidreachtaí sa mhéid ar a bhfuil meastóireacht á dhéanamh díreach níos treise ná na laigí. Cé nach mbíonn drochthionchar suntasach ag na laigí cuireann siad srian le cáilíocht na n-eispéireas foghlama agus ba chóir déileáil leo d'fhonn caighdeán níos fearr a bhaint amach.	Sásúil; sách maith; soláthar oiriúnach cé go bhfuil féidearthachtaí ann le feabhas a dhéanamh; leibhéal cáilíochta inghlactha; is gá feabhas a dhéanamh i réimsí áirithe
Measartha	Úsáidtear Measartha áit, in ainneoin go bhfuil roinnt láidreachtaí sna réimsí a ndéantar meastóireacht orthu, go bhfuil níos mó easnaimh nó laigí ann freisin ná na láidreachtaí. Beidh ar an scoil dul i ngleic le heasnaimh áirithe gan mhoill lena chinntiú go mbíonn an soláthar sásúil nó níos fearr ná sin.	Measartha; laigí soiléire ann a bhfuil tionchar acu ar fhoghlaim na ndaltaí; gan a bheith sásúil; deacrachtaí ann; ní mór feabhas a dhéanamh i réimsí ar leith; gá le gníomhú le feabhas a dhéanamh
Lag	Úsáidtear Lag áit a bhfuil easnaimh thromchúiseacha sna réimsí a ndéantar meastóireacht orthu. Is gá don scoil uile gníomhú láithreach ar bhonn comhordaithe le dul i ngleic leis na réimsí atá mar ábhar imní. I gcásanna áirithe, b'fhéidir go mbeidh gá le hionchur ó ghníomhaireachtaí eile le tacú leis na feabhsuithe.	Lag; míshásúil; easnamhach; neamhéifeachtach; go dona; athrú, forbairt nó feabhas suntasach ag teastáil; deacrachtaí suntasacha ann

Aguisín

Freagra na Scoile ar an Tuairisc

Arna chur isteach ag an Bord Bainistíochta

Cuid A: Tuairimí ar ábhar na tuairisce scoile

Glacann Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Phort Láirge agus Loch Garman agus Bord Bainistíochta Mheánscoil San Nioclás, leis an tuairisc dhearfach chigireachta seo san Eolaíocht agus sa Cheimic.

Tá fíricí na tuairisce fíor agus fáiltítear roimh na moltaí atá déanta sa chigireacht san áireamh: go mbainfí úsáid as straitéisí éifeachtacha a chabhródh leis an gcaighdeán teagaisc agus foghlama; aiseolas foirmitheach níos fearr; athbhreithniú ar an measúnú deireadh téarma; athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar an bplean eolaíochta.

Cuid B: Gníomhartha leantacha a rinneadh nó atá beartaithe le déanamh ó cuireadh críoch leis an ngníomhaíocht chigireachta chun tátail agus moltaí na cigireachta a chur i bhfeidhm

Ardófar moltaí na tuairisce ag cruinnithe foirne agus ag cruinnithe rannóige ábhair san Eolaíocht agus cuirfear san áireamh iad sa phlean Meastóireacht Uile Scoile.

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Science & Chemistry

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Meánscoil San Nioclás
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Rinn Ó gCuanach Dún Garbhán Co. Phort Láirge
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	76066J

Date of Inspection: 25-09-2018



An Roinn Oideachais
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 Science & Chemistry under the following headings:

4. Teaching, learning and assessment
5. Subject provision and whole-school support
6. 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

Dates of inspection	24 and 25-09-2018
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with deputy 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 deputy principal and relevant staff

School context

Meánscoil San Nioclás is a co-educational post-primary school under the trusteeship of the Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board. There are 146 students in the school. The programmes available in the school are the Junior Cycle, a compulsory Transition Year (TY), and the Leaving Certificate (Established). The school participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools initiative, the Department of Education and Skills action plan for educational inclusion.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- A good quality of teaching and learning was observed in science and chemistry lessons; this included examples of very good practice.
- In some lessons, students were actively engaged in their learning through the use of purposeful active learning tasks; the use of such tasks should be increased.
- There was some evidence of monitoring and annotation of students' written work, a practice that should be extended.
- Comprehensive departmental summative assessment arrangements are in place, although some consideration of these should be undertaken in light of the new approach to assessment in Junior Cycle.
- Provision for the science subjects and whole-school support is of very good quality.
- The quality of departmental planning and preparation for lessons is good; a very good start has been made in developing a plan for teaching the new Junior Cycle Science Specification.

Recommendations

- Students' active engagement in learning should be further fostered in lessons through increased use of strategies such as cooperative learning, brainstorming and developing mind maps.
- Enhanced provision of formative feedback on students' written work in the form of written commentary is advised.
- In light of student engagement with the classroom-based assessments (CBAs), the school should evaluate its current practices in relation to end-of-term assessment at the end of second year and Christmas of third year in order to avoid over assessment of students.
- Continued development of the science plan should include detailed consideration of all learning outcomes in the contextual strands and their linkage with the nature of science strand and the development of key skills.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- A good quality of teaching and learning was observed in science and chemistry lessons; this included examples of very good practice.
- The positive and relaxed atmosphere in the school was conducive to students' learning. Constructive student-teacher relationships facilitated students' engagement in the learning process. Students' contributions were encouraged and affirmed.
- Lessons were well structured and the pace was appropriate in almost all instances.
- Learning intentions were shared with students in each lesson. This provided a focus and structure for the lesson and helped students to understand what they should know and be able to do at the end of the lesson. Building on this good practice, the science department should ensure that the learning intentions be reviewed during or at the end of the lesson in order to ascertain learning. Student involvement in this review process would enhance students' self-assessment skills.
- Overall, students worked diligently during lessons and it was evident that they were interested in the work.
- In some lessons, students were actively engaged in their learning through the use of purposeful active learning tasks. This is very good practice. The use of such student-centred approaches should be extended to all lessons. On occasion, strategies such as brainstorming and the use of mind maps were suggested to activate students' prior knowledge of a topic.
- Use of co-operative-learning strategies such as placemat activities was advised in some instances to encourage students to share ideas and reach a consensus about a topic, and to summarise learning during the review phase of the lesson.
- Questioning was very effectively used to ascertain student learning and to further develop students' knowledge and understanding by building on previous learning.
- Student learning in the practical lesson observed was enhanced by the very structured approach taken, by the support and advice given by the teacher, and by discussion and questioning. Practical work was conducted in a safe and skilful manner in all lessons.
- Information and communications technology (ICT) and white boards were very effectively used to provide visual images and to outline the main points of the scientific concepts under consideration.
- There was some evidence of monitoring and annotation of students' written work. Increased monitoring of students' written work, in particular the practical work, is recommended. Enhanced provision of formative feedback in the form of written commentary is also advised.
- In light of student engagement in classroom-based assessments (CBAs), the school should evaluate its current practices in relation to summative assessment at the end of second year and Christmas of third year in order to avoid over assessment of students' progress.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Subject provision and whole-school support is of very good quality. Science is a core subject in Junior Cycle and TY. Students have the opportunity to study Biology, Chemistry and Physics for Leaving Certificate.
- The provision of a broad and balanced curriculum, making deliberate efforts to meet the needs of the students, is commended.
- The time allocation for the sciences is in line with syllabus and specification guidelines. All class groups have an appropriate distribution of lessons across the week, including a weekly

double lesson to facilitate practical work. This is commended as it maximises students' contact with the subjects.

- Facilities for the teaching of Science are good. The school has one well-resourced laboratory. A very good approach to health and safety exists in the science department. A high standard of safety equipment is present in the laboratory and preparation area.
- Significant work has been done to ensure that chemicals are stored according to Department of Education and Skills guidelines. A flame-resistant press should also be purchased for the storage of flammable chemicals.
- The school has a very good level of ICT which supports teaching and learning. Data projectors and laptop computers are available in the laboratory and classrooms. The use of a visualiser where practicable is suggested as a further means of supporting student learning.
- Science teachers actively engage in continuing professional development activities. This is very good.
- Overall, student attainment in certificate examinations is very good.
- It is very positive that students are given opportunities to participate in a very good range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities in the sciences. These include, for example, the BT Young Scientist competition, SciFest and the Salters Festival of Chemistry in University College Cork.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The quality of departmental planning and preparation for lessons is good. This contributed to the effective teaching and learning observed in individual lessons.
- The small size of the science department, comprising two teachers, facilitates a good level of informal communication and the sharing of resources on an ongoing basis. To supplement this collaboration, formal meetings take place. Building on this good practice, teaching and learning strategies should be discussed at these meetings.
- The science department has engaged purposefully in developing a programme of work for the new Junior Cycle Science Specification. Science teachers understand that the nature of science strand should be taught in conjunction with the contextual strands. Commendably, the learning outcomes have been broken down to include the learning intentions for some lessons and the activities to be undertaken. Continued development of the science plan should include detailed consideration of all learning outcomes and their linkage with the nature of science strand and the development of key skills.
- The school has purposefully engaged in classroom-based assessments (CBAs) and in subject learning and assessment review (SLAR) meetings. Given the small size of each year group, and of the science department, consideration should be given to collaborating with science teachers of another school when holding SLAR meetings. Such collaboration would enrich the discussion around features of quality and help teachers in making judgements on the standard of the CBAs.

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

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

This is a translation of the school response submitted by the board of management.

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Waterford and Wexford Educational and Training Board and the board of management of Meanscoil San Nioclás accept the positive subject inspection report in Science and Chemistry. The findings are accurate and the recommendations in the inspection report are welcomed including that: that effective strategies are used to enhance the standard of teaching and learning; better formative feedback; review of terminal assessment; review of the science plan.

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 report recommendations will be raised at staff meetings and science department meetings and they will be included in the whole-school assessment plan.