

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

Subject Inspection in Home Economics

REPORT

School name	Coláiste Chraobh Abhann
School address	Creowen Kilcoole Co Wicklow
Roll number	76076M

Date of Inspection: 30-04-2019



**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 Home Economics 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

Dates of inspection	29-04-2019 & 30-04-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal, deputy principal and key staff• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during four double lessons and two single lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and relevant staff

School context

Coláiste Chraobh Abhann is a co-educational post-primary school under the auspices of Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board. The school has a current enrolment of 707 students and offers the Junior Cycle programme, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the established Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good and individual lessons ranged from good to very good; though in some cases students could be further challenged.
- Active learning methodologies were effectively used in lessons and students had opportunities to learn collaboratively.
- Teachers provided students with oral formative feedback; written formative feedback was not provided regularly.
- The overall quality of subject provision is effective with some examples of very effective practice; though timetabling arrangements do not always support continuity of learning.
- Teachers are reflective and the subject department is effectively steering action planning to address current and future targets.
- The overall quality of planning and preparation is good; however, some programmes of work lack sufficient detail.

Recommendations

- Additional opportunities for students to engage in more challenging tasks should be provided by teachers.
- To further develop formative assessment practice, an agreed approach to the frequency and format of providing written developmental feedback should be implemented by teachers.
- Senior management should explore options to avoid timetabling some double lessons over break and lunch time.
- Some programmes of work should be reviewed, agreed and extended by the subject department to further support teaching and learning.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good and individual lessons ranged from good to very good.
- Very positive interactions were observed between students and teachers. Teachers had high expectations of students' work and communicated these effectively to students.
- In most instances, very clear learning intentions were shared with students outlining what students will know, understand and be able to do as a result of teaching and learning activities. However, in many instances students' achievement of learning intentions were not assessed. All teachers should plan to assess learning intentions during lessons to ensure that the intended learning has taken place and should differentiate learning intentions so that all students are adequately challenged.
- Students were provided with opportunities to work independently and collaboratively in lessons. Highly effective group work was evident in a junior cycle lesson when revision tasks were clearly aligned to learning intentions. Students had assigned roles, timeframes to complete work were shared, students had opportunities to peer teach and teachers provided time to discuss and process feedback received from students.
- In some lessons, students had some opportunities to reflect on their learning. This was achieved by identifying and recording areas of achievement and areas for development and through the use of exit cards which were used by students to identify areas which they sought further clarity on. This is effective practice. To further support students in making more informed evaluative judgements about the quality of their learning, success criteria should be shared in advance of students undertaking such tasks.
- Digital technology was effectively used in classrooms to support teaching and learning. For example, in a food studies lesson, students photographed key stages involved in preparing, cooking and serving a dish. Photographs are used by students to record and present their learning and act as a reference point when students recreate dishes at home. This is good practice.
- Teachers clearly modelled how skills should be performed by the appropriate use of spot demonstrations in practical lessons. Very good practice was evident when teachers used spot demonstrations to enable students to recognise the integrated nature of learning in Home Economics.
- In practical food studies lessons, it is positive that students regularly evaluate their work. In a minority of lessons, this practice was limited to students evaluating the sensory characteristics of the dish prepared. Best practice was evident when the focus of evaluation tasks varied and provided a range of challenges for students.
- Teacher questioning in lessons was generally very effective. In most instances, questions were directed and best practice was observed when questions were used to promote higher-order thinking. Teachers encouraged students to develop their answers and utilised questions to provide students with opportunities to make co-curricular links.
- When teachers supported students to document work in a systematic way, very good recording of student learning was evident in copybooks and folders. In some instances, copybooks lacked structure and did not provide a clear record of student learning. Teachers could reflect on what approaches are successful in assisting students to record their learning and extend this very good practice to all classrooms.

- Some good monitoring of homework was evident in copybooks and folders. Samples of senior cycle coursework provided good evidence of written formative feedback. However, regular, formative feedback is lacking. An agreed approach to the frequency and format of providing written formative feedback should be implemented by teachers.
- Many very good examples of note-making were evident in student copybooks. This is very good practice as it empowers students to take ownership of their learning.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support is effective with some examples of very effective practice.
- Students have very good access to the subject. Option bands are generated based on students' preferences at junior and senior cycle and this is very good practice.
- It is positive that senior management ensure that teachers have the opportunity to teach the full range of programmes offered in the school.
- Appropriate timetabled provision is made for Home Economics. However, the scheduling of some double lessons over break and lunch time is not best practice. In some food studies practical lessons, this results in an interval in the middle of the lesson. This poses additional challenges when lesson planning and can impact negatively on learner experiences and learner outcomes due to a lack of continuity in the student learning experience. This practice should be reviewed. Consideration regarding how this timetabling arrangement could impact on potential health and safety issues in the kitchen is not addressed in the risk assessment.
- A risk assessment template exists for Home Economics, however, it has been a significant time period since this was last reviewed. This matter should be prioritised by senior management with input from the home economics department.
- It is commendable that a home economics teacher coordinates 'Healthy Eating Week' which elevates whole-school awareness about health and wellbeing through a wide variety of activities and guest speakers.

4. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall quality of planning and preparation is good.
- Programmes of work have been prepared for all year groups. On occasion, there are discrepancies between programmes of work for the same year group. Best practice was evident when lesson sequence allowed for an incremental approach to teaching and learning. A collaborative review of programmes of work should take place to ensure an agreed approach to teaching and learning.
- Some programmes of work lack sufficient detail and should be further developed to encompass learning outcomes which are inclusive of theoretical and practical learning, teaching methodologies, resources, assessment modes and school self-evaluation strategies.
- The content of some TY Home Economics modules contain excessive material from Junior Cycle. This should be reviewed so that TY is a more unique experience for students in line with TY guidelines.

- Subject department meetings are recorded and it is positive to note that teaching and learning are a central part of discussions.
- It is commendable that teachers collaborate with local businesses and invited speakers to provide meaningful learning experiences for students.
- The home economics department has analysed most recent attainment data and provided commentary on these results. This should be continued over time to deduce emerging trends. Commendably, the subject department is effectively engaging in action planning, informed by results analysis and teacher reflections, to identify current and future targets. To enhance this process, plans should be time bound, delegated tasks should be recorded and systematic review and evaluation should be an integral part of the process.
- It is notable that teachers regularly attend continuing professional development events that develop their own practice and meet the needs of students. All subject teachers are members of the Association of Teachers of Home Economics (ATHE).

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;

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 at Coláiste Chraobh Abhann is very satisfied with the report on the Quality of Learning and Teaching in Home Economics at the school issued by the Department of Education and Skills Inspectorate as a result of a subject inspection held on 30th April 2019.

In particular, the Board acknowledges the very positive comments made in relation to the quality of teaching and learning of Home Economics, the very positive interactions between students and teachers and the high expectations that teachers had of student's work.

Teachers found the content of the report an acknowledgement of their enthusiasm, commitment and dedication to the teaching of Home Economics.

All relevant partners have had an opportunity to discuss and evaluate this report.

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

A full and thorough review of the recommendations has taken place and a progressive course of action has commenced. The collaborative work of members of the Home Economics Department will be central to the implementation and success of this plan. The ultimate aim of the plan is to progress and further improve the quality of learning and teaching of Home Economics at the school.

The school has reviewed the recommendations for development and will progress and support improvements in the quality of learning and teaching of Home Economics. Senior Management have already implemented measures to avoid the timetabling of some double lessons over break and lunch time. The teachers will use the recommendations in the report as a focus for improvement both individually and collectively as a Department through lesson planning and subject planning.