

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in English

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Maynooth Community College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Maynooth Education Campus Moyglare Road Maynooth
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	76193Q

Date of Inspection: 08-05-2019



**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 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

Dates of inspection	08-05-2019
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 six class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Maynooth Community College is a co-educational school under the patronage of Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board. The school opened in 2014 and has a current enrolment of 513 students. The school offers the Junior Cycle programme, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate (Established), the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching was generally good, a few lessons had instances of exemplary practice with regard to encouraging and facilitating the student voice.
- The quality of learning ranged from satisfactory to very good, the learner experience was best when there was an appropriate balance between teacher input and purposeful student activity.
- In all lessons, a good student-teacher rapport together with teachers' enthusiasm for their subject, created very positive learning environments.
- Learning intentions were shared in most lessons but could in some cases have been presented in more accessible language.
- In some lessons, differentiated teaching methodologies were well used to support learning.
- The overall standard of planning and preparation is very good, with some opportunities for further development in areas such as planning for improvement.

Recommendations

- In order to engage students in reflecting more on their own learning, learning intentions should be presented in language that is student friendly with clearer links to prior learning and success criteria.
- The English team should collaboratively share best practice with regard to differentiated teaching methodologies, the use of formative feedback and the maintenance of student's written work.
- Subject department meetings should prioritise discussions regarding teaching and learning and planning for future developments.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching was generally good. A few lessons were characterised by instances of exemplary practice, specifically when teachers used methods to develop, encourage and facilitate the student voice.
- The overall quality of learning was also generally good, ranging from satisfactory in some lessons to very good in others. Excellent practice was noted in a few lessons when a good balance was achieved between teacher input and independent structured student activity.
- In all classrooms visited, the very good teacher-student rapport, together with the teachers' own enthusiasm for the subject, created a positive learning environment. Such positivity was especially evident when students were affirmed and encouraged in their responses.
- In most lessons, learning intentions were shared with students at the outset. This strategy worked best when the learning intentions were reviewed at the end of the lesson as this encouraged students to reflect on their own learning. Ensuring that learning intentions are described in student-friendly language and explicitly linked to success criteria would help improve learner outcomes further.
- In general, teachers had high expectations of their students and this was most evident when teachers prepared resources and chose texts that were clearly linked to the learning intentions of the lesson and suited the learning needs of all students.
- Where learning was optimised, very good use was made of differentiated methodologies, such as one-to-one support or differentiated questioning techniques. However, further planning and development of differentiated learning activities and tasks would facilitate the provision of appropriate levels of challenge and support to students of all abilities.
- In the best lessons, students demonstrated high levels of interest and participation in their learning. This was evident in their engagement with texts, particularly when the teacher made direct links between lesson topics and students' own interests and experiences outside the classroom.
- All students benefited from opportunities to work together in groups or pairs. This teaching strategy worked best when groups were organised co-operatively: clear instructions were provided, activities were time-bound, individual roles were assigned to students, and ample time was given for students to give feedback. Students were able to share their learning and engage in exploratory discussion with the whole class. Greater use of this structured approach to group work would benefit students in all classes.
- Very good use was made of targeted, lower-order questioning to assess students' knowledge. Some good use of higher-order questioning and open-ended questions was also observed in a few lessons. Students' learning would be further supported by greater use of higher-order questions as a scaffold to independent learning and deeper engagement with the texts being studied.
- Some good examples were observed of developmental feedback in students' written work. However, there was scope for greater use of formative assessment in this regard. In addition, the way students presented and stored their extended writing tasks varied considerably. The English department should further develop their assessment policy in order to promote a collaborative and consistent approach to the use of formative feedback and to the presentation and storage of students' work. This would be particularly useful to the students' collection of texts at junior cycle.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The school is very supportive of provision for English in terms of resources, and timetabling. Management are supportive of teachers' development and encourage participation in ongoing professional development.
- An annual celebration of reading takes place during 'Literacy Week'. Students' involvement in 'reading for pleasure' is promoted through a wide range of initiatives. To further support this success, it would be worthwhile to review and expand the range of in-class strategies used to support literacy development.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The subject plan is of a good standard reflecting a collaborative and collegial approach among English teachers. The plan provides good support to the provision of English in areas such as long-term planning.
- It is good practice that the English department meets regularly to discuss issues such as textbooks and administrative issues. However, a greater emphasis on discussions on teaching and learning practice at department meetings would further enhance the sharing of good practice in this regard.
- A challenging and engaging TY plan is in place. It is positive that TY is viewed as a link to work students will complete in fifth year and in sixth year: it is advised that care should be taken to ensure a focus on the continuum of learning from junior cycle, rather than an explicit focus on the Leaving Certificate syllabus.

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 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.

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 quality of 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;