

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Home Economics

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	De Lacy College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Ashbourne County Meath
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	76196W

Date of Inspection: 24-04-2018



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 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 on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

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 of inspection	24-04-2018
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 two class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Coláiste De Lacy is a co-educational school under the auspices of the Louth, Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB). Opened in August 2014, the school offers Junior Certificate and Transition Year (TY) programmes currently. The Leaving Certificate programme is being introduced from September 2018 to accommodate incoming fifth-year students. Home Economics is provided as an optional subject. Two modules related to Home Economics are also provided as part of the Transition Year (TY) programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good; students enjoyed the planned learning activities.
- While students' learning in lessons was of a satisfactory standard, there was scope to develop some teaching approaches to provide for deeper learning and reflection.
- High expectations are set for student achievement and a very good rapport was evident in all of the lessons observed.
- Very good levels of student creativity and originality were apparent in the range of craft and design practical coursework reviewed.
- The quality of provision and whole-school support for Home Economics is very good; senior management actively promotes a culture of continuous improvement in teaching and learning.
- Subject planning is very good overall; some aspects of programme planning need further development.

Recommendations

- A smaller number of learning intentions should be planned for lessons to allow sufficient time for plenary activities that enable students to consolidate and reflect on their learning.
- The health and safety risk assessment templates for Home Economics should be extended to take cognisance of all the learning activities that take place in the specialist room.
- The sequence of planned learning intentions in the junior-cycle programme plan should be reviewed to facilitate an enhanced integrated and incremental approach to learning.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good. While students' learning in lessons was of a satisfactory standard, there was scope to adjust the use of some teaching approaches to provide for deeper learning and student reflection.
- In all lessons, high expectations were set for student achievement. Classroom interactions were positive and affirming, with clearly established routines apparent for practical lessons. Students were well able to work both independently and collaboratively.
- Clear learning intentions were shared in all lessons and this provided for effective student engagement. The learning intentions outlined clear expectations for student achievement and, commendably, were also linked to key skills being developed at whole-school level.
- The number of learning intentions planned for lessons merits review. Too many learning intentions were planned for the lessons observed and this impacted on the time available for students to process and reflect meaningfully on their learning. Lessons should be based on a smaller number of learning intentions that support incremental and integrated learning across relevant thematic strands in Home Economics.
- A very good range of additional resources was prepared and integrated into lessons. These resources supported learning by enhancing students' understanding of new content. Some very good use was made of information and communications technology (ICT) as a teaching and learning tool.
- In all lessons, very good efforts were made to facilitate active learning. However, further consideration should be given to the type of learner experiences and outcomes arising from planned tasks. There was scope to align some student tasks more closely to the planned learning intentions for the lesson. On occasion, there was insufficient processing of student learning from completed tasks. In planning for the inclusion of student-led activities, sufficient time should be given to incorporating plenary activities that challenge students to process, apply and record their learning.
- Students are exposed to a very good range of craft and textiles skills. A commendable focus is placed on the design phase of project work; high levels of student creativity and originality were very evident in practical coursework and design folders reviewed during the evaluation. The teaching approaches used in Craft and Design actively encourage students to be autonomous and reflective learners. This very good practice provides for good-quality learner outcomes.
- Some very good formative and summative assessment practice is evident in Home Economics. A well-designed cover sheet used on written examinations encourages student reflection on their progress. It is very good practice that an aggregate mark, informed by student progress in the practical and theoretical aspects of Home Economics, is provided on school reports.
- A review of students' copybooks indicated some variation in how they store work from previous lessons. The home economics department should implement an agreed system that encourages students to keep a notebook to include key points of information from lessons and that facilitates the systematic storage of class handouts and worksheets.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support is very good. The home economics department has made commendable efforts to establish Home Economics as a high profile optional subject in the school.
- Students have very good access to Home Economics. The first-year taster programme supports students in making informed subject choices. The length of this taster should be re-considered as part of the curriculum review underway currently. It is very good practice that option bands are determined by students' choices.
- Timetable provision for junior-cycle Home Economics is adequate. The current arrangements result in students having two lessons of Home Economics per week of either one or two hour duration. This arrangement does present challenges for planning lessons which facilitate high-quality student engagement for the full duration of the lesson period. These arrangements should be kept under review, especially when providing for Leaving Certificate Home Economics.
- Senior management actively promotes a culture of continuous improvement in teaching and learning. A culture of reflective practice underpins the work of the home economics department and a very good level of engagement with continuing professional development (CPD) is evident. This is impacting positively on the quality of learner experiences and outcomes in Home Economics.
- There is one specialist room for Home Economics, with a second room planned in phase two of the school's building programme. The room is well organised, well-resourced and developed as a vibrant learning environment.
- Health and safety procedures are well established. The risk assessment templates currently in use should be extended to take cognisance of the fact that the kitchen, for the moment, is also used for practical textile lessons.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Planning and preparation for Home Economics is of a very good standard.
- Subject department planning is well established with significant progress made in the short time since the school was established. There is a clear connection between planning at subject-department level and the whole-school focus on key skills development and student-centred learning.
- Programmes of work are well advanced but there is a need to foster a more integrated and incremental approach to learning. Modifications are necessary to the lesson sequence in the junior-cycle programme plans, and to the range of learning intentions planned to provide for a more enhanced integrated and incremental approach to the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills from first year through to third year.
- It would be beneficial to integrate the design brief process as a teaching approach into additional learning activities planned for students from first year. This measure will support the incremental development of key skills such as the analysis, implementation and evaluation of information.
- Highly effective self-evaluative practice is apparent in the work of the subject department. Good use is made of data and target setting to inform a developmental agenda for the subject.

- The quality of short-term planning for lessons was good overall. Very good use is made of an electronic platform to share relevant resources with students.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and subject teacher 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;