

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

Subject Inspection in English

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Carrigtwohill Post Primary
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Unit A2 Fota Business Park Carrigtwohill
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	76333G

Date of Inspection: 11-03-2019



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.

The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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	8 and 11 March 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

Carrigtwohill Community College is a newly established co-educational school under the joint trusteeship of Cork Education and Training Board (ETB) and the Diocese of Cloyne. There are 182 students enrolled in the school's Junior Cycle programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- Overall, there was a very good standard of teaching, learning, and assessment, with opportunities to further develop the current very good practice identified.
- The very effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) was a particular feature of lessons; the adoption of additional ICT measures to support modelling of assessment and students' assessment literacy would build on current good practice.
- Extended writing exercises are regularly assigned to students; teacher modelling of writing in the department is limited at present.
- Teachers are professional in their approach to the assessment of student work; feedback is mainly focused on the provision of teacher comments.
- There is very good subject provision and whole school support for English; English teachers have developed classroom libraries to support students' reading for pleasure and some opportunities to further develop this practice exist.
- There was evidence of very good planning and preparation in English, including the incorporation of an integrated approach to the language and literature elements of the curriculum.

Recommendations

- The explicit modelling of assessment should be a focus for development in the English department; the adoption of visualisers in English classrooms would further support this practice.
- Teacher modelling of the drafting and redrafting process presents as a worthwhile area for development.
- The further development of assessment practice and the feedback modes employed by teachers should be pursued with a particular focus on students' actions arising from assessment feedback.
- The English department and the school should investigate services offered by the local library.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- Overall, there was a very good standard of teaching, learning, and assessment. In all lessons, a very high level of preparedness was evident on the part of teachers.
- A particular feature of teachers' practice was the use of ICT in lessons. Students have access to tablet devices and this facility was used effectively to support learning. As a further extension of teachers' work in this area, the adoption of the visualiser as a support for discussing both student and teacher exemplars of work and quality should be pursued.
- Questioning was a frequent feature in lessons. This was particularly successful where teachers incorporated higher-order demands with regard to the areas under investigation. This frequently involved a requirement that students discuss and justify their views regarding the impact of particular techniques used by the authors of texts, moving beyond the mere identification of the presence of such techniques.
- A focus on writers' use of language was frequently evident and included an emphasis on the use of sound to communicate ideas in poetry. Beyond this, the use of online dictionaries and thesauruses was an element in a number of lessons, emphasising the development of word consciousness as a key part of the subject.
- Generally, there was a very good balance between teacher and student talk in lessons. Where this worked best, group work incorporated key elements such as wait time, accountability, and a sense of security for students. In addition, teachers in these instances took advantage of the opportunities presented for formative assessment and repair of student understanding. There is an opportunity to focus a subject department meeting on discussion of the use of co-operative learning to support the development of students' exploratory talk.
- Students were clear with regard to the learning underway in all lessons. This was frequently underpinned by the effective use of learning intentions which were identified with careful use of language. The most effective utilisation of such learning intentions was observed where they were used not only to set out the learning planned for the lessons, but also to check in on learning achieved during the lesson.
- Various approaches to assessment were observed. There were very good examples of teachers' written commentary with regard to student work. On occasion, peer assessment was observed. While students were engaged by this activity, their overall capacity to engage in assessment of their own and their peers' work could be advanced further. With this in mind, the explicit modelling of assessment by teachers should be a focus for development. The further expansion of assessment modes should also be pursued, incorporating a particular focus on students' actions arising from feedback.
- Writing was regularly assigned, monitored, and assessed in English lessons. In addition, an integrated approach to the language and literature elements of the English curriculum was evident. To further support this latter approach and to consolidate its place in the department, it should be explicitly highlighted as part of the subject plan. While some modelling of writing has been undertaken by English teachers, the modelling of the drafting and redrafting process presents as a worthwhile area for development.
- English classrooms incorporated very good learning environments. It is suggested that, as a means of building on already very good practice, the display of metacognitive strategies, as well as word consciousness displays, could usefully be extended.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Overall, there is very good subject provision and whole school support for English. Timetabled provision is very good. Classes are organised in mixed-ability groups in first year, as is appropriate. Some division of class groups according to ability has been undertaken in the current second year and in third year. In this context, it is advised that the continuation of mixed ability grouping for a longer period should be considered. This should be done in order to allow for the affective impact that ability grouping may have on students' learning at an early stage in their emotional and intellectual development.
- The adoption of classroom libraries to support reading for pleasure was observed during the evaluation. As a means of enhancing the range of titles available for students, the English department and the school should investigate services offered by the local library. The potential for a budget to be allocated by the school for this purpose might also be considered, where practicable, and within the limits of available resources.
- The school has begun to consider the area of feedback as a focus for school self-evaluation. This is very positive and should work well as a support for the new Junior Cycle specification in English.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- There is very good planning and preparation. There has been continuing reflection on and development of planning approaches as part of departmental meetings. This should continue, along with formal discussions regarding teaching and learning as and where appropriate.
- While common schemes of work have been developed using a generic plan, the plan is now in the process of being adjusted and changed in the context of the English department's particular context. Currently, the plan incorporates alignment between the learning planned and summative assessments in common units of work. It is suggested that, as the department grows in size, the translation of learning outcomes into the key learning to be achieved in a particular period could be worthwhile in order to ensure clarity and consideration across the department. A useful focus in first year could be links with students' curricular experiences in local primary schools. It is suggested that, as a further development of current plans, the inclusion of a formal collection of the students' texts in first year planning and reporting would be worthwhile.
- A very positive feature of the department's current approach is its move to plan for and establish common success criteria with regard to summative assessment tasks linked to units of work. The department is encouraged to continue to develop this approach, while also allowing space for students to co-create success criteria in lessons. In particular, a focus on both structural and qualitative elements with regard to success criteria should be pursued.

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