

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

**Subject Inspection in English**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Griffen Community College
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	C/O Kishoge Community College Thomas Omer Way Lucan Co Dublin
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	76454S

**Date of Inspection: 11-09-2019**



## **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 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

<b>Date of inspection</b>	11-09-2019
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and key staff</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during three lessons</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### School context

Griffeen Community College is a co-educational post-primary school under the patronage of Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB), in partnership with Scoil Sinéad Ltd. The school is in its third year, offering the Junior Cycle programme and has a current enrolment of 137 students.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The standard of teaching and assessment were good; instances of very good practice were noted where students were facilitated to be active and independent in their learning.
- The quality of learning was generally good, but not all students received appropriate amounts of challenge or support in their learning.
- A very good rapport between teachers and students, together with the development of interesting and attractive learning spaces, supports a positive learning environment for students.
- Student engagement was actively encouraged by the use of a variety of valuable methodologies and generating further opportunities for student collaboration would accentuate these good practices.
- A comprehensive subject plan has been diligently prepared; there are some areas for improvement within the plan.

#### Recommendations

- Students should receive further opportunities to be active in their learning through the development of carefully structured co-operative learning activities where students can share ideas and engage in exploratory discussion.
- The teachers of English should collectively develop and implement teaching approaches that challenge students while also providing the supportive structures required to progress their learning, particularly with regard student engagement and response to texts.
- Students should have more opportunity to engage in extended writing pieces and should receive regular and developmental feedback on this work so that they can improve and develop their writing skills.
- A developmental section of the plan should now be developed, exploring the vision and aims for the English department as the school moves towards senior cycle and long-term planning should reflect explicit links between learning outcomes, assessment practices and methodologies.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT**

- The standard of teaching was good. Teachers were well prepared and demonstrated good subject knowledge. Instances of very good practice were noted when students were facilitated to be active in their learning.
- The overall standard of learning was generally good. Ensuring that students are appropriately supported or challenged as they engage and explore texts would benefit the mixed-ability setting. Planning for the differentiation of learning tasks, and activities to build students' understanding, would support this.
- In every classroom, teachers ensured the subject of English was promoted and students' work was celebrated and on display, creating interesting learning spaces. Such a positive learning environment was further supported by the evident good rapport between teachers and students.
- Teachers shared and discussed the intended learning of the lesson with students and so encouraged students to be a part of their own learning journey. This good practice could be further extended by ensuring the language used is student friendly and explicitly linked to prior learning.
- Starter tasks were used successfully to provide a hook to engage students in the lesson from the outset. However, in general, teachers should be cognisant regarding the timing and pace of lesson tasks and this should be noted and included in planning.
- English teachers used a variety of teaching methodologies to engage students in their learning and to assess students' understanding of texts, including the use of information and communications technology (ICT). To extend this further, the provision of learning tasks around the creative use of ICT by students is encouraged.
- While there was some examples of student collaboration in evidence, generally this is an area for development. In this context, it is recommended that further exploration of the use of carefully structured co-operative learning activities should be undertaken and incorporated in the department's practice, facilitating the development of oral language skills as emphasised in the specification for Junior Cycle.
- Co-operative learning activities should in turn encourage the integration of exploratory discussion and allow for the closer engagement of students with characters, themes and texts. Good work regarding choice of texts to reflect students' interests should be built on by supporting and scaffolding student discussion. This should boost their confidence in themselves as learners and increase their willingness to venture an opinion or response.
- The evidence from a sample copy books indicates that students should have more opportunity to engage in extended writing tasks so that they can develop their writing skills and experience writing in different contexts.
- School-wide literacy and numeracy initiatives were evident in most lessons, with a specific emphasis on the use of key words. Laminated bookmarks with key themes and characters further supported student learning. Building on these good practices is encouraged.
- Good lower-order questioning to assess understanding was in evidence but there is scope to further develop questions that stimulate critical thinking and, so, deeper engagement with texts. Such use of higher-order questioning should support the development of exploratory discussion as mentioned earlier in this report.

- The department should build on good assessment practices already in use by developing an assessment policy where the frequency and format of developmental feedback on students' written work should be discussed and documented.

## **2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- There is very good whole-school support and provision for English. Classrooms are equipped with data projectors and all students have tablet devices.
- Continuous professional development is valued by the teachers as a way of improving and building on their practice. As a newly established department, teachers should continue to share their expertise, particularly at subject-team level.
- Extra-curricular and cross-curricular activities are already taking place, such as debating, so that students can experience learning outside of the classroom. The English team recognises the value of fostering a culture of reading for pleasure and are developing in-class libraries and book clubs. Plans are already underway for innovative ways to encourage reading in the upcoming annual Literacy Week.

## **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- A newly established English team has already indicated its commitment to collaboration by initiating the sharing of resources, rotating the position of the co-ordinator and engaging in professional dialogue regarding the development of the subject in this school. Such discussions should be documented and included in the developmental section of the subject plan.
- A subject plan has been diligently prepared and good work has been undertaken in developing the Junior Cycle scheme of work that reflects a deepening understanding of the specification. Further work is needed regarding explicit linking of learning outcomes with assessment practices and teaching methodologies. As the department looks towards senior cycle, a section of the plan that outlines the vision and aims for the English department should be developed.

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 quality of the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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**

## **Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board of Management of Griffeen Community College welcome the findings in the English Inspection Report, It is particularly satisfying to receive the report stating that *“instances of very good practice were noted where students were facilitated to be active and independent in their learning”*. Observations of *“very good rapport between teachers and students...supporting a positive learning environment for students”* were also welcomed and affirmed the consistent efforts of all in this learning community in developing routines and relationships that honoured the school values of wisdom, inclusion and dignity.

Acknowledgement of the diligent planning undertaken by this department in a new school also gives a great foundation to the recommendations provided.

## **Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.**

We are in the process of building on differentiated learning to ‘ensure that students are appropriately supported or challenged as they engage and explore texts in the mixed ability setting’ in a newly formed subject department which has been operating in a solo capacity to date.

Plans are in progress for the creation of developmental sections linking learning outcomes, assessment practices and methodologies. Specific consideration will be given to collaboration and developing co-operative learning activities. These are now included in the department planning of all subject departments.

It is intended that the department plan will reflect and be cognizant of the vision and aims for the English department as it looks forward to senior cycle planning.