

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

**Subject Inspection in Home Economics**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Trinity Comprehensive School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Ballymun Road Dublin 9
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	81017A

**Date of Inspection: 19-10-2016**



**WHAT IS A 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. Learning, teaching 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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

## SUBJECT INSPECTION

### INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

<b>Date(s) of inspection</b>	18 and 19 October
<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 five class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Trinity Comprehensive School has a current enrolment of 498 students. The school participates in DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools), the Department of Education and Skills action plan for educational inclusion. Home Economics is provided mainly as an optional subject in the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes. Hotel Catering and Tourism (HCT) is provided as a vocational specialism in the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- Elements of good practice were noted in the lessons observed; the selection of teaching approaches used could have been broader.
- A very good rapport was evident in lessons; classroom interactions were affirming and encouraging.
- Deliberate efforts are made to create stimulating learning environments for students.
- Students are supplied with materials for practical lessons to optimise engagement with the planned learning activities.
- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support is good; collaborative planning for teaching and learning needs development.
- A good level of reflective practice is evident; a targeted approach to planning for enriched learner experiences would prove beneficial.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- To provide for highly effective learner experiences, learning intentions should be differentiated and carefully aligned with the teaching approaches used in lessons.
- The timetabling arrangements with regard to double-period lessons should be reviewed.
- The home economics team should review the lesson sequence in the programme plans to provide for an enhanced integrated and incremental approach to progressing students' learning.
- Agreed teaching and learning strategies, that support the development of key procedural and practical skills, should be documented in an action plan aimed at continued improvement in learner outcomes in Home Economics.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was satisfactory, with some elements of good practice noted. There was scope to adjust the pitch or pace of lessons to a level more commensurate with students' needs.
- Learning intentions, which were shared with students, effectively provided a focus for lessons. Given the spread of student abilities and interests, further attention should be given to planning for the achievement of appropriately differentiated learning intentions. Teaching and learning approaches should be aligned carefully with the planned intentions, and deployed strategically to promote an incremental approach to progressing students' learning.
- Explanations of new content were clear, with some good use made of additional resources. High-quality learning was noted where students linked new content actively to previous learning or their own experiences. In one lesson, a worksheet was used as an effective ice-breaker activity. The information gathered was well processed to deepen and progress students' learning. The further use of such strategies is recommended.
- There was some good use of information and communications technology (ICT) to clarify new content. In some lessons, there was an over-reliance on teacher-led and text-based resources to clarify new concepts. Additional use of visual stimuli and structured student-led activities would prove very beneficial in enhancing learner experiences.
- A very good rapport was evident in all lessons. Students' efforts were affirmed and encouraged and they were able to work independently and in groups. Some good attention was paid to the development of students' literacy by checking their understanding of key terms and developing their vocabulary to support evaluation skills.
- Good attention was paid to health and safety in the practical lesson observed. While students displayed a satisfactory range of practical skills, additional strategies, in particular spot demonstrations, should be incorporated into practical lessons to refine students' culinary and procedural skills and promote high-quality learner outcomes.
- Students' work was well monitored in lessons. Questioning was used well to check recall. High-quality learning was noted when the questioning strategies elicited more detailed student responses. Good routines were evident in some student notebooks, with some good formative feedback provided. Strategies that support students to reflect on their progress could now be developed.
- Observation of students' practical coursework indicates that learners find various elements of this work challenging. The home economics team should consider how key practical and procedural skills, that underpin successful completion of high-quality practical coursework, can be developed incrementally from first year through the revision of the programme plans.

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

- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support for Home Economics is good.
- Appropriate timetabled provision is made for Home Economics, but the arrangement of double and single periods should be reviewed. The home economics team, in association with senior management, should consider the effectiveness of timetabling arrangements in facilitating continuity of teaching and learning and in supporting high-quality learner outcomes.

- The home economics teachers are deployed in accordance with their qualifications. It is commendable that a member of the home economics team is part of a staff group undertaking a continuing professional development (CPD) programme in teaching and learning. A systematic approach to embedding learning from this CPD into home economics lessons should now be established.
- Good progress is apparent in implementing some of the recommendations made in a previous inspection of Home Economics. However, some recommendations made in relation to planning for teaching and learning have been re-emphasised as areas for development in this report. To facilitate the execution of recommendations, priority areas for development should be included in the home economics department's improvement plan. Progress should be collaboratively reviewed periodically.
- Deliberate efforts have been made to create stimulating learning environments for students in each specialist room and on the surrounding corridors. Specialist rooms are well equipped. Students are supplied with all ingredients for practical lessons; this highly commendable practice facilitates full student engagement in the planned learning activities.
- Some aspects of the formal health and safety procedures for Home Economics need development. The risk assessment template should be extended to include the full range of activities undertaken in practical textiles and craft lessons. Records of regular servicing schedules and past risk assessments should be maintained in the subject plan.

### **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Appropriate provision is made for subject planning in Home Economics. Collaborative planning should now focus on the aspects of teaching and learning that need particular attention.
- Programme plans are developed by individual teachers and are at varying stages of development. Some plans demonstrate good integration of the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) learning statements.
- There is scope for the home economics team to amend the plans reviewed to provide for an enhanced incremental and integrated approach to students' learning. It was not always clear from the planning what practical skills in the areas of food studies, core textiles and craft are taught, or how incremental progression is facilitated. The home economics team should review the current plans and amend accordingly to provide for a lesson sequence that supports incremental progression, and that facilitates the integrated approach underpinning learning in Home Economics. The implementation of these plans should be reviewed collaboratively on an on-going basis.
- Some very good individual teacher planning was noted in the development of detailed topic plans and a very good review template is being used by all teachers to note progress.
- Commendably, the home economics team analyses student attainment data. This analyses should inform a set of specific teaching and learning priorities. Agreed strategies that support the achievement of these priorities should be documented in an action plan aimed at continued improvement in learner outcomes.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and a representative of the home economics team at the conclusion of the evaluation.

## **Appendix**

School response to the report

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

**Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board accepts the Home Economics inspection report. It acknowledges the recommendations and an Action Plan will be put in place.

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

- The Board will request an action plan from the HE Dept. in relation to the areas highlighted by this inspection.
- The time tabling of HE will be discussed and looked at to improve the provision.
- The management will meet with the HE Dept. to look at their planning, lesson sequencing and incremental approach to progressing students' learning.
- Planning meetings will be facilitated to focus on the agreed teaching and learning strategies that support the development of key procedural and practical skills.
- Meeting times will be allowed to reflect/evaluate and document progress/changes needed etc.

## 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 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. Overall, learners have access to a basic level of provision. 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;