

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

Subject Inspection in Business Studies and Accounting

REPORT

School name	Leixlip Community School
School address	Celbridge Road Leixlip Co. Kildare
Roll number	91371B

Date of Inspection: 21-03-2018



**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 Business and Accounting 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

Date of inspection	21-03-2018
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, four doubles and two singles• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, two deputy principals and subject teachers

School context

Coláiste Chiarán Leixlip is a co-educational secondary school which operates under the patronage of Kildare Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB), the Presentation Sisters and the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The school has an enrolment of 640 students in the current school year. In addition to the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate, the school offers an optional Transition Year programme (TY), Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA).

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment during the evaluation was good.
- Teachers shared learning intentions with students and displayed them clearly in all lessons.
- The use of effective feedback was evident in a small number of lessons and this practice should be extended to guide students' learning and move their understanding of a topic to the next level.
- Very effective group and peer work was observed in all lessons; students worked very successfully in a collaborative manner that had a positive effect on learning.
- Over the past number of years higher level attainment has been consistently below the national norms.
- The quality of planning and preparation was very good; the schemes of work set out at junior cycle were based around learning outcomes and intentions which is good practice.

Recommendations

- The highly effective practice of revisiting and sharing learning intentions should be developed further through the use of an exit strategy which would facilitate teachers in assessing students' understanding of the lesson.
- There is scope to look at introducing a rotating TY module of Business, Economics and Accounting so that students have greater awareness of subject choice and can make a more informed decision for Leaving Certificate.
- By developing an action plan focusing on reflective practice and evidence collated on areas for improvement the business department planning would be further enhanced and would tie in with the whole school approach to school self-evaluation (SSE).
- School journals should be checked more regularly to make sure that students are recording homework in their journals; during the evaluation this was not the case.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment observed during the evaluation was good.
- Teachers shared learning intentions with students and displayed them clearly in all lessons. This highly effective practice was most effective when teachers revisited the planned learning intentions in order to assess students' understanding and knowledge. By developing this practice further through the use of an exit strategy teachers could assess students' understanding of the lesson.
- Information and communications technology (ICT) resources used were seen to enhance the learning experience. The use of the online platform, presentation mediums and media clips kept students on task. Further scope for development exists in facilitating student use of ICT.
- The pace and structure of most lessons were good with smooth transitions achieved through the various stages and students engaged very well with the learning activities. Teachers made meaningful connections to real-life business examples.
- The use of effective feedback was evident in a small number of lessons and this practice should be extended to guide students' learning and move their understanding of a topic to the next level. This approach provides students with advice on how to improve their learning.
- Whole-school literacy and numeracy strategies were implemented in a number of lessons. Key words were emphasised through the development of a keyword journal.
- The SSE approach to assessment and managing myself should be further embedded into planning and informing teaching and learning.
- Students were actively engaged in lessons. In finance lessons a check balance approach would assist students in developing their financial skills and focus on achieving and keeping to set times.
- Modelling of students' work should be developed further; this strategy would assist students in engaging in active constructive feedback through viewing a piece of work. Identifying and affirming students' work of good quality is very important in preparing students to engage in self-assessment. The use of a visualiser would provide opportunities to view exemplars of students' work and engage in constructive feedback and self-assessment.
- Students were very well prepared as they started their classroom based assessment (CBA) task. This group task will appear on students' junior cycle profile of achievement (JCPA) in September 2019. Teachers have worked diligently to stay informed of specific material having recently received junior cycle continuing professional development (CPD).
- Very effective group and peer work was observed in all lessons; students worked very successfully in a collaborative manner that had a positive effect on learning.
- Homework was assigned in all lessons observed and rolls were recorded electronically.
- Classroom management was very good in all lessons with exemplary student behaviour evident during the evaluation.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support was good in the school.
- Coláiste Chiaráin offers Business Studies prior to entry into first year against other option subjects. At senior cycle, students have an option to study three business subjects, Business, Accounting and Economics. Subject choice is student-centred and the arrangements for students to choose are good.
- Time allocation for the subjects at junior and senior cycle is very good. Consideration should be made for provision of business subjects in the TY programme.
- There is scope to look at introducing a rotating TY module of Business, Economics and Accounting so that students have greater awareness of subject choice and can make more informed decisions.
- Student attainment in certificate examinations is something which should be closely monitored as over the past number of years higher level attainment has been consistently below the national norms. This analysis of subjects should then be used to inform teaching and learning practices across the department.
- Uptake has risen significantly in Junior Certificate Business in recent times and for some senior cycle subjects; attention should focus on raising the attainment rates in line with an increasing number of students studying business subjects.
- All teachers of Business are members of their subject association, the Business Teachers Association of Ireland (BSTAI); this arrangement promotes professional dialogue and collaboration and raises awareness of issues relevant to the business subjects nationally.
- The assessment procedures set out by the business department are at common level in line with good practice.
- School journals should be checked more regularly to make sure that students are recording homework in their journals; a check of journals during the evaluation indicated that this was not the case.
- Enterprise education is evident in the school; during this academic year students have taken part in the local enterprise awards. It is very good practice that students participate in enterprising initiatives.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The quality of planning and preparation was very good. The schemes of work set out at junior cycle were based around learning outcomes and intentions which is good practice. It would be useful to include an evaluation process in the schemes of work to reflect on practice around junior cycle reform as it is taught for the first time.
- By developing an action plan focusing on reflective practice and evidence collated on areas for improvement the business department planning would be further enhanced and would tie in with the whole-school approach to SSE.
- Business teachers have actively engaged in recent subject-specific CPD which is supported by senior management within the school.
- The Business department should agree a strategy for trialling methodologies that teachers have been exposed to at recent in-service and CPD events. The implementation of peer mentoring and observing in particular around the Junior Cycle Specification would assist in the development of the department's practice in this areas. The *Teaching and Learning in*

the Twenty First Century initiative and the *Droichead* programmes would be very good opportunities to embed this practice into classrooms.

- Business teachers hold regular meetings with documented agendas and minutes provided;
- Professional time is provided to every teacher in the school and a member of the Business department has been identified to lead Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings and coordinate CBAs in the school.
- Individual lesson planning was good throughout the evaluation with an appropriate range of questions and solutions provided to engage student learning.
- The business department produced a CBA publication for students of the school. It is recommended that this information guide be shared with all stakeholders in the school community to keep them informed on current practice.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, two deputy principals and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

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.

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 in 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;

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 welcomes this report. It notes the following:

- The Inspector described the behaviour of students as exemplary
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment during the evaluation was good
- Very effective group and peer work was observed in all lessons. This is commendable as it is a current priority in our school development planning and self-evaluation.
- The students were well prepared for their Classroom Based Assessments (CBA's) and the teachers worked diligently to stay informed of specific material having recently undergone continuous professional development.
- The school will take on board the recommendations within the subject department and where appropriate through school development planning to inform best practice throughout the school. This is particularly important in the area of effective feedback as this is also a priority for development in the school.

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

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