

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

**Subject Inspection in Guidance**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Rosses Community School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Dungloe County Donegal
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	91407T

**Date of Inspection: 18-04-2018**



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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 Guidance 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

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	18-04-2018
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal, deputy principal, guidance team and key staff</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during two class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and guidance team.</li></ul>

### School context

Rosses Community School is a co-educational post-primary school under the joint trusteeship of Donegal Education and Training Board and the Catholic Diocese of Raphoe. It has a current enrolment of 410 students. The school provides the full range of curricular programmes, including an optional Transition Year (TY). The school participates in DEIS, Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools, the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good; there was scope to further develop questioning strategies and more collaborative work in lessons.
- The quality of provision and whole-school support for Guidance is very good.
- There is a strong commitment to student care in the school community and there is a wide range of well-integrated student supports in place; a Wellbeing team would be beneficial.
- The school surveys parents and students regularly for their views, and this has led to the provision of additional subject choices and the hosting of a Careers Fair.
- The quality of planning and preparation in the guidance department is very good.
- The whole-school guidance plan is of an exceptionally high quality.

#### Recommendations

- In order to improve learner outcomes, questioning strategies should be further developed to assess and challenge students' understanding more effectively in lessons.
- More opportunities should be provided for students to work collaboratively in lessons to support their learning.
- A Wellbeing team should be established to foster closer cross-curricular links between the various subject departments.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good; there was scope to develop questioning strategies and to provide more opportunities for collaborative work in lessons.
- All lessons observed were characterised by very respectful relationships between the teacher and the students, and this created a supportive learning environment.
- Advance planning for lessons was evident in the high quality of work sheets, handouts and digital presentations which had been well prepared for the students. Information and communications technology was well integrated into the lessons observed. Commendably, all students were provided with laptops that facilitated easy access to additional guidance resources on line. During the evaluation, students were observed to be using the online research tools with a high level of proficiency and independence.
- The learning intentions were shared at the beginning of each lesson. Some good assessment of the learning intentions was evident during the lessons observed. At the end of one lesson the teacher summarised what had been achieved. Best practice was observed where the teacher asked questions of the students to assess progress in the learning intentions and to consolidate the learning.
- Global questioning was a common feature in most of the lessons observed. Examples of effective direct questioning was observed in one lesson. In this instance the teacher asked questions of the class and provided sufficient wait time, before directing the question at a particular student. Other students were then challenged to expand on the original answer; this is very good practice. In order to improve learner outcomes, it is recommended that questioning strategies be developed further to assess and challenge students' understanding more effectively in lessons.
- During the lessons observed, students worked purposefully and effectively on set tasks, while the teacher moved around the room assessing and supporting individual students in an effective manner. Students, for the most part, were working on their own and rarely engaged in collaborative work. It is recommended that more opportunities be provided for students to work collaboratively in pairs or in groups to support their learning.
- Written assessment practices were observed to be good. Guidance assignments such as career investigations and career profiles are assessed regularly by the guidance counsellor. It is positive that individual constructive feedback is given to students. There was evidence that students are making effective use of self-assessment tools, career interest inventories and a reflective diary for work experience. Students returning from work placements are interviewed by the teaching staff to assess their learning.
- Through interactions with students, it was clear that the students had a good understanding of the education, training, apprenticeship and career options available to them.

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

- The quality of provision and whole-school support for Guidance is very good.
- A recent change in guidance personnel necessitated mid-year changes to the school timetable and interim measures were put in place. School management and staff are to be commended for managing and facilitating the transitional arrangements. Currently, the

guidance team comprises a full-time qualified guidance counsellor, and another member of staff who provides counselling supports. School management should ensure that all members of the team are appropriately qualified in line with Department Circular 09/2012 by the start of the next academic year 2018/19.

- The school has been allocated thirty-three hours for Guidance with a significant proportion of these hours allocated appropriately to one-to-one guidance counselling appointments. In their feedback during the evaluation, senior students praised the accessibility and availability of the guidance team to meet with them on an individual basis. Classroom guidance is timetabled appropriately for students in TY, fifth year and sixth year.
- There is a strong commitment to student care in the school community, and there is a wide range of well-integrated student supports in place. Close cooperation between relevant staff is evident. A student support team meets twice a week and provides an effective forum for dealing with student issues. Referrals are made to the appropriate support agencies in the area.
- Strong links have been established with Donegal Youth Services and other support groups in the community. A mindfulness toolbox has been produced for the school community as part of its ongoing promotion of positive mental health. Other initiatives include a Festival of Happiness Week and an Active Schools Week. It is a positive development that parents and students are represented on the Health Promoting School committee, and that student prefects organise the anti-bullying and friendship week in the school. The school has yet to establish a Wellbeing committee. It is recommended that a Wellbeing team be established to coordinate all these activities and foster closer cross-curricular links between the various subject departments. This would provide for an integrated curriculum and an extra-curriculum programme to support wellbeing.
- Commendably, as part of its self-evaluation process, the school regularly surveys parents and students for their views; this has led to the provision of additional subject choices and the hosting of a Careers Fair.
- An effective induction programme for incoming first-year students is in place and includes subject sampling and a peer-mentoring system. The school promotes student leadership in many aspects of school life, including the system of head boy and head girl, the student council, prefects and mentors.
- It is positive that the guidance counsellor engages in continuing professional development and attends regular counselling supervision.

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

- The quality of planning and preparation in the guidance department is very good. The whole-school guidance plan is of an exceptionally high quality. All of the school's guidance-related policies are up to date.
- Records of meetings with students are well maintained in paper and digital format and are stored securely, along with records of various assessments and standardised tests.
- An annual report on the initial destinations of Leaving Certificate students is compiled. Former students are invited back regularly to talk about their courses and career paths, and their achievements in all walks of life are celebrated.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and guidance team 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
<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;