

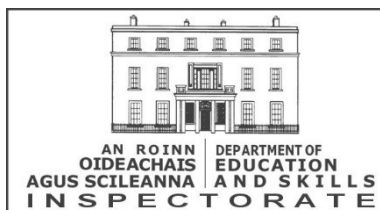
An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of ENGLISH
REPORT**

**Coláiste Phobal Ros Cré
Corville Road, Roscrea, County Tipperary
Roll number: 76069P**

Date of inspection: 9 March 2016



REPORT ON THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN ENGLISH

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	8 and 9 March 2016
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during nine class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The teachers of English are a hard-working group who possess deep levels of enthusiasm and knowledge for their subject.
- Teaching ranged from good to very good in most lessons, with some excellent practices observed.
- There was scope for development in some aspects of teaching and learning.
- The teachers of English are commended for their strong promotion of personal reading and for their voluntary organisation of co-curricular experiences which strengthen the subject-specific enthusiasm and skills of their students.
- Subject department planning is an area for development.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- A rotating co-ordinator role for the department, formal meeting opportunities, and common schemes of work should be developed as a priority.
 - Departmental plans for junior cycle should now be revised and adjusted, with the learning outcomes and other requirements in the new English specification as a key focus.
 - Teaching and learning strategies to further develop students' oral, written, and comprehension skills should be agreed and implemented.
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INTRODUCTION

Coláiste Phobal Ros Cré operates under the patronage of Tipperary Education and Training Board (TETB). It is a co-educational school with an enrolment of 653 students in 2015/16. The student population spans a range of social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. The curricular programmes offered are Junior Certificate (JC), Transition Year (optional), Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, and the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme. The school also offers Post-Leaving Certificate courses.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Teaching ranged from good to very good in most classes, with some excellent practices observed. Some highly effective questioning was observed, which activated students' prior knowledge of concepts and linked new learning with real-world contexts and students' experiences. Other very good practices observed included the linking of genre-specific writing tasks with studied texts and teachers' varying their text choices to meet the needs and interests of particular student cohorts.
- In a small number of lessons, scope for development in some aspects of teaching and learning was noted. Those aspects included inadequate activation of students' prior study of a genre, teaching unseen texts rather than explicitly equipping students with a strategy for unpacking meaning from them, and the majority of classroom talk being provided by the teacher. Adopting the learning-outcomes approach at the centre of the new JC English specification more consistently in planning, teaching and assessment will help remedy these areas for development over time.
- Students were affirmed and encouraged for their contributions in every class.
- Across the department, different teachers possess particular interests and areas of expertise. Formal sharing of that expertise through subject department meetings will strengthen consistent subject delivery while lessening the burden of lesson preparation for the individual teachers.
- From the sample of copies evaluated during the inspection, it was clear that all teachers were diligently setting homework, monitoring completion and giving written formative feedback on substantial pieces of work.
- To support even higher achievement in students' writing, it is recommended that more explicit in-class modelling of the writing process be provided by teachers, that exemplars of standard be used to support peer and self-assessment, and that a departmental approach to leading students to generating collections of texts be agreed.
- Some good differentiation supports are provided to students through careful seating arrangements matching less able and more able students and through the integration of varied stimuli and collaborative exercises in lessons. To further support students in mixed-ability classes, a greater range of differentiated resources should be gathered by the department to support the study of core texts.
- More strategies for the development of students' oracy and comprehension skills should be incorporated into departmental practice. Consciously planning the first-year English scheme to build on fifth and sixth class primary approaches to oracy and comprehension development is encouraged to support student learning.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Good quality subject provision was evident during the evaluation.
- There is very good timetable provision for English in both junior and senior cycle. However, the timetabling of one LCA class group for three periods of English and Communications over two days needs to be reviewed.
- Students are strongly encouraged to study higher-level English at junior and senior cycle.
- The teachers of English possess a shared understanding of the importance of promoting personal reading. The department's encouragement of public library usage, its spearheading of fundraising to stock the school library, and its organisation of an author-visit to officially launch the facility are concrete manifestations of this commitment.
- All classrooms observed were vibrant learning environments, incorporating displays of student work and of subject-specific materials.
- The teachers of English organise a range of valuable co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that enhance the learning experience for students, including theatre visits, the school musical, the school yearbook, and a TY paired reading project.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- While the teachers of English individually engage in planning for their class groups, subject department planning is an area for development.
 - The teachers of English have traditionally participated in departmental meetings. However, the retirement of a colleague who had acted as head of department for many years left a void that had not yet been filled by the time of the evaluation. It is recommended that a rotating co-ordination structure be established with the role and responsibilities of the co-ordinator agreed as part of the English plan, concentrating on organising and facilitating collaborative practices including the sharing of information, tasks, resources, and expertise.
 - Due to specific, once-off circumstances, no opportunities for the school's subject departments to meet formally had been organised for the school year 2015/16 by the time of the evaluation. To support the effective teaching and learning of English, formal opportunities need to be provided by school management for subject department meetings.
 - The subject department plan incorporates a number of useful elements, including agreed priorities for action and an analysis of student achievement in relation to national norms.
 - The preparation of common schemes of work now needs to be incorporated into departmental practice. The individual senior cycle and LCA plans that have guided the teachers of English to date offer very good foundations for common scheme preparation. Collaboratively planning for delivery of the new JC English specification will be an immediate priority for the department.
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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 board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.