

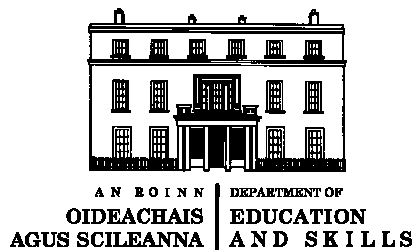
An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Home Economics
REPORT**

**Presentation Secondary School,
Tralee, County Kerry
Roll number: 61450C**

Date of inspection: 15 April 2016



REPORT ON THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN HOME ECONOMICS

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	14 and 15 April 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 eight class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good, with some excellent practice noted.
- A competent team of teachers provided clear, accurate and passionate whole-class inputs.
- All lessons were highly inclusive of both student voice and activity.
- Provision and support for Home Economics is good.
- Planning and preparation outcomes are testament to the teachers' capacity to review, reflect and improve, and all in the interest of enhanced student learning.
- Preparation for lessons was of a high standard, and very thorough at times.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- The further incorporation of topic-specific resources, strategies, homework and assessment activities into programmes of work is recommended.
-

INTRODUCTION

Presentation Secondary School is a voluntary secondary school for girls. It has a current enrolment of 653 students. The curriculum offered includes Junior Certificate, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was very good, with some excellent practice noted.
- As a result of careful and very considered individual planning, lessons were well structured and paced, appropriately pitched, and purposeful.
- The practice of sharing learning intentions with students is firmly established. This was best where reference was made, as relevant, to the knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and values to be developed. In a number of lessons, really well constructed learning intentions were shared, where the wording used emphasised students' active requirements.
- Provision for the visual learner was very strong, with a range of resources well utilised to support students' understanding and learning. In this regard, it was suggested that easy access to a visualiser would be of great benefit to the teachers.
- A competent team of teachers provided clear, accurate and passionate whole-class inputs, with the latter clearly inspiring much student interest, enthusiasm and engagement.
- A student-centred approach to lesson delivery was observed, with all lessons noted as highly inclusive of both student voice and activity. In addition, student activity was effectively monitored and fully processed, with students well supported to draw meaningful conclusions.
- Good quality questioning was noted. On occasion, it was suggested that there was a need to better distribute questions across the class group.
- It was advised that the introduction of writing frames would further support students in the task of note making.
- It was most positive to see that students' creativity is fostered, especially in both the practical food studies and the design and craft work element at junior cycle.
- Students worked competently and confidently during practical food studies lessons, which is indicative of the quality instruction and guidance they receive in this aspect of Home Economics.
- It was good to note a strong keyword emphasis in lessons: however, it was advised that it would be valuable to link such references to a summative activity or event.
- Teachers demonstrated a genuine care for students and their learning, which resulted in an extremely positive classroom atmosphere.
- Both self-assessment and peer-assessment events were observed at classroom level. Teachers provided simple, accessible tasks, explicitly highlighted the related criteria for success, and promoted relevant discussion. This was noted as very good practice and is further encouraged.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Provision and support for Home Economics is good.
- Access to Home Economics is favourable, with the provision of compulsory subject sampling programmes in both first year and transition year ensuring informed student decision-making.
- Home Economics is a popular subject choice with students.
- Overall, the subject is appropriately timetabled. The possibility of a third period in TY would be beneficial, if and when resources permit. An evident inequity of timetabled provision for Home Economics, when compared with other optional subjects in the school, was highlighted during feedback.
- It was advised that deployment could facilitate greater rotation of teachers across year groups and programmes. The undesirability of having two teachers share a class group was also highlighted. The newly appointed principal provided assurances that every effort would be made to address both matters in the construction of future timetables.
- The subject is well resourced, with both kitchens recently renovated. The rooms are well equipped and organised, and are maintained to a high standard.
- Teachers' ongoing participation in continuing professional development, which includes the marking of the relevant state examinations, is very supportive of effective teaching and learning.
- A subject-specific assessment policy exists. It positively reflects syllabus recommendations, with due attention also paid to: frequency and modes of assessment; the importance of aggregate marking; and provision of common assessments that reflect the paper layout and question style of the associated state examination.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- A proactive team has produced very good outcomes in the area of planning and preparation. Significant work has been undertaken across all key areas, with the identification and documentation of valuable resources being noted as especially strong.
- The electronic presentation of the plan is commended, both for the collaboration it supports and the sharing that it is fostering. It was suggested that there is scope at this point for some archiving, alongside the possible organisation of material in an annual plan format. It was suggested that the role of coordinator be rotated.
- Programmes of work have been agreed, and these are positively grounded in sets of year-group specific learning intentions. They are developmental in nature, and clearly identify both practical and project work. It was highlighted that there may be some scope for increasing students' access to practical food studies, especially in second year and third year. The need to make further provision for textile studies in junior cycle was also identified.
- A well-thought out, solid, varied, challenging but fun, first-year programme has been planned, one which provides a very good grounding for students who will choose to study Home Economics to Junior Certificate level. A high-quality accompanying workbook, which has been prepared in-house and is updated regularly, is particularly commended. It

is a testament to the teachers' capacity to review, reflect and improve, and all in the interest of enhanced student learning.

- An interesting TY programme exists. The possibility of modifying it, so that it further supports the development of the skills and competencies required for Leaving Certificate Home Economics, was suggested for consideration.
- Building on the established identification of generally suitable teaching methodologies and strategies, as well as homework activities and assessment events, the further incorporation into plans of more topic-specific data is recommended.
- Action planning, to accompany the abundant and varied review activities undertaken on an ongoing basis, should be considered. The 'Santa Letter' student review activity was noted as a particularly innovative and fruitful way to garner students' views on teaching and learning and the subject in general.
- Preparation for lessons was of a high standard, and very thorough at times.

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 accepts the report as the final inspection report available for publication and wished to respond formally to the report. The Board agrees that the response submitted will be included as an appendix to the published report. The board's response is submitted below.

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 is pleased with the content of the inspection report that acknowledges the very good practice of the Home Economics department in the school. The Board wishes to commend the members of the Home Economics Department for their professionalism, hard work and commitment to their students.

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

The Board of Management notes a recommendation of one further period of Home Economics in Transition Year and undertakes to examine its feasibility.

Archiving of the electronic plan is planned for the current year.

Rotation of staff is planned, as discussed with the Inspector.

The recommendations regarding incorporation of topic-specific resources, strategies, homework and assessment activities into programmes of work will form part of the department's review in the current year.