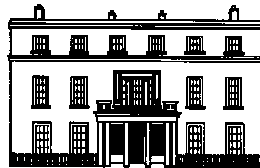


An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Home Economics
REPORT

Scoil na Tríonóide Naofa
Doon, County Limerick
Roll number: 68121S

Date of inspection: 9 March 2016



AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS

**REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN HOME ECONOMICS**

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 six class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- Teaching was of a high quality, with a student-centred approach to lesson delivery.
- Collaborative learning was facilitated in lessons, with some suggestions for its enhanced use provided.
- There was a strong emphasis in lessons on checking for understanding, and student learning was evident.
- Print-rich classrooms served to inform and inspire students, as well as to acknowledge their work.
- Provision and support for Home Economics is very good.
- Home Economics is a very popular choice for girls, and there is a desire to increase uptake amongst boys.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- As Home Economics is best taught in an integrated manner, programme plans should be revisited with a view to enhancing provision for a more unified delivery.
 - Teachers were advised to seek to provide for greater variety in terms of what is required of students during individual lessons.
 - Planning and provision for practical food studies, both in terms of level of challenge and students' contact with this aspect of the syllabus, ought to be reviewed.
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INTRODUCTION

Scoil na Tríonóide Naofa is a co-educational secondary school with a current enrolment of 606 students. It offers a wide range of curricular programmes including: Junior Certificate, an optional Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), and the established Leaving Certificate.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Teaching was of a high quality.
- Lesson plans were commendably shared. This was best when framed within a series of learning intentions that emphasised knowledge to be garnered as well as understanding, skills and attitudes to be developed.
- Through the identification of relevant links, teachers made valuable use of students' existing knowledge or experiences to support new learning.
- The teaching of Home Economics is best when topics are taught in an integrated manner. This approach was generally evident, but it was suggested that there is scope for increasing the use of this approach, particularly when delivering practical food studies lessons.
- Teachers were highly informed in relation to contemporary matters relevant to Home Economics. As a result, their inputs both interested and appealed to students.
- In teachers' presentations very good use was made of high quality visual resources to both stimulate students' interest and to support their understanding and learning.
- A student-centred approach was evident, with questioning utilised as the key inclusion strategy in theory lessons. With a view to enhancing observed good practices, questioning was identified as an area worthy of further development.
- Teachers were advised to seek to provide for greater variety in terms of what is required of students during individual lessons. The incorporation of strategies that would help students to consider or source information, in tandem with more teacher-led strategies which support the presentation of information, would provide a valuable starting point. For example, students might be taught to note make rather than note take.
- It was positive to see that collaborative learning was accommodated in all lessons. It was suggested to teachers that it would be valuable to start benchmarking planned activities against the five elements of effective group work: individual accountability; positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction; collaborative skills, and processing of both academic and social efforts. In addition, teachers are encouraged to explore the myriad of relevant strategies linked to this method of teaching and learning.
- In the facilitation of practical food studies lessons, teacher inputs included good provision for a combination of modelling, on-spot demonstrations, whole-class reminders and careful monitoring of students' participation.
- There is a developmental approach obvious in terms of the attainment of practical food studies skills in first year, but consideration ought to be given to increasing the level of challenge offered by chosen tasks and related dishes. It is positive that students are introduced to the concept and practice of review and evaluation from first year.

- There was a strong emphasis in lessons on checking for understanding, and student learning was evident.
- There was some evidence of the use of assessment for learning (AfL) strategies. Teachers were encouraged to build an action plan around the further exploration and incorporation of such strategies.
- Teacher-student relations were positive, and atmosphere in lessons was most conducive to student learning.
- Print-rich classrooms served to inform and inspire students, as well as to acknowledge their work. It was suggested that the adjoining corridors might provide further space for these valuable, and potentially powerful, functions.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The level of provision and support for Home Economics is very good.
- Home Economics is a very popular choice for girls, and there is a desire to increase uptake amongst boys. The intention to address this through programme planning is encouraged. Entry and exit polls, to inform planning and programme delivery in first year and in transitions year, were suggested for consideration.
- Access to Home Economics is favourable, supported by the provision of taster programmes and the construction of subject bands informed by students' preferences. It is suggested, in particular for first-year students for whom the half-year module ceases at Christmas, that students be supported to complete a detailed end-of-module review. This would serve to later remind students of their experience in the Home Economics classroom.
- Whilst remaining cognisant of the fact that a taster programme operates in first year, Home Economics is appropriately timetabled. An additional single period each week in Transition Year would be valuable, if and when resources permit.
- Home Economics is well resourced, and these resources include the provision of information communication technologies (ICT). When finances allow, a visualiser would be a worthwhile addition to the teachers' toolkit. Teachers were encouraged to explore the possibilities that ICT offers in terms of communication with students.
- Due attention is paid to health and safety in the classroom. The class rules, as well as the associated 'Responsible Care Contract', should be reviewed against the subject-specific, risk-based assessment.
- A subject-specific assessment policy is clearly articulated. It commendably indicates that assessment takes many forms and that teachers provide aggregate marks at key times. It acknowledges feedback as vital to learning, and formative assessment is emphasised in the plan. It was observed that examinations could be more reflective of the layout of the related state examination papers.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- A subject plan is in place, which positively demonstrates an emerging review and reflection component. This was further encouraged, with the suggestion that relevant findings be linked to action plans for improvement.

- Programmes of work have been developed. Commendably, these are time-based, grounded in learning outcomes and attention is being paid to the identification of suitable methodologies. The compartmentalised nature of the programmes was discussed with teachers, a finding that is linked to the earlier recommendation offered in relation to the need to further develop the teaching of Home Economics in an integrated manner.
- Another key observation discussed was the relatively low provision of practical food studies lessons across year groups, and the suggestion that this be reviewed.
- The preparation of good quality worksheets designed to support fifth-year students when self-evaluating journal work, and third year-students when engaging in peer assessment during the food studies practical pre examinations, were noted.
- Planning for co-curricular and extracurricular activities is good, with the after-school 'Food Club' that was recently established by the subject department meriting particular mention.
- Preparation for observed lessons was thorough.

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 acknowledges the positive report on the subject and recommendations therein.

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 will work and support the Home Economics Department in the implementation of the Report's recommendations.

- Currently the Department is revisiting its First Year plan with regards to practical food studies contact time.
- The Home Economics teachers are also developing a display area to promote the subject to our Home Economics Students.
- The Home Economics Department will endeavour to continue to work on the positive feedback from the Inspector recommendations.