

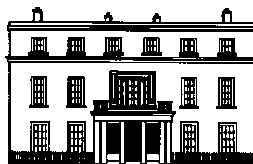
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of Home Economics  
REPORT**

**Coláiste Chomáin  
Rossport, County Mayo  
Roll number: 72140V**

**Date of inspection: 17 September 2013**



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

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

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Date of inspection</b>	17 September 2013
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and teacher(s)</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during four class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teacher</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- High quality teaching and learning was evident in all of the lessons observed.
- A very good range of resources, including information and communication technology (ICT), was well-utilised to enhance teaching and learning.
- There was very good teacher-student rapport during all of the lessons observed.
- Students were fully engaged in the learning activities and demonstrated good understanding of subject knowledge appropriate to their ability.
- There is very good monitoring and assessment of students' work on a continuous basis.
- Individual lesson planning was very good and a positive start has been made with regard to long term schemes of work.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Short-term schemes of work should be developed to include details regarding learning outcomes, the corresponding methodologies, resources and assessment modes.
  - Action planning which should focus on achieving key developmental priorities for the subject should be developed and implemented in line with the school's procedures for self-evaluation.
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## **INTRODUCTION**

This Gaeltacht co-educational school operates under the auspices of Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board (ETB). Irish is the normal spoken language of the school and the school's administrative work is conducted through the medium of Irish. The school is making very good progress in developing students' Irish-language skills thus increasing the level of Irish-medium instruction in the school. The junior cycle now operates through the medium of Irish and it is planned to extend this provision into the senior cycle as resources permit. The school is the sole provider of post-primary education in the locality and serves a largely rural population. The mainstream enrolment stands at fifty-four, with a further eighteen students enrolled in adult and continuing education courses. The school participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- The standard of teaching and learning was of a high quality in all the lessons observed. Lessons had clear learning objectives, were well structured and appropriately paced.
- Teaching and learning were most effective where the variety of methodologies used facilitated a good balance between teacher instruction and the active engagement of all students in their learning.
- Very good questioning and explaining strategies were integrated effectively to engage students in the learning activity, to check understanding and to support students in the development of higher-order thinking skills.
- ICT was used effectively in all of the lessons observed to present content and to provide a focus for teacher presentations.
- Classroom instruction is provided through the medium of Irish for junior cycle lessons. From classroom observation and discussions with students they clearly understood the teacher. This commitment to the promotion of the Irish language is in line with school policy and the teacher's effort to meet these challenges is praiseworthy. The school is urged to continue in its efforts to increase the level of Irish-medium teaching in Home Economics.
- Very good teacher-student rapport was evident, which led to a positive classroom environment. Students were very well behaved and positive affirmation of their efforts helped the teacher to raise higher expectations and standards amongst learners.
- Students were well managed and directed in all learning activities. Small class sizes supported the provision of high levels of individual support tailored to students needs. Students were very engaged in the learning activities.
- There is good support for students with additional educational needs and good understanding of the nature of their learning difficulties.
- Good attention was paid to promoting the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Students' progress and competence is monitored and assessed effectively by a range of assessment modes. The majority of students aspire to take higher level in certificate examinations and they achieve well. The positive benefits of continuous assessment were evident and there is greater scope for the various components of Home Economics to be reflected in these monthly assessments.

- High standards were set with regard to the setting and monitoring of homework. Students generally displayed very good levels of knowledge and understanding appropriate to their ability. Some very good practice was observed regarding the provision of formative feedback to students.

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

- A short subject sampling programme in optional subjects is undertaken by incoming first-year students. The Transition Year programme is optional in the school and students undertake a cookery module for a half-year.
- Currently Home Economics is chosen predominately by the female cohort, and uptake is generally in line with national norms. The school acknowledges that gender imbalance in uptake is an issue that it will continue to monitor in consultation with the partners involved. While recognising the constraints regarding subject choice options, the school should continue to support students in making less traditional subject choices, in order to encourage gender balance.
- Class period provision is generally in line with syllabus recommendations; however the current fifth and sixth-year students are taught in a multi-class situation. While a commendable range of teaching approaches are employed to ensure effective learning, this current arrangement should be kept under review and addressed if possible, within the constraints of available resources.
- Home Economics benefits from a good level of resource provision and whole-school support. The school has a recently refurbished specialist room, which functions as a kitchen and a textiles room. The facility is very well maintained and resourced. Management is committed to the ongoing updating of resources and servicing of equipment for both food and textiles studies.
- There is very good commitment to continuing professional development (CPD). There is a notable history of engagement in the marking of various aspects of the subject, in the certificate examinations, through the medium of Irish. This is commended as it provides opportunities to increase the breadth of professional expertise and so enhance students' learning experiences. This commitment to CPD is very well facilitated and supported by management.

#### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Very good progress has been made in developing subject planning documentation through the medium of Irish. In addition, long-term schemes of work, including timeframes for delivery of topics, have been drawn up for each year group. It is recommended that more detailed short-term schemes of work be developed to include the learning outcomes to be attained, the corresponding methodologies, resources and assessment modes. These should be utilised as working documents. A review section should also be included to support self-evaluation.
- In order to support ongoing evaluations in the school, a written plan should be developed for the short taster programme in first year.

- There was evidence of very good individual lesson planning and preparation. A good range of Irish-medium teaching aids, resource materials, and class notes has been developed. These cover a range of syllabus topics that are effectively tailored to support specific year groups.
- To further develop self-evaluation it is recommended that a SCOT (strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats) analysis be undertaken with regards to various aspects of home economics provision at the school. This should identify the perceived subject-specific strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats. Once developmental priorities have been identified, from the SCOT analysis and shared with school management, action plans, including timeframes for their implementation, should then be developed to achieve these priorities and performance indicators should be designed to review progress.

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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject teacher at the conclusion of the evaluation. 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.