

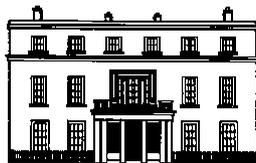
An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Home Economics
REPORT**

**Gairmscoil Éinne
Cill Rónain, Inis Mór, Oileáin Árann
County Galway
Roll number: 71300M**

Date of inspection: 12 May 2014



**A N R O I N N | D E P A R T M E N T O F
O I D E A C H A I S | E D U C A T I O N
A G U S S C I L E A N N A | A N D S K I L L S**

REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN HOME ECONOMICS

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	12 May 2014
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and teacher• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during four class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teacher

MAIN FINDINGS

- Very high quality teaching and good quality learning was observed and there was evidence of some good use of active learning and differentiation strategies.
- Very good teacher-student rapport was evident.
- The provision for teaching and learning in Home Economics is mainly through the medium of English.
- A good range of resources was used effectively to enhance teaching and learning.
- The quality of subject planning and review is good, with some scope for development.
- A range of assessment modes is utilised to determine student progress and competence.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is a need to provide students with more detailed formative feedback on their work.
 - The school is urged to continue in its efforts to increase the level of Irish-medium teaching in Home Economics.
 - The outcomes of current and future self-evaluation activities should inform the identification of priorities and related action planning.
 - A review of textiles provision including curriculum and facilities should be undertaken.
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INTRODUCTION

Gairmscoil Éinne is a co-educational school operating under the auspices of Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board (ETB) and has an enrolment of sixty-six students. The school has an optional Transition Year (TY). A small number of students from mainland schools attend Gairmscoil Éinne for TY only, as part of ‘*Scéim na bhFoghlaimoírí Gaeilge*’. The school serves Inis Mór, the largest of the Aran Islands, which is a Gaeltacht area. Irish is the normal spoken language of the school and the school’s administrative work is conducted through the medium of Irish.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The provision for teaching and learning in Home Economics is currently through the medium of English, with the exception of TY where instruction is provided through the medium of Irish. However, the willingness and potential to deliver the full programme through Irish exists. This should be further explored as experience and expertise in delivering the subject through Irish are further developed. The school authorities in collaboration with the teacher should plan for incremental up-skilling in order to be competent in delivering the subject through the medium of Irish.
- Very high quality teaching and good quality learning was observed in lessons. Clear learning outcomes were communicated to the students. Lessons were clearly focused, well sequenced and presented at a pace that accommodated the individual abilities of the students.
- The choice and use of teaching resources were effective. Information and communication technology (ICT) was utilised well in lessons. Good attention was paid to promoting the development of students’ literacy and numeracy skills.
- Some good examples of the use of active-learning methodologies, including strategies to support differentiation were observed. In the context of mixed-ability classes, the use of strategies for differentiation should be further developed so that students continue to be challenged to foster independent learning in oral, written and practical work.
- Very good interpersonal relations exist and students’ progress and competence is monitored and assessed by a range of assessment modes. However, there is scope to provide students with more detailed formative feedback to enable them to improve the quality of their work.
- With regards to the child care projects, care should be taken to ensure that the focus, aim and investigation involved reflect some aspect of child development. It is important from the outset that students are familiar with the guidance available in resources such as examinations criteria, guidelines and associated marking schemes, and the chief examiners’ reports available from the State Examinations Commission.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- All TY students study Home Economics and it is a very popular optional subject in all other year groups. The uptake is particularly high at junior cycle. Currently Home Economics is chosen predominately by the female cohort.
- Optional subjects are currently selected from pre-set subject band which are created within the constraints of available resources. To facilitate students in making a more

informed choice with regard to subject choices, the school is planning to introduce a short subject sampling programme to incoming first-year students.

- 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 in line with syllabus recommendations, and particularly generous in senior cycle. However, two timetable issues were identified during the evaluation. First, the current fifth and sixth-year students as well as the first and second year students are taught in a multi-class situation. The impact that this approach has on student attainment should be monitored. Secondly, two of the double classes straddle the break. While a commendable range of teaching approaches are employed to support effective learning, these arrangements should be kept under review and addressed if possible, within the constraints of available resources.
- The school has a specialist food studies room, which has been fitted out with a range of domestic and industrial catering equipment. The facility is well maintained and resourced, albeit, that there is lack of suitable storage space for specialist equipment, teaching resources and student coursework. Management is committed to the ongoing updating of resources and servicing of equipment for both food and textiles studies. In this context, the provision of some new sewing machines and sewing equipment should be prioritised. Furthermore, provision for adequate storage space should be addressed.
- The school is committed to supporting teachers to improving their Irish language skills through a variety of training courses and learning opportunities. The expertise to be gained in the marking of various components of the certificate examinations, particularly through the medium of Irish, was discussed.
- The existing policies for homework and assessment should be reviewed and further developed into more comprehensive documents.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Very good progress has been made to date in developing a subject plan. Long-term checklists as well as short-term detailed schemes of work have been developed for each year group. These include time frames; the learning outcomes to be attained; the corresponding methodologies and resources. Schemes also include a review section to facilitate self-evaluation. This is exemplary practice.
- As an initial step in self-evaluation, a SCOT (strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats) analysis was recently carried out. From the SCOT analysis, developmental priorities for Home Economics should be identified and shared with management. Action plans, including timeframes for their implementation, should then be developed to achieve these priorities and performance indicators designed to review progress.
- A review of the current programme for textiles is recommended in order to take full account of current syllabus requirements.
- A good range of teaching resources have been accumulated, however, these are mainly English-medium. In the context of building capacity to increase the level of Irish-medium teaching in Home Economics, ongoing investment in the development and expansion of a

range resources to support Irish-medium teaching and learning in Home Economics is recommended.

- Given the small class size there is good support for students with additional educational needs and good understanding of the nature of their learning difficulties.
- A range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities such as catering for various school events provides students with opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom. There are very good links with such subjects as Science, Art and French.
- Records of student achievement in certificate examinations are analysed annually.
- There is very good communication with parents regarding all school activities and students and their parents are advised regularly on their progress in the subject.

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.