

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Home Economics
REPORT

Kinsale Community School
Kinsale, County Cork
Roll number: 91499E

Date of inspection: 12 March 2013



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

Dates of inspection	11 and 12 March 2013
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

- The quality of teaching observed in lessons ranged from very good to poor; where very good or good, there was much evidence of learning.
- Many positive practices were noted in all food-studies lessons.
- Where observed, teacher dynamism served to bring about enthusiastic student engagement.
- A stimulating learning environment has been established, which commendably includes the display of students' work.
- Home Economics is well provided for and supported by the school.
- Planning for co-curricular activities is very strong.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that a better balance between teacher inputs and students' participation be provided in lessons.
 - The further demonstration and highlighting of key skills and principles is recommended in practical food-studies lessons.
 - The subject plan, and in particular the programmes of work, require further development.
 - The Transition Year (TY) module should be reviewed.
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INTRODUCTION

Kinsale Community School is a co-educational school, with 768 students enrolled. A comprehensive curriculum is offered to students, including: Junior Certificate; Transition Year (TY); Leaving Certificate; the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP); and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA). The school also provides Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching observed in lessons ranged from very good to poor. Where teaching was good or very good, there was much evidence of students' learning.
- The good practice of sharing learning outcomes with students was observed. At times, key words were used, together with a concise explanation of their relevance, which simplified the planned learning for students.
- Whilst on occasion greater teacher involvement was necessary, at other times teacher voice tended to predominate. It is recommended that a better balance between teacher inputs and students' participation be provided in lessons.
- Following one theory lesson, advice was offered by the inspector in relation to the need to enhance students' participation and learning through: the provision of a clearer explanation of what was required of students; the on-going monitoring of students' engagement with the task, in order to determine task suitability and the degree of students' understanding; and the facilitation of comprehensive feedback to ensure that students benefit from the activity. The use of co-operative learning strategies was also advised.
- A positive feature noted in the same theory lesson was the provision made for the development of students' research skills and oral proficiency. Students presented in a confident manner. With a view to supporting students in structuring their oral presentations, it was suggested that they be provided with a template for future presentations. Ideally, this template should be closely aligned to a corresponding student worksheet.
- In a textile lesson, the teacher's love of the subject area engendered high levels of student interest and motivation. In this instance, an effective mix of whole-class teaching; small group demonstration; co-operative learning groups; individual projects; and task sheets, resulted in quality student participation and significant learning.
- In practical food studies lessons, many positive practices were noted. These included: advance preparation of students; clearly communicated teacher expectations in relation to organisation, hygiene, and safety; monitoring of students' participation; the provision of differentiated support and advice to individuals and pairs; and the promotion of students' independent activity, and their creativity. In turn, the majority of students demonstrated an admirable level of competence and confidence.
- It was recommended that better provision be made in practical, food studies lessons for the demonstration of key skills to students. With this in mind, it was suggested that a visualiser would be a valuable addition to the kitchen. The greater highlighting of key concepts relating to food preparation, cooking and presentation, was also suggested. In one lesson, where some students were practising for an examination, the fuller inclusion of all students through, for example, a carefully structured, peer-observation activity, was strongly suggested.

- Where observed, teacher dynamism served to bring about enthusiastic student engagement. This, in conjunction with a warm and ready affirmation of students' efforts, resulted in a positive atmosphere. Where the atmosphere was tense, student engagement was less positive.
- A stimulating learning environment has been established, which commendably includes the display of students' work.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Home Economics is well provided for in the school. It is offered as an optional subject, except in TY, where all students undertake a half-year module. Timetabling is both equitable and fair. A large home economics room, which has been equipped to a high standard, is well maintained.
- A relatively high percentage of both junior and senior cycle girls choose to study Home Economics. It is unusual, particularly in light of the open subject choice system operating in the school that, excluding first year, no boys have currently opted to study the subject. It is suggested that this finding is worth further exploration at school level.
- Whilst being cognisant of students' abilities, teachers encourage their students to study higher level Home Economics.
- In its deployment of the school's two specialist teachers, management seeks to facilitate the rotation of teachers across year groups. To enhance existing practice, it is hoped that in the future, management will be able to deploy both teachers to equally share the teaching of first-year home economics. Management also accommodates teachers' interests and knowledge by ensuring, for example, that the teacher most experienced and interested in LCA Hotel and Catering (HCT) is correspondingly deployed.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- A formal subject department meeting is facilitated once a year. Provision for a minimum of one other formal meeting should be considered. The subject co-ordinator's role is linked to a post of responsibility. As this does not support the concept of rotating the position of co-ordinator, this practice needs to be reviewed.
- Minutes of meetings are maintained and a subject plan has been compiled. It would be valuable to see inclusion of self-evaluation activities in this plan. These might include: the outcomes of a SCOT analysis; the literacy and numeracy demands of the subject; or a commentary on the outcomes of an analysis of results in the state examinations.
- Lists of work to be covered with each year group have been compiled. It is advised that termly programmes of work be developed. These should clearly indicate the integration of theory with practical food studies or journal work, and should demonstrate a more balanced scheduling of the various aspects of the syllabuses.
- Teachers maintain records of completed work, in which valuable information such as resources, methodologies and assessment, is also documented. In time, these records should be used to inform the preparation of more detailed programmes of work which should, ideally, find their basis in a set of agreed learning outcomes.

- Teachers are encouraged to review the TY module. The development of a programme that will build on junior cycle learning, while supporting the development of skills that students would require for senior cycle, should be the focus for this review.
- Planning for co-curricular activities is very strong.
- In the majority of lessons, the quality of short term planning was either good or very good. A range of resources, often visual in nature, had been prepared and selected for use in some lessons.

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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

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 thanks the inspectorate for a most comprehensive report and notes its many compliments. The Board is particularly pleased that the high quality of work undertaken in the textile lesson and in the practical food lessons was noted.

The school has made every endeavour to promote Home Economics amongst the entire student body and looks forward to the new extension when the building will be further equipped to facilitate this subject.

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 Principal understands the importance of implementing the recommendations of the inspectorate and will discuss key appropriate issues on an ongoing basis with the relevant staff.

The Board regrets that the inspectorate noted tension in one particular class and that on one occasion that the standard of teaching was poor. The Board have requested that this matter be addressed by the Principal and that the situation be monitored on an ongoing basis.

The Board fully accepts the very positive recommendations made by the inspectorate and will endeavour to implement changes in the coming academic year. This process has already begun and the timetable for 2013/2014 reflects this.