

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Business and Accounting

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Colaiste Na Mí, Navan, Co. Meath
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Johnstown Educational Campus Johnstown Navan
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	76173K

Date of Inspection: 20-11-2018



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agus Scileanna**
Department of
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SUBJECT INSPECTION

Subject Inspections report on the quality of work in individual curriculum areas within a school. They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of the subject in the school.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated learning and teaching in Business and Accounting under the following headings:

1. Teaching, learning and assessment
2. Subject provision and whole-school support
3. Planning and preparation

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

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.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Date of inspection	20-11-2018
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and key staff• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during 6 class periods; three singles and three doubles.• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Colaiste na Mí, Navan was established in 2013 under the patronage of Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB). Since then, the school has grown to its current enrolment of 715 students. The school provides the Junior Cycle, Transition Year (TY) as an optional programme, Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA). The current sixth-year grouping will be the first students to sit the Leaving Certificate examination in 2019.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was very good.
- Effective assessment strategies were observed with some highly effective examples of formative feedback evident in students' copies.
- In highly effective lessons, there were some examples of note making which facilitated a student-centred approach to learning. However, a heavy emphasis is still being placed on note taking across the business department.
- The quality of whole-school support and subject provision is very good.
- Subject planning in the business department is very good and teachers have adapted junior cycle resource material in developing the scheme of work for junior cycle.
- Collaboration is very strong across the business department. Teachers' resources are developed and placed on an online platform and a very extensive business website has been developed.

Recommendations

- It would be beneficial to students to balance the heavy emphasis that is being placed on notetaking with the more challenging practice of encouraging the students to summarise and phrase key points themselves; this skill would enhance their understanding of the subject area and develop students' capacity in becoming independent learners.
- To increase parents' and students' understanding of the assessment framework that supports junior cycle Business Studies, reporting systems should be developed that reflect the range of student learning experiences and the descriptors used with classroom-based assessments (CBAs) and certificate examinations.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was very good. The majority of lessons ranged from good to very good.
- In highly effective lessons, teachers facilitated a student-centred approach to learning by enabling students to become reflective independent learners; highly effective questioning strategies were used which developed students' understanding.
- Students' learning experiences were positive when teachers engaged in active methodologies which allowed students to take ownership of their learning. Identifying and affirming good quality students' work is key to preparing learners to self-assess. In a few instances teachers provided time to the class group to examine exemplars of students' work and engage in feedback. This highly effective practice should be developed across the department.
- In all lessons observed the interactions between students and teachers were very respectful, and teachers had high expectations of their students. This facilitated a positive learning environment.
- Student attendance was very good throughout the evaluation with exemplary student behaviour evident in all lessons visited.
- Oral questioning was the dominant assessment strategy observed. Best practice was evident when the questions posed enabled students to apply and evaluate information with their peers. A greater use of higher order questions with appropriate wait time would further develop learner experience.
- A range of teaching methodologies was observed during lessons. High quality learning was noted in instances where deliberate efforts were made to link the lesson content to students' experiences or with prior learning.
- A strong emphasis on oral skill development was evident in business lessons with a focus on subject specific terminology and key word development. A vibrant print rich display of business material was evident in business classrooms which further immersed the student cohort in the subject specific language.
- Effective assessment strategies were observed. Homework was assigned in all lessons and is regularly corrected. Some highly effective examples of written formative feedback was evident in students' copies. This good practice should be extended across the whole department.
- Formative assessment approaches including the use of success criteria linked to learning intentions for units of learning at junior cycle should also be further developed to enable teachers and students make more accurate judgements about learning.
- In all lessons observed students' enjoyment and enthusiasm for the subject was clearly evident. Teachers circulated and kept students focused on the task-at-hand and provided one-to-one support when required.
- There were some examples of note making. However, a heavy emphasis is being placed on notetaking. Students' understanding of the subject area would increase if they were required to phrase key points themselves.

- Very effective group and pair work was observed in all lessons; students worked very successfully in a collaborative manner that had a positive effect on learning.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of whole-school support and subject provision is very good.
- All three business subjects; Accounting, Business and Economics are offered to students at senior cycle and first-year students study a twelve week sampling programme of Business Studies before making an informed subject choice in second year.
- The business department assessment procedures are in line with whole-school assessment approaches. Examinations are set at common level and coordinated by the team of teachers; students are encouraged to peer assess and comment on areas for improvement which is very good practice.
- Regular reports are issued to parents. However, in order to increase parents' and students' understanding of the assessment framework that supports junior cycle Business Studies, reporting systems should be developed that reflect the range of student learning experiences and the descriptors used with classroom-based assessments and certificate examinations.
- Teachers and students avail of very good Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities with both having access to Wi-Fi enabled tablets. The business department has full access to a computer room and the use of such resources is actively promoted by senior management.
- The uptake of business subjects across the school is very good.
- The business department has established highly effective systems to support newly qualified teachers including peer mentoring and teacher observation. All activities are meticulously documented. This practice should be further extended to include all business teachers as the new specification is embedded across the school.
- Business teachers have actively engaged in recent subject specific Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and teachers are active members of their subject organisation, the Business Teachers Association of Ireland (BSTAI).
- Professional time is provided to every teacher in the department and the deployment of all teachers is in line with their qualifications, skills, knowledge and interest.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Planning in the business department is very good and teachers have adapted junior cycle resource material when developing their schemes of work for junior cycle.
- Subject planning would further benefit from a piece on reflective practice with an evaluation section at the end of each identified learning area and the development of an action plan which would identify short, medium and long term goals for the business department.
- Individual lesson planning was very good. An appropriate range of questions and solutions was provided to engage students throughout lessons.
- Formal subject department meetings are regularly held with extensive minutes recorded.

- Collaboration is very strong across the business department. Teachers' resources are developed and placed on an online platform and a very effective business website has been developed.
- Data regarding the number of students taking business subjects in the certificate examinations and student attainment are reviewed annually against the national norms for the subject.

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 INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the of quality the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	Very good applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is outstanding and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	Good applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	Satisfactory applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	Fair applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	Weak applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;