

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in English

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Jesus And Mary College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Our Lady's Grove Goatstown Road Dublin 14
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	60891E

Date of Inspection: 24-10-2018



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

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 English 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

Dates of inspection	23 and 24 October 2018
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of subject planning folders• Discussions with principal and teachers of English• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning in eight lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to individual teachers• Feedback to principal and English department

School context

Jesus and Mary College is a well-established secondary school for girls under the trusteeship of the Le Chéile Schools Trust. It offers the Junior Cycle programme, a compulsory Transition Year programme, and the established Leaving Certificate. Current enrolment stands at 309.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching was very good overall, with examples of highly effective teaching approaches in most lessons visited.
- The quality of learning was very good; students were responsive, motivated, and willing to engage with challenging material.
- Assessment practices are of good quality and reflect the new approaches to junior cycle assessment.
- Provision and whole-school support for English is very good.
- Subject planning is well structured, detailed and reflective, and the department is committed to continuing development

Recommendations

- To build further on the effective junior cycle practices in place, teachers of English should work on articulating learning intentions, derived from the learning outcomes in the specification, in terms of specific skills and knowledge that students will be able to demonstrate.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- Eight lessons were observed, covering all years, levels, and programmes offered, and involving all members of the English department. The quality of teaching was very good overall, and instances of highly effective teaching were observed in most of the lessons visited.
- Teachers engaged very readily in professional discussions about their practice during the evaluation, and showed a commitment to developing their approaches to teaching, learning and assessment in line with changes in the curriculum.
- Lessons were planned so as to provide rich learning experiences for students. This was evident in the attention given to the sequence of lesson activities, so that students could build their knowledge and understanding of the text and topic as the lesson progressed. In one or two instances, lessons would have benefited from an additional step in the sequence, for example, the opportunity for students to hear a full and expressive reading of a poem before beginning to analyse it. However, sequencing was generally very good.
- Teachers approached the topic of each lesson enthusiastically, inviting participation and response. Very good teacher preparation of materials and tasks gave students a 'way in' to the topic, and allowed purposeful work to begin without any loss of lesson time. While teachers guided students through the various lesson activities, teacher voice did not dominate.
- The lesson topics covered included analysis and appreciation of poetry, drama, film and visual texts, and the development of descriptive writing skills. Texts, whether prescribed or selected, were suitably engaging and challenging, and were approached in a way that enabled students to interpret and respond to them. One excellent example of this enabling approach involved students in considering a range of meanings that could be applied to a poem's title, and then selecting the most pertinent.
- The classrooms in the school are large, and teachers used them very well to provide students with opportunities for purposeful co-operative learning. Students were seated in clusters with plenty of table space for laying out materials and placemat-style worksheets. The rooms were also used well to display students' work, useful resources and attractive visual material.
- The quality of learning observed was very good. Students were responsive and motivated, and willing to engage with challenging material. They expressed views and opinions confidently, and listened to each other with interest.
- Students' understanding of the purpose and the desired outcome of the tasks they were engaged in was generally very clear. It was noteworthy that even first-year students were familiar with the concept of success criteria, and could explain and use the term accurately. This valuable focus on students' reflective and critical thinking about their own work is crucial to the principles of junior cycle, and is highly transferable to the senior cycle context.
- Students worked purposefully and productively in pairs and groups in most lessons, and shared the learning from this work either through well-managed whole-class discussion or presentations to the class. It was very good to see students presenting their responses and discoveries confidently, while their peers listened attentively. Oral presentations were made in both junior and senior cycle lessons, and showed how effective this approach can be as a means of sharing and consolidating learning.

- Assessment practices are effective and many features of junior cycle developments in approaches to assessment have been incorporated into English department practice.
- Students' copybooks and folders contained varied assignments, including substantial extended writing. Developmental feedback on students' work featured regularly. Some exemplary instances of drafting and re-drafting were noted in the students' work towards their Collection of Texts. These very constructive approaches to assessment are worth sharing and developing.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Timetable provision for English is very good in all years.
- Most teachers of English teach both junior and senior cycle class groups, allowing them to engage with the subject as a continuum of knowledge and skills development from first to sixth year. Senior management's support for this pattern of deployment is especially valuable in the present context of curriculum change.
- English is predominantly taught in mixed-ability class groups, and the school is both supportive of inclusion and proactive in supporting students with additional needs. Most students take higher level English, and are successful at this level. A discrete ordinary level group may be formed in the senior cycle as appropriate.
- English is very well resourced. Consistent with the school's commitment to digital learning, teachers have access to very good information and communication technology in all classrooms. All junior cycle students have tablet devices, and their use is well integrated into classroom practice. Although there is no school library, various reading initiatives form part of the school's literacy improvement plan, in which the English department takes a lead role.
- The principal is highly supportive of continuing professional development (CPD), and there has been very good engagement with subject-specific and whole-school CPD.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Very good structures are in place to support collaborative planning for the subject, and to enable the sharing of resources and methodologies. The work of the subject department is co-ordinated very effectively, and meetings are regular, well-recorded, and focused on subject development as well as operational matters.
- A detailed and well-informed subject plan is in place, complemented by year plans which have been developed collaboratively, but with responsibility for writing them up delegated among all members of the department. All plans and related documents are maintained in a shared electronic folder.
- The junior cycle plans reflect the department's growing familiarity with the English specification. Among the very good practices noted are the participation of all teachers of English in the subject learning and assessment review (SLAR) meetings, and a commendable focus on integrating the oral, reading and writing strands of the specification in a meaningful way for students.
- To build further on the effective practices in place, the teachers of English should work on articulating learning intentions, derived from the learning outcomes in the specification, in terms of specific skills and knowledge that students will be able to demonstrate. This approach will then enable the design of assignments and assessment instruments derived from the students' learning experiences and aligned with specific learning outcomes.

- In keeping with its good reflective practices, the English department reviews and comments on the outcomes in the certificate examinations. Some inaccuracies in the analysis tool used need to be corrected, but the department's attention to outcomes and commitment to the highest possible attainment for students is commendable.
- Very good individual planning aligned to the subject department plan was noted.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy 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;