An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Subject Inspection: English
Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Cabra Community College
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Kilkieran Road Cabra Dublin 7
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	70150O
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	02-03-2023

What is a 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(s) 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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and tackle bullying

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Child Protection</td><td>Anti-bullying</td></tr>
<tr><td>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.</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013) and this policy is reviewed annually.
2. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides a report to the board at least once a term on the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template provided in the Procedures) since the previous report to the board.
3. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils/students.</td></tr>
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Subject inspection

Date of inspection	02-03-2023
Inspection activities undertaken • Review of relevant documents • Discussion with principal and key staff • Interaction with students, including a focus group	• Observation of teaching and learning during 6 lessons • Examination of students' work • Feedback to principal, deputy principal and relevant staff

School context

Cabra Community College comprises a co-educational post-primary school operating under the patronage of the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETB) with Educate Together as education partners. All curricular programmes except the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) are provided. Transition Year (TY) is a compulsory programme. The school has been enrolling post-primary students since 2012 and there are 207 students currently enrolled. The school participates in the Delivering Equality in Schools (DEIS) action plan and Junior Cycle Schools Programme (JCSP).

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of learning in English was generally good, ranging from satisfactory to very good; there is scope to further develop aspects of differentiated teaching methodologies so that all students are appropriately challenged or supported to suit their learning needs.
- The overall quality of teaching was also good; in the best lesson, there was an appropriate balance between teacher talk and student activity.
- Exemplary rapport with students and positive classroom environments characterised all lessons visited.
- The English department, with the help of students, had recently redeveloped the school library and there was a commendable emphasis on reading for pleasure at junior cycle, underpinned by clear DEIS targets for improvement.

Recommendations

- Cooperative learning using very structured tasks and activities that provide students with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning should be extended to all lessons and used as a strategy to encourage greater student personal engagement. with texts.
- Teachers of English should ensure that methodologies, tasks and assessment modes are differentiated so that students receive appropriate levels of challenge and support.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- Clarity with regard to learning intentions was provided in all lessons. Frequently, this was supported through the effective use of learning intentions to frame the lesson. Learning was most effective where teachers designed tasks that developed the learning intention and included a reflection on the learning at the end of the lesson.
- The overall quality of teaching was good, ranging from satisfactory to very good. In the best lesson observed, there was a balance between teacher talk and student activity. This was achieved by facilitating students to engage in exploratory discussion. Explorative talk or learning through talking should be an integral part of English lessons across all year groups. This emphasis should be reflected in long-term planning for the subject.
- The overall quality of learning was generally good but opportunities existed to extend independent learning opportunities such as building on students' prior knowledge, designing cooperative tasks that appealed to students' own interests and experiences and facilitating students' critical analysis of texts. Students demonstrated their learning best when they had opportunity to voice their opinion, specifically regarding personal engagement with texts.
- Lessons were well prepared and there was evidence of teachers' passion for the subject in many lessons. Exemplary teacher-student rapport was in evidence in all classrooms visited.
- It was encouraging that in all lessons students were given opportunities to be collaborative in their learning. To further enhance student collaboration, group-work should be co-operative and students should have a chance to share and discuss their learning with their peers.
- In some lessons, students were not adequately challenged, and in others, students required more support and scaffolding in their learning. There was evidence of a differentiated approach to teaching in some of the lessons, often in terms of individual help given during pair or group work. In the best lesson observed, the teacher planned activities and tasks that supported the diverse learning needs of students. All English teachers should plan for the differentiation of tasks, activities and assessments to ensure that the individual needs of all students are met. Teachers should plan for and integrate co-operative learning approaches to help achieve this.
- As part of its DEIS improvement planning, the school arranged a library class to support students' in junior cycle engagement with reading. The student focus group spoke very positively in relation to this. Commendably, students and teachers have recently redeveloped the school library to further support reading.
- To support oral language development, the school had integrated oral presentations in whole-school assessment practices at junior cycle. Using examples of effective oral communication in different formats will also support the development of students' oral communication skills.
- In some lessons, digital learning technology was used effectively as a formative assessment tool and impacted positively on student engagement.
- Effective practice was noted where teachers created opportunities for students to make connections between the studied text and their own experience in a way that deepened their understanding and engagement. This ensured that students were supported and encouraged to develop personal opinions and increase their confidence in themselves as learners.
- Overall, there was a good understanding of key literary terms, and in the best lessons observed, these were discussed and developed with students.
- Some good approaches to teaching writing were observed throughout the evaluation such as the use of graphic organisers, Venn and spider diagrams to help students organise their ideas. To further support the development of student writing and analysis, teachers and students should plan for the wider use of peer and self-assessment through the ongoing development of success criteria.

- Some good use of different questioning techniques were noted, including directed, open and follow-on questions. Very good practice was noted when teachers gave sufficient wait time and supported students to develop fuller answers and to allow them an opportunity to develop and explain their opinions.
- Good oral formative feedback was in evidence in many lessons. Good-quality work was observed in some copybooks; however, the standard of presentation of written work varied widely. To support the development of students' skills and practices in this area, the school should consider the development and implementation of a homework policy for English.
- The TY programme provided a range of learning experiences both within the regular timetable and through participation in school-organised activities. It would be worthwhile ensuring that all students in TY be facilitated to participate in all activities so as to broaden their experience and maximise their enjoyment of the subject.

2. Subject provision and whole-school support

- There was good provision and whole-school support for the subject, evidenced in the worthy DEIS targets to encourage reading and oral language development.
- Many members of the English team had engaged in continuing professional development, including training on the new module descriptor for English and Communications in LCA. A new coordinator was in the process of being upskilled in the area of English as an additional language (EAL) with a focus on improving learner experiences and outcomes for EAL students.
- There were good links between the English department and the SEN department. It was notable that the school had arranged team teaching in a number of lessons with two English teachers to support students' needs.

3. Planning and preparation

- The English team are hardworking, collaborative and collegial. Resources were shared through an online sharing platform.
- A comprehensive subject plan was prepared diligently. More explicit linking of learning outcomes with methodologies and assessment practices across all year groups would further develop planning. Differentiated activities and tasks should also be included. Each unit should identify and agree on extended writing tasks to support the development of collections of texts.
- Assessment tasks with clear success criteria aligned with key learning outcomes identified for each unit should be incorporated in the subject department plan.
- The TY programme reflects a good understanding of the continuum of learning from junior to senior cycle in English and planning for improvement already underway.
- To build on existing good practice, teaching and learning should be prioritised at department meetings through formalised discussion and the sharing of good practices among teachers.

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.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management welcome this affirming English Inspection report and are very pleased that it highlights many of the key strengths of Cabra Community College.

The Board would like to acknowledge the many positives identified in this report including the:

- Good quality of teaching and learning observed in English lessons.
- Exemplary rapport with students and positive learning environment.
- Commendable emphasis on reading for pleasure at junior cycle, underpinned by clear DEIS targets for improvement.

Part B: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

The Board would like to acknowledge the recommendations made in this report and are committed to implementing them as soon as possible.

The following actions will be implemented to address the recommendations:

- School management will be providing all English department teachers with CPD opportunities in the areas of cooperative learning and differentiation in the coming months.
- The English department Plan will include more differentiated tasks from September 2023.
- The English department plan will include more explicit linking of learning outcomes with methodologies and assessment practices in 2023/24.

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 quality of 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 *very good* 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;