An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Subject Inspection: Home Economics
Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Kennedy College
Seoladh na scoile/School address	New Ross Co Wexford
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	71660T
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	10/04/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	27/05/2024

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 evaluated learning and teaching in Home Economics 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.

Included in this subject inspection report is a student-friendly page that provides information for the children/young people in your school about the inspection that occurred recently. It outlines for them some of the main findings and recommendations.

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.

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) or Bí Cineálta (2024) and this policy is reviewed annually.
2. The school's current anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and students.</td></tr>
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The school met all the requirements in relation to child protection checks.

At the time of the inspection the school met the requirements in relation to check 2 of the anti-bullying checks above. The school did not meet the requirements in relation to check 1 of the anti-bullying checks but has subsequently provided evidence to meet the requirements of check 1.

Subject inspection

Dates of inspection	09/04/2024 and 10/04/2024
Inspection activities undertaken • Review of relevant documents • Discussion with principal and key staff Examination of students' work	• Observation of teaching and learning during three lessons • Interaction with students, including a focus group • Feedback to principal and deputy principal

School context

Kennedy College is a co-educational, multi-denominational post-primary school under the auspices of Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board with a current enrolment of 199 students. It participates in DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools), the action plan of the Department of Education for inclusion. The school provides the Junior Cycle (JC) programme, including the Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP), a compulsory Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), the Leaving Certificate (LC) programme and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme. Home Economics is usually offered as an optional subject in JC and at LC. All TY students study the subject.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the lessons observed required improvement to achieve a good standard; in theory-based lessons, teaching approaches did not support high levels of student participation and there was much scope in all lessons for assessment for learning strategies to be utilised.
- Respectful relationships between students and their teacher were evident in all lessons visited; students responded very positively to the high expectations set for their behaviour.
- The overall quality of subject provision and whole school support was good; the school does not yet have an assessment policy.
- It is positive that school leaders have plans in place to improve the home economics facilities to include a textiles classroom and a newly developed kitchen.
- The overall quality of subject planning and preparation required improvement to achieve a good standard; JC and LC plans require development.
- An analysis of Leaving Certificate results had been completed by school management; the subject department has no plan in place to support the required need for improvements in higher level uptake and attainment.

Recommendations

- The subject department should employ teaching methods, including assessment for learning strategies, that foster higher levels of student participation in their learning while also implementing differentiation strategies to accommodate diverse learning needs.
- Senior school leaders should enhance support for assessment practices in the subject by developing various agreed-upon approaches, including homework practices, to enable students to demonstrate their learning. These agreed approaches could be outlined and shared in an assessment policy.
- All core areas of the LC syllabus must be thoroughly planned for and taught to ensure that students receive support in engaging with all prescribed learning and can effectively demonstrate their learning in certificate examinations.
- In general, student copybooks and other planning documents indicate a linear approach to planning for students' learning and this should be revised by teachers. The integrated

approach reflected in some planning documents should be extended and also realised at classroom level.

- The subject department should conduct an annual analysis of examination results to identify trends, and use this information to address any potential barriers to success and implement strategies for ongoing improvements in higher level uptake and attainment so that each student achieves their potential.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment required improvement in order to achieve a good standard.
- Respectful relationships between students and their teacher were evident in all lessons visited; students responded very positively to the high expectations set for their behaviour.
- It was good that in some theory lessons, students were provided with the opportunity to identify areas relating to the topic which were already known to them and, in some lessons, the answers shared by students underpinned their note-taking. At times, the teacher modelled note-making skills and, there were moments when students were able to make notes independently. This was good practice.
- Teacher explanations in theory-based lessons were clear and, on some occasions, these were supported through images sketched on the whiteboard, textbook images or real-life props. It was positive that online video clips and whiteboard work were posted for students to access on the school's digital platform.
- Students reported having some opportunities to use digital technology in lessons to undertake research for classroom-based assessments, journal work and class projects and would welcome more opportunities to use digital technology, for example, to support them to assess their progress in learning.
- In general, student copybooks and folders were good records of learning. It was positive to see that photographs of class activities which captured learning were stored in these. There was evidence of the teacher regularly monitoring students' work and affirming verbal comments were provided. At times, corrections were noted on students' work but limited written formative feedback from the teacher was evident.
- Overall, assessment for learning needed significant improvement. Key elements including sharing learning intentions, success criteria, assigning regular homework, assessing students' progress in learning, peer assessment, self-assessment, and student reflection were not evident in the lessons observed or in students' records. Integrating these approaches would help both teachers and students measure learning progress effectively.
- In all lessons, there was limited evidence of differentiation. It was positive that in one lesson visited, recipes were translated into the home language of learners. There was a need to provide differentiated approaches, particularly upward challenge, so that all students can achieve their full potential.
- In the theory-based lessons observed, there was an imbalance between teacher and student participation, with students rarely speaking up. It was beneficial when individual students were directly asked questions, as this encouraged their involvement. However, most questions were recall-based and not specifically directed, leading to only a few students responding, often with brief answers. To enhance student engagement and participation, it's important to plan for more opportunities where students can discuss their learning, develop their oral literacy skills, and engage in deeper thinking. Strategies outlined in Department's webinar titled the 'Effective Literacy Strategies in Post Primary DEIS Schools Webinar' could support in this regard.
- It was positive that in the food studies practical lesson observed, students were provided with some opportunities to link their learning about nutrition to the ingredients which they

were about to use. It was also good that students routinely evaluate the dishes prepared.

- In the practical food studies lesson observed, it was good that some teacher-led spot demonstrations were provided but these needed to more explicit in demonstrating key steps and techniques. Due to the varying levels of subject experience among learners, more demonstrations were necessary to ensure that all students understood how to complete tasks correctly.
- While there was effective monitoring of students during the practical lesson, there was insufficient oral formative feedback from the teacher. Providing more verbal feedback would help students refine their skills and consistently maintain high standards of hygiene and safety throughout their work.

2. Subject provision and whole school support

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole school support was good.
- In addition to inputs from the Guidance teacher for parents and students, a short subject-sampling programme was provided for first-year students to support them to make informed subject choices.
- It was good that student preferences influenced the design of subject options offered to first and fifth-year students.
- Timetabling for the subject was very good; a generous time allocation has been provided for the subject and the duration and scheduling of lessons support very high quality learner experiences and outcomes.
- The home economics kitchen was a visually rich learning environment. It was positive that some upgrading and purchasing of electrical appliances and equipment had taken place recently. Notwithstanding this, the facility is in need of modernising. Plans are underway to redevelop the existing kitchen into a textiles classroom and to provide a new, improved kitchen.
- An online WWETB health and safety checklist was undertaken by the subject department on a monthly basis and submitted to the principal. Given that the home economics kitchen is used to prepare food and undertake textiles work, it is recommended that the potential hazards arising from this arrangement and any other risks specific to the kitchen are factored into an annual risk assessment.
- It was very positive that the school and subject department supported all students to fully engage with the practical aspect of the subject by removing barriers which may limit engagement in these lesson.
- A number of professional learning events had been organised by the principal and deputy principal to support ongoing developments in teaching and learning.
- The school does not yet have an assessment policy. Senior school leaders should enhance support for assessment practices in the subject by developing agreed-upon approaches, including homework practices, to enable students to demonstrate their learning. These agreed approaches could be outlined and shared in an assessment policy.

3. Planning and preparation

- The overall quality of subject planning required improvement to be good.
- It is positive that that a wide bank of home economics resources had been collated.
- Planning documents were available for all programmes. Plans did not include dates or specific timeframes so it was not always clear as to which plans were currently being taught and if the class group was on track to complete the programme of work in the academic year.
- While the JC units of learning presented reflected some integration of learning outcomes across strands, in general, student copybooks and other planning documents indicated a more linear approach to students' learning. The integrated approach reflected in planning documents should be fully realised at classroom level. Furthermore, units of

learning should include assessment tasks which are aligned to the intended learning. This will support the teacher in making judgements about the extent to which students have achieved the intended learning.

- Leaving Certificate plans were available, however, certain core areas of the syllabus were not included in the programme plans provided and this requires require immediate attention. Additionally, there was a need to revaluate the sequence of content taught to facilitate a more integrated approach to student learning. This would also enable students to apply their knowledge when completing Leaving Certificate assignments.
- There was little reference to DEIS targets or strategies in the subject plan. The subject department should integrate teaching, learning and assessment strategies in lessons which would support the realisation of the agreed whole-school targets.
- The subject plan lacked recent analysis or reference to students' certificate examination results, which were available in the school. It is recommended that the subject department conducts an annual analyses of results to identify trends, address any potential barriers to success, and implement strategies to ensure ongoing improvements in higher level uptake and attainment so that each student achieves their potential.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and deputy principal at the conclusion of the evaluation.

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

For the students of Kennedy College about their learning in Home Economics

10/04/2024

What kind of inspection did your school have?

Recently, an inspector called to your school to carry out a subject inspection. The inspector visited some classes and had a talk with the principal and teachers. They also met with a focus group of students who study Home Economics. The inspector wanted to hear what the focus group of students had to say about their learning experience in that subject.

What were the main findings of the inspection?

The inspector saw many things during the inspection. The main findings were:

- Positive relationships were observed between students and their teacher.
- Overall, teaching, learning and assessment required improvement. In some lessons, there was a need for better student engagement and more variety in the ways that teachers assess learning.
- School leaders have plans in place to improve the home economics room by providing a new kitchen and a textiles classroom.

What did the inspector recommend to make teaching and learning better in Home Economics?

- Teaching approaches that support students to be very involved in lessons should be used.
- The teacher should use assessment that helps both students and the teacher understand what students are good at and where they might need more help.
- Teachers should look at students' results in certificate examinations and identify more ways to support students to achieve their full potential.

Thank you for taking the time to read this page.
A special thank you to the students who participated in the focus group.

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	Examples of descriptive terms
Excellent	**Provision that is excellent** is exemplary in meeting the needs of learners. This provision provides an example for other schools and settings of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Excellent; exemplary; outstanding; exceptionally high standard; with very significant strengths
Very good	**Provision that is very good** is very effective in meeting the needs of learners and is of a very high standard. There is potential to build on existing strengths to achieve an excellent standard.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful
Good	**Provision that is good** is effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to build on existing strengths in order to address the aspects to be developed and achieve a very good standard.	Good; of good quality; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; strengths outweigh the shortcomings; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist
Requires improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard** is not sufficiently effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is good or better.	Fair; less than effective; less than sufficient; evident weaknesses that are impacting on learning; experiencing difficulty; shortcomings outweigh strengths; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard** is not meeting the needs of learners. There is immediate need for significant action to address the areas of concern.	Weak; poor; ineffective; insufficient; unacceptable; experiencing significant difficulties; serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated; requiring significant change, development and improvement to be effective

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 of Kennedy College and WWETB, welcomes the subject inspection report of Home Economics. The report provides guidance for us as a school as we move forward, especially in the area of teaching, learning and assessment. It also offers opportunities for reflection on areas where improvements may be made.

We particularly acknowledge and appreciate the inspector's observation of the respectful relationships between students and their teachers.

The Board appreciates the acknowledgement of the future development of the Home Economics facilities, which will have an obvious impact on the delivery of the subject.

The Board is committed to supporting current practices and encouraging additional initiatives to further enhance Home Economics provision in the school.

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 teachers are committed to addressing the issue of student participation and engagement. Future planning meetings will highlight this area for improvement.

Senior Management have prioritised planning practices and maximising their effectiveness, for the coming year. To support this, a subject planning template has been created for all subject departments to utilise for the next academic year.

An assessment policy has been drafted and is currently being reviewed by the Kennedy College school community. This assessment policy, which includes homework practices, will be brought before the board of management for ratification in late May in order for it to be implemented in the coming academic year.

Teachers of all subjects in Kennedy College will be given an opportunity at the start of the year to analyse examination results and identify trends to address any potential barriers to success and implement strategies for ongoing improvements in higher level uptake and attainment.

Building capacity, focusing on professional learning in teaching, learning, assessment and reporting practice, cognisant that teachers are in a one teacher department, is a Board priority and will continue to be supported by WWETB through ongoing resources for school leaders, middle leaders, and subject teachers including communities of practice, in-person professional learning and development and provision of PLD funding