An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Subject Inspection: Home Economics
Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Our Lady's Grove Secondary School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Our Lady's Grove Goatstown Road Dublin 14
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	60891E
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	07-03-2023
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	19/05/2023

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 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.

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) 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	07-03-2023 and 10-03-2023
Inspection activities undertaken • Review of relevant documents • Discussion with principal and key staff • Interaction with students, including focus groups	• Observation of teaching and learning during three lessons • Examination of students' work • Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Our Lady's Grove is a voluntary secondary school for girls in the trusteeship of Le Chéile, a Catholic Schools Trust. At the time of the evaluation the school provided the Junior Cycle, the Leaving Certificate and a compulsory Transition Year (TY) programme. Home Economics is offered as an optional subject at Junior Cycle and in the Leaving Certificate. All TY students study Home Economics.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good.
- Information Communications Technology (ICT) was creatively used in a practical food studies lesson to enable students develop junior cycle key skills and record their learning.
- The overall quality of subject provision was of a very high standard.
- The senior management team regularly engage with the subject department to support ongoing developments in teaching and learning.
- The overall quality of subject planning was good.
- It is commendable that the subject department has acknowledged aspects of students' learning to be further developed and an action plan is in place to address the areas identified.

Recommendations

- To further support students to develop and refine their practical and procedural skills, additional spot demonstrations should be planned for and delivered in practical lessons.
- Regular opportunities should be provided in lessons for students to engage in self and peer assessment using success criteria.
- Programme plans should be further developed to reflect learners' needs, interests and the school context.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good.
- In all lessons, a very positive rapport was evident between students and their teacher. In a focus group discussion, students spoke about how they had been supported by their teacher to identify areas of their learning which they sought to improve and they noted that the teaching approaches used in lessons were very responsive to address the needs identified.
- Students displayed high levels of engagement in lessons. In focus group discussions, students spoke of enjoying their learning in Home Economics and they recognised the value of their learning.
- In all lessons, students had opportunities to work collaboratively. In food studies practical lessons, tasks were assigned to students working in pairs and this supported students to work efficiently. In practical lessons, to further support students to develop time management skills the teacher should share with students the time limits within which work should be undertaken.
- Learning intentions were shared with students at the beginning of all lessons. At times, these could have been more explicit about what students would know, understand or be able to do as a result of the learning experiences in the lesson. Good practice was evident when the teacher referenced the learning intentions in relation to the task that students were undertaking so that they could see how a task supported the achievement of the intended learning.
- Very good practice was observed when the mode of assessment used supported all students to participate in the assessment process. For example, students used a placemat activity to record their learning and this enabled the teacher to ascertain the progress of individual students. In some lessons, further assessment of students' attainment of the intended learning could be planned for.
- The use of teacher questioning in lessons was effective. Questions were well distributed and best practice was evident when students were asked to develop their answers as this provided opportunities for students to engage in deep learning. At times, in advance of assessing students' learning of new material, an additional activity to support students to familiarise themselves with new content and deepen their understanding of this material was needed before their learning was assessed.
- Good routines and implementing of health and safety practices were evident in the lessons observed.
- Teaching approaches used in theory lessons scaffolded students' learning by providing opportunities for students to recall previous learning which linked with new content. Very good practice was evident in a food studies practical lesson, when a student-led spot demonstration of a previously taught skill was undertaken under the guidance of the teacher. This supported students to recall and see the key stages of a skill to be followed prior to undertaking the task. Teacher-led spot demonstrations were well planned and were very clear. In practical lessons, there was a need for additional spot demonstrations to further support students to refine their practical and procedural skills.
- A collaborative online platform is used to share teacher designed resources and additional materials with students. Students highly valued the sharing of these resources. In a practical food studies lesson, students digitally recorded the key stages involved in undertaking a complex skill and they were expected to add text to the images so that a digital record of completing skills could be developed. This is highly commendable practice.
- A sample of craftwork was observed and students' work reflected much creativity and individuality.
- It is commendable that written formative feedback is shared with junior cycle students and parents on teacher designed key tasks during the school year. To support students in making ongoing improvements in their learning, there was a need for regular written formative feedback on students' work in copybooks.

- Copybooks provided a good record of students' learning. Good practice was observed in junior cycle students' copybooks in the recording to key words and note-making. There were some gaps in the correcting of students' work. To maximise students' opportunities to learn from the tasks completed, regular opportunities to engage in self and peer assessment, using success criteria where appropriate, should be planned for.

2. Subject provision and whole school support

- The overall quality of subject provision was of a very high standard.
- Regular meetings are held between the subject department and the senior leadership team. These meetings include discussions about subject department meetings, programme planning, teaching and learning approaches, continuous professional development needs and strategies to support school-self-evaluation (SSE) targets. The on-going and strategic approach to leading teaching and learning by the senior leadership team is highly commendable.
- Very good evidence of previous areas of focus in SSE were evident in the lessons observed.
- Students have very good access to Home Economics. In focus group discussions, TY students welcomed the opportunity to study Home Economics and other optional subjects in advance of selecting Leaving Certificate subjects.
- Very good engagement with Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is evident in the home economics department. It is very positive that having attended CPD events, teachers reflect on their learning and identifies a new approach which they will integrate into their classroom practice. Opportunities are also provided for teachers to share their learning with colleagues.
- Home Economics facilities comprise a very well-maintained and resourced kitchen.
- The home economics department has completed a risk assessment for the kitchen which also includes some risks linked to undertaking textiles work. Given the multipurpose nature of the home economics kitchen, the risk assessment should be reviewed to ensure that all risks are identified and associated control measures are in place.
- The subject department organises extra-curricular activities which enhance and broaden students' learning including a lunch-time crochet club and a Christmas bake-off competition. During the school's wellbeing week, the home economics department facilitates students to share and taste dishes which celebrate the range of cultures represented in the school community.

3. Planning and preparation

- The overall quality of subject planning was good.
- It is positive that a range of strategies to support learners with additional needs, and literacy and numeracy strategies have been identified in the subject plan.
- Good examples of collaborative planning with some other subject departments were evident in the subject plan and this is commendable.
- Programme plans are in place for all year groups. It is positive that teacher reflections are recorded on planning documents and these are used to inform future planning. An integrated approach to programme planning is reflected in the Leaving Certificate plans. Additional opportunities exist to develop junior cycle units of learning which integrate learning outcomes from more than one strand and this would support a more integrated and less linear approach to students' learning. It is recommended that programme plans are further developed to reflect the school context, and learners' needs and interests.
- The subject department has recognised some aspects of students' learning to be further developed and it is positive that strategies have been implemented to address the areas identified. To further support this approach, success criteria could be recorded as part of the action planning process and these could be used to determine the impact of the strategies implemented.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal, deputy principal and subject department 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 school welcomes the report.

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

Safety: The school wide Health + Safety Statement has been updated with a revised section for Home Economics which further comprehends our multidisciplinary nature of our Home Ec Lab.

Homework Correction: A correction rotation system is now employed to complement the existing whole class regular feedback.

Planning: As an NQT our Home Ec teacher has made great planning strides in structuring the provision of the subject area. During year two the focus will be on meaning making and contextualising for the specific local content.

The observed practice of sharing explicit learning intentions in some classes will be extended to all.

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;