An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Subject Inspection: Guidance
REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Schull Community College
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Colla Road Schull
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	71102I
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	17/01/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	19/03/2025

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 Guidance 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>
</table>

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

Subject inspection

Date of inspection	16/01/2025 - 17/01/2025
Inspection activities undertaken • Review of relevant documents • Discussion with principal, deputy principal and guidance counsellor • Meeting with the student support team • Interaction with students, including a focus group	• Observation of teaching and learning during three lessons • Examination of students' work, career investigations, portfolios and e-portfolio work • Feedback to principal, deputy principal and guidance counsellor

School context

Schull Community College is a co-educational post-primary school. The school is managed under the co-trusteeship of the Cork Education and Training Board (ETB) and the Diocese of Cork and Ross. At the time of the evaluation there were 357 students enrolled. The school offered Level 1 Learning Programmes (L1LPs) and Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs), the Junior Cycle, a compulsory Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), and the Leaving Certificate (Established) (LCE).

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment was very good.
- Very positive relationships between students and their teachers, and students and their peers were observed.
- Overall, provision for Guidance was very good, with a balanced timetabled programme for classroom Guidance, one-to-one support and small group work delivered to all year groups based on the continuum of care model and inclusion.
- Student support and wellbeing was given very high priority by senior management and staff; there were excellent collaborative student support structures in place, underpinned by highly effective communication systems.
- The Leaving Certificate Applied was not delivered by the school at the time of the evaluation.
- There were significant strengths in collaborative planning at whole-school guidance level, with highly effective guidance planning in other subject department plans, and a very comprehensive senior cycle Guidance scheme of work; however, some areas of the junior cycle Guidance planning required further development.

Recommendations

- While teacher input was effective and resulted in good learner outcomes, lessons occasionally lacked sufficient opportunities for student collaboration. Teachers should incorporate more collaborative and student-led methodologies to actively engage learners and balance teacher input with student participation.
- The senior leadership team should keep the possibility of the implementation of the Leaving Certificate Applied under review in order to help ensure the school continues to meet the diverse needs of all students, and provide equitable opportunities for their academic, personal, and career development.
- Departments collaborated well on the junior cycle guidance programme. The guidance team should now develop detailed junior cycle guidance related learning modules containing units of learning that include learning intentions and outcomes, planned assessment activities and module lengths in relation to educational pathways and career exploration.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- There was a very good standard of teaching, learning and assessment overall.
- All lessons were conducted in an atmosphere that was supportive and inclusive and very positive relationships between students and staff were observed.
- The guidance counsellor had very good subject specialist knowledge and outstanding individual knowledge of students.
- Teachers had high expectations of students and provided high quality instruction and explanations in all lessons. They were well prepared for all lessons and had selected very good resources to support student learning.
- The teacher outlined clear learning intentions at the start of each lesson and revisited them throughout the lesson.
- Interactions were very respectful which allowed learners to take risks, ask questions and offer opinions. In lessons, students stated that they enjoyed the learning activities, the opportunity to discuss careers, work experience and to collaborate with their peers. While these learning activities were evident in all lessons there was scope to provide greater opportunities for students to collaborate on tasks in order to balance the teacher input and student participation.
- Students in the focus group stated they valued the detailed input they received, in particular, in senior cycle, from the lessons in Guidance.
- Subject-specific skills were developed to a high standard in lessons, with the guidance counsellor promoting diverse career and educational pathways. It was evident in conversations with students around their future career pathways, their vast examples of work experience, diaries, career investigations and portfolios, that the school had established significant partnerships with parents and community agencies to promote tailored career opportunities for students.
- Digital technology was used effectively in all lessons by the teacher and students to promote independent research and to support students' lifelong learning skills. Students were observed enjoying the online tasks with others in purposeful independent education and career research contributing to student engagement, ownership and responsibility of their learning in their work. These strategies and outcomes aligned with the school self-evaluation priorities.
- The guidance classroom and corridors of the school provided a print rich environment to support student learning in areas of guidance.
- The guidance counsellor shared weekly career and educational event updates in class and through the school's digital platform. This platform could be used further to provide formative feedback by the guidance counsellor and assess student work.

2. Subject provision and whole school support

- Overall, provision for Guidance was very good, with a balanced timetabled programme for classroom Guidance, one-to-one support and small group work delivered to all year groups based on the continuum of care model and inclusion.
- The senior leadership team demonstrated a full commitment to Guidance by utilising the school's full allocation, which was then appropriately deployed to guidance activities. A well-equipped, accessible office supported counselling. Secure and safe storage, digital tools and guidance-related literature was provided. Additional therapeutic spaces, like the chaplain's office, the 'Young Room', and career library room, fostered holistic student spaces and placed value on student wellbeing.
- Continued professional development was recognised and facilitated as essential by the senior leadership team for the guidance counsellor. This included timetabling appropriately to support professional guidance supervision, and time allocated for ongoing professional development.

- The timetabled guidance programme was highly effective across the school, balanced with personal, social, educational and career guidance and across the cohort of students. It was also distributed between individual student support, classroom guidance and working with students in small groups.
- Senior management, the guidance counsellor and chaplain, working as the student support team, provided a highly commendable lead in the whole-school collaborative approach to guidance and care. They provided very effective support for student wellbeing by being closely linked to the work of the year heads, the educational support team and the whole-school community. This was based on well-developed systems of sensitive communication, identified clear roles of key staff and effective and appropriate internal and external referrals. All of this was further supported by an ongoing prioritisation and review of relevant policy documents, most recently, the critical incident plan. There was a shared responsibility for student support across the continuum of care evident in the effective online collaborative sharing of student support file target setting also.
- Students stated that they felt supported and cared for in the school, citing opportunities to take part in inclusive initiatives, leadership opportunities, and unique and rich extracurricular activities. They praised the staff's commitment to accompanying them on extracurricular endeavours.
- The induction programme included extensive activities such as TY visits to primary schools prior to students' entry into first year, the parents' association organising "meet and greets" with incoming students and their parents, and, once the students had arrived in the school, a focus on relationship building before the conducting of psychometric testing.
- Students were positive about the range of subject choices on offer in the school and the array of guidance activities that supported their holistic progression. Some students stated they would like to see Politics and Society becoming a subject for them to study in senior cycle and others expressed a desire for more career exploration at junior cycle.
- Leaving Certificate Applied was not part of the school programme and the senior leadership team should keep the possibility of the implementation of it under review to help ensure the school continues to meet the diverse needs of all students, and in order to provide equitable opportunities for their academic, personal, and career development.
- The school uniquely offered two annual Bollinger scholarships to students who have completed their Leaving Certificate and for each year of their chosen pathway, which fostered opportunities for student progression.

3. Planning and preparation

- The quality of the whole-school guidance plan was of a very high standard with detailed guidance activities, whole-school support systems, community links, programmes and guidance work outlined and shared among staff. The school described this as distributed guidance. This was evident in the collaborative work that was taking place in organising events and in planning to support student personal, social, educational and career development and pathways. A shared online document outlined the guidance-based activities undertaken by staff across subjects and activities to support students at all levels of the continuum of care. This was highly commendable practice.
- Guidance planning within different subject department plans was laudable. Teachers had documented, in their own subject department plans, areas of 'in-class career guidance' relevant to subjects that may support the development of skills and experiences needed for career development and pathways for students. This included identifying transferrable skills, having past pupils and speakers to support the work and networking with industry and businesses in the subject area.
- A very comprehensive senior cycle guidance programme was in place and planning here was highly effective. The programme included clear units of learning in all senior cycle year groups and had identified learning intentions and outcomes for each unit, along with resources and teaching methodologies to support the work. It also incorporated elements of independent research, investigations, psychometric testing, practical application, and lifelong learning skills.

- While very good collaborative practice occurred between departments to outline the junior cycle guidance programme, the whole school guidance team should now develop detailed junior cycle guidance related learning modules containing units of learning that include learning intentions and outcomes, planned assessment activities and module lengths in relation to educational pathways and career exploration.
- The guidance team should explore also how to develop the guidance section on the school's website to raise awareness and ensure information is shared effectively and that accessible, up-to-date information is available for all stakeholders.

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

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

For the students of Schull Community College about their learning in Guidance
Date of inspection: 17/01/2025

What kind of inspection did your school have?

A subject inspection was completed in your school. The inspector observed lessons and spoke with the principal and teachers. The inspector met with a group of students to talk to them about their learning in Guidance.

What were the main findings of the inspection?

- A very good Guidance programme was provided to all year groups in the school.
- There was a very good whole school approach by staff that contributed to the development of students' personal, social, educational and career development.
- There were very positive and supportive relationships for students in the whole-school community.

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

- In guidance lessons teachers need to give more time for students to share their learning and become more active throughout the lessons.
- The school management should review whether the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) is an option going forward for their students.
- The guidance department should consider what elements are a priority to cover in the junior cycle guidance programme.

Thank you for taking the time to read this page.
Special thanks 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 Schull Community College is very pleased with the findings of this report. We are delighted that the inspectorate has acknowledged the high standard of teaching, learning and assessment in Guidance which is supported by comprehensive and effective planning.
This report also emphasises the positive relationships between teachers and students, as well as
the excellent collaborative support structures in place for our students. The wellbeing of our students is of the highest priority, and the Board is pleased that this has been recognized in 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.

The Board values the recommendations outlined in this report and senior management will guide staff in their effective implementation moving forward.

Published March 2025 / Foilsithe Márta 2025