An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Follow-Through Inspection

REPORT

School name	Waterpark College
School address	Park Road Waterford
Roll number	64940L

Date of Evaluation: 08-12-2016

Date of issue of report: 15-02-2017

AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS AGUS SCILEANNA | DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Follow-Through Inspection

ORIGINAL INSPECTION DETAILS	FOLLOW THROUGH INSPECTION DETAILS
Type: Science Subject Inspection **Date of Inspection: 4 February 2015** **Report Published? Yes**	**Date of Inspection: 8 December 2016**

Follow-through inspection activities

The following activities took place in the course of the follow-through inspection

- Meeting with principal
- Interview with science teachers
- Review of school documentation and records and students' work
- Observation of teaching and learning
- Interaction with students

Recommendation in original inspection report	Progress achieved to date on implementation of recommendation
Through collaborative subject planning, the science teachers should continue to strengthen the investigative approach to learning Science and involve students more in procedural planning for their investigations and in using the scientific method in problem-solving.	**Very good progress** Through subject planning and regular collaboration the science teachers have strengthened the implementation of the investigative approach to learning Science. They conscientiously maximise opportunities to apply it in lessons whenever appropriate. Their agreed approach to this aspect of learning and teaching Science is cohesive and commended. Very good practice was observed in the lessons observed; the implementation of the investigative approach to learning was robustly and capably conducted by all teachers. First, second and third-year students were actively involved in procedural planning for all aspects of their investigations and developing very good capabilities in doing investigations. As well as the teaching approaches taken, implementation was greatly supported by the use of very well-designed worksheets and templates for the investigations; these guided the students in independent inquiry, making and noting their observations and drawing valid conclusions. The theme of investigation was also greatly supported by the prominent display of key words and phrases associated with working like a scientist and the scientific method.

Science teachers should plan for and implement greater opportunities for learner autonomy in lessons and homework.	**Very good progress** Very good learner autonomy was observed in the lessons visited. Students conducting practical work were making autonomous decisions about how best to approach the investigation such as decisions relating to the selection of apparatus, setting up, and designing the procedure. In these lessons, the teacher helped students to work autonomously.
Teachers should explore a range of approaches that will enable them to develop a coherent approach to the assessment of students' written work, particularly the use of guiding feedback that improves learner performance.	**Good progress** It is the agreed practice of the subject department that students' laboratory report writing and presentation skills are progressively developed from first year through independent writing and teachers' application of guiding feedback that improves performance. In most of the lessons visited, teachers' guiding feedback was having demonstrable impact on the quality of this written work. Students were encouraged to take action to improve their reports and re-submit them for improved grades. This is very good practice. It should, however, be more consistently implemented with all class groups.
The subject plan for Science could be developed by placing greater emphasis on planning for students' skill development from stage to stage.	**Good progress** Good progress has been achieved in subject planning and some very good ideas are emerging such as new templates for investigations and success criteria for investigations and laboratory report writing. The science department would benefit from even greater time for meetings and formal planning.
Summary of findings	
Overall, the progress being made by the science department in this school is very good and it is having a demonstrable impact on the quality of students' skill development in scientific investigation, learner autonomy and written work. The science department's conscientious approach to maximising opportunities for these aspects of learning is commended.	
Recommendations	
No further recommendations arise in relation to the recommendations in the original report but the science department would benefit from even greater time for meetings and formal planning so as to further develop the emergent ideas and facilitate reflection and monitoring of progress with the very good practices in use. The very good practice observed of assessing students' written work through the use of guiding feedback that improves performance should be more consistently implemented by all teachers.	

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.

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