An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Subject Inspection: Home Economics
REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Loreto College
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Crumlin Road Dublin 12
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	60800V
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	12/03/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	13/06/2025

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 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 the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Subject inspection

Dates of inspection	11/03/2025 and 12/03/2025
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 four lessons • Examination of students' work • Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Loreto College is a voluntary secondary school for girls under the trusteeship of the Loreto Education Trust. It school offers the Junior Cycle programme, Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), an optional Transition Year programme (TY), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and the Leaving Certificate Established (LCE). The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education for educational inclusion. Hotel, Catering and Tourism (HCT) is offered as a vocational specialism in LCA to fifth-year students. There is a current enrolment of 367 students.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was very good; students were active in their learning and displayed very high levels of engagement in class activities.
- Assessment practice was good; learning intentions were shared with students and these scaffolded learning within the lessons observed.
- Teachers provided students with regular opportunities to develop their oracy skills through their participation in well-structured classroom activities and discussions; students were expected and supported to participate through a variety of effective strategies used by teachers.
- The overall quality of subject provision was very good.
- The overall quality of subject planning and collaborative practice was good with very good practice evident.
- Teachers were very reflective and had identified strengths and areas for development at subject department level.

Recommendations

- There was considerable variation in students' records of their learning; teachers should explore ways to better support students in recording their learning so that copybooks and or folders can serve as a more complete reference for review and revision.
- In the lessons observed, teachers did not fully assess to what extent the intended learning was achieved; teachers should assess students' attainment of the intended learning and use this information to inform future teaching.
- There was a shortfall in the hours provided for LCA HCT; senior management should review the LCA timetable so that the time allocation as recommended in the HCT module descriptor can be provided.
- While students had some engagement with the design brief process, teachers should provide students with regular opportunities to solve problems using this approach.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was very good.
- Teachers were highly enthusiastic about teaching Home Economics, creating a very positive learning environment for students. They were very aware of students' interests and shared new concepts in a very meaningful and engaging way.
- Teachers created opportunities for students to draw on their learning from previous lessons and harnessed their life experiences outside the classroom when presenting new concepts. This scaffolded students' learning and reassured them that they could already make links with the new learning. In focus group discussions, students shared that they felt confident making connections between their learning within the subject and with other subjects they were studying.
- In all lessons, students had opportunities to be active in their learning. There was a very good balance between student activity and teacher inputs.
- Students were provided with regular opportunities to develop their oral literacy skills. In general, they were confident in discussing their learning. In the focus group, students discussed the importance of being able to 'say it' before being able to 'write about it'. In most lessons, the distribution of questions by teachers was very good, which supported high levels of student engagement.
- Clear and comprehensive teacher-led spot demonstrations in a food studies practical lesson were expertly delivered. These inputs supported students to develop their food literacy skills. Very effective teacher monitoring of students at work, along with very high quality oral formative feedback from the teacher, supported students to develop their skills as well as their confidence. The connection between students' knowledge and understanding of food science and its practical application was evident.
- Students followed clearly established health and safety routines very effectively, with reinforcement from the teacher.
- Assessment practice was good. In all lessons, teachers shared clear learning intentions, and class activities were aligned with the intended learning. It was positive that teachers provided students with opportunities to reflect on their achievement of the intended learning. In the lessons observed, there was a need for a more thorough assessment of the intended learning so that teachers can identify strengths and areas for development in students' learning.
- In many lessons, students used a whiteboard to support whole-class assessment of previous learning or to help map their thinking. This was very effective, as it facilitated high levels of student engagement and helped the teacher identify both strengths in students' learning and areas needing further development.
- Homework was assigned in all observed lessons, but students' diaries and copybooks did not consistently reflect the regular assignment of homework. Some students in the focus group spoke positively about homework tasks that offered choice or note-making opportunities. Further discussion is needed within the subject department to agree on homework frequency and its role in supporting students' learning.
- A review of students' copybooks showed that fifth-year students, in particular, were supported to self-assess or peer-assess their work. Assessment criteria were shared with students in relation to some tasks. This very good practice could be further extended to all year groups.
- Some very effective note-making practices were observed, particularly in Leaving Certificate students' copybooks, and there was scope to support junior cycle students in this regard.
- There was considerable variation in students' records of their learning, both within lessons and across class groups. While students often engaged in very meaningful work on whiteboards, no record was made for later reference. In many cases, students would benefit from more support in labelling and structuring written work in copybooks and

organising teachers' handouts. Teachers should explore ways to better support students to record their learning so that copybooks and or folders can serve as a more useful reference for review and revision.
- Teachers effectively differentiated through approaches including rich visual aids, step-by-step guides with text and images to assist students to complete practical tasks, one-to-one support, and, at times, peer teaching.

2. Subject provision and whole school support

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole school support was very good.
- Home Economics was a popular subject at junior and senior cycle.
- A broad range of programmes was provided in the school to meet the interests and needs of students.
- Teachers were deployed to teach the subject at both Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate levels, and they rotate to teach HCT.
- Subject specialist facilities included two well-resourced and maintained kitchens, which each had a storage room.
- The subject department had developed a risk assessment for the kitchens. Since the kitchens are used by students to undertake both practical food studies and textiles, additional hazards arising from their dual-purpose use should be recorded. Senior management, in conjunction with the subject department, should oversee an annual review of the risk assessment for both kitchens.
- Timetabling practices supported very high quality learner experiences and outcomes in Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate Home Economics.
- There was a shortfall in the time allocated for HCT and timetabling arrangements for the subject should be reviewed to meet the minimum requirements outlined in the module descriptor.

3. Planning and preparation

- The overall quality of subject planning and collaborative practice was good with some very good practice evident.
- Teachers had established effective ways of working together as a subject department.
- Junior cycle units of learning had been developed. It was positive that in many of the units developed there was good integration of learning outcomes from across strands. There was scope to develop additional creative assessment tasks aligned with the intended learning outcomes, to support the development of a range of key skills.
- It was commendable that teachers reflected on, collated, and recorded what worked well, along with suggestions for improving the teaching of the units in the future.
- While there were some opportunities for students to utilise the design brief process, there was scope for them to solve problems using this process on a regular basis in lessons.
- There were regular opportunities for students to develop their practical food studies skills across junior cycle and the names of dishes or baked goods were recorded in units. Teachers should consider the range of practical food studies skills that they wish students to incrementally develop and record these within the units of learning.
- Leaving Certificate subject plans were well developed and they supported an integrated approach to students' learning.
- It was notable that the subject department had identified strengths and areas for development. To build on this good work, the subject department could develop a concise action plan to support the realisation of the areas for development. This plan could include targets, strategies, timeframes, success criteria, and how success will be measured.
- Teachers should analyse and review trends in students' achievement in certificate examinations at both junior and senior cycle. This data, along with insights from

reviewing students' work, teachers' reflections, and student feedback, could inform areas for further development.

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.

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

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

Date of inspection: 12/03/2025

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 Home Economics.

What were the main findings of the inspection?

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was very good.
- Students were active in their learning and displayed very high levels of engagement in class activities.
- Teachers provided students with regular opportunities to discuss their learning during lessons.

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

- Teachers should support students in creating copybooks or folders that are well-organised and clearly record their learning, as these can support study and revision.
- In lessons, teachers should regularly check how well students are getting on with new learning to identify their strengths and areas where they may need more support.
- While students sometimes used the design brief process, they could be given regular opportunities to solve problems using this approach.

Thank you for taking the time to read this page.
Special thanks to the students who participated in the focus group.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

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

Time allocated to HCT will be reviewed to meet the minimum requirements outlined in the module descriptor.

Teachers will analyse & review trends in the students' achievement in certificate examinations. (Junior & Senior Cycle).

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