



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Subject Inspection: Business Report

REPORT

School name	Griffeen Community College
School address	C/O Kishogue Community College Thomas Omar Way Lucan
Roll number	76454S
Date of evaluation	05-05-2023
Date of issue of report	11/09/2023

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(s) evaluated learning and teaching in Business under the following headings:

1. Teaching, learning and assessment
2. Subject provision and whole-school support
3. Planning and preparation

The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

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.

Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and tackle bullying

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:	
<i>Child Protection</i>	<i>Anti-bullying</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">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.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)</i> 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 <i>Procedures</i>) 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 students.

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

Subject inspection

Date of inspection	05-05-2023
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and key staff• Interaction with students, including focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during 3 lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

The focus of this subject inspection was on Junior Cycle Business Studies only.

School context

Griffen Community College is a co-educational post-primary school under the patronage of Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB), in partnership with Scoil Sinéad Ltd. The school is in its sixth year. The school offers the Junior Cycle School (JC), Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate (Established) (LCE) and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme. The school has a current enrolment of 375 students.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment was satisfactory.
- Homework was corrected in all lessons through teacher questioning. An analysis of students' copies showed limited evidence of written formative feedback.
- Provision for Business Studies was very good; the subject was well supported by timetabling and teachers have very good access to digital learning technologies (DLT).
- All business studies teachers have engaged with the subject learning and assessment review (SLAR) meetings in-line with best practice and a report was issued to senior management.
- The overall quality of planning within the business studies department was good.

Recommendations

- Written work in copies had some evidence of monitoring and feedback. Students would benefit from more comprehensive recorded formative feedback, in order to improve learning outcomes.
- The potential benefits of digital learning technology were not realised in the lessons observed. The business department should explore using a wider variety of DLT methodologies that could be incorporated into lessons to meet the needs of all learners.
- Assessment of learning was more evident than assessment for learning generally, and this is an area for development. Teachers should revisit the area of assessment to ensure that approaches used support productive student participation in assessment.
- At junior cycle, teachers should further develop units of learning, prioritising assessment and learner experiences, which link learning outcomes from across the three strands of the business studies specification.
- It is recommended that the business teachers engage in action planning for improvement by looking at what is working well and identifying priorities for development. Following collective reflection on these areas, teachers should develop an action plan for improvement which would align with the whole school approach to school self-evaluation (SSE).

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment was satisfactory with highly effective practice observed in a small number of lessons.
- Learning intentions were presented at the outset of all lessons either orally or displayed on the board. In a small number of lessons, highly effective use of learning intentions was noted. In these lessons, time was taken to discuss the intentions and progress was reviewed. When the intentions were suitably differentiated, students were challenged to go beyond the tasks set for the class. Additionally, in the highly effective lessons, the planned learning intentions were revisited to assess students' learning and to affirm understanding.
- In highly effective lessons, teachers planned carefully for learning and used well-designed handouts and activities to support student engagement. In these instances, lesson sequence was good where there was a good balance between student voice and teacher direction.
- In a few lessons the teacher became the facilitator of learning when the planned intentions placed the students at the centre of the learning process. However, there was a tendency to move away from the learning outcomes set by the specification and to be led by a chapter based approach guided by the text book. The subject department should review this practice to improve the quality of the learning experience as envisaged by the specification.
- Highly effective practice was observed in a minority of lessons when students worked collaboratively to develop their answers and complete financial accounts using a check balance approach. This practice should be developed further across the business studies department.
- In a few lessons, where student engagement was highest, teachers effectively planned a sequence of learning that combined a range of active learning methodologies. These included, opportunities for cooperative learning and peer assessment. In the context of one hour lessons, business teachers should plan for a range of learning opportunities to promote increased student engagement and to ensure the range of learning styles are adequately supported.
- In the majority of lessons, there was a tendency for the learning to be presented in a homogenous manner rather than differentiated in a way that recognises students' various learning needs. To improve learner experiences in lessons, teachers should reduce the level of instructional teaching and engage students more in the learning process. It is recommended that differentiated teaching and learning approaches, which scaffold learning, and provide sufficient challenge should be further incorporated into lessons.
- The dominant form of assessment of students' learning in lessons was oral questioning. Best practice was evident when the questions posed enabled students to apply and evaluate information with their peers. A greater use of higher order questions with appropriate wait time would further develop learner experience. In a small number of lessons, other effective assessment strategies were used appropriately, including the use of effective digital assessment strategies. Assessment of learning was more evident than assessment for learning generally, and this is an area for development. Teachers should revisit the area of assessment to ensure that approaches used support productive student participation in assessment.

- Student copies showed limited evidence of the provision of effective written feedback to improve student learning. In keeping with the school's homework policy, all teachers should provide students with regular written formative feedback, to enhance their capacity to improve their learning.
- Students who participated in the focus group spoke positively of their experiences in Business Studies. Where they described the subject as enjoyable, especially when provided with opportunities to engage in enterprise tasks and to develop their skills for analysis and critical thinking. They valued opportunities for collaboration and discussion with their peers and to apply problem-solving skills to tasks. They enjoyed learning about real life business examples and when links were made to local, national and international enterprise.
- In lessons, the potential of DLT to support learner engagement and learning was not fully realised and this is an area for development. In a highly effective lesson, the teacher's good use of DLT was used to reinforce the lesson content. However, in the majority of lessons, DLT was underutilised and in many cases its use was limited to displaying the textbook digitally. In the majority of lessons there was an over-reliance on teachers using electronic slides, leading to unnecessary periods of student passivity
- Homework was assigned in all lessons, mainly as a completion task. Homework correction in most lessons, was framed by teacher questioning, with students self-correcting their work from the board. In the majority of lessons, an analysis of students' copybooks, showed limited evidence of the provision of effective written feedback, to improve student learning. In keeping with the school's school self-evaluation (SSE) target, all teachers should provide students with regular written formative feedback, to enhance their capacity to improve their learning.

2. Subject provision and whole school support

- The quality of whole-school support and subject provision was very good. School management was supportive of the subject and a suitable time allocation was provided for Business Studies.
- Teachers and students were provided with very good DLT facilities and all had access to Wi-Fi enabled tablets. Classrooms were equipped with data projectors, white boards, personal computers and Wi-Fi enabled internet access was provided. A shared learning platform was in use that allowed teachers to collaborate and share resources with one another and with students.
- To increase parents' and students' understanding of the assessment framework that supports junior cycle Business Studies, the school had developed a useful assessment calendar.
- The school amended its reporting template to reflect the descriptors used for classroom-based assessments and certificate examinations. The use of this highly effective practice should be extended to guide students' learning when providing them with formative feedback in their copybooks.
- Professional time was provided to every teacher in the department. All Business Studies teachers had engaged with the SLAR meetings in line with best practice and a report was issued to senior management.

3. Planning and preparation

- The overall quality of planning and preparation for the subject was good. Long-term and short-term plans for teaching, learning and assessment were evident.
- In line with good practice, the coordination of the subject was undertaken by a business teacher and rotates annually. Formal subject department meetings were regularly held with agendas prepared and minutes recorded appropriately.
- The schemes of work for business studies should be further developed. When planning for Business Studies, teachers should collaborate to develop a unit of learning approach, prioritising assessment and learner experiences by linking learning outcomes from across the three strands of the business studies specification.
- The development of an action plan for business studies would enhance the quality of subject planning and tie in with the whole school approach to SSE. The business studies department should gather evidence in relation to what is working well and areas for improvement. This information can then be used to set targets in the short, medium and long term for the development of the subject to improve learner outcomes and experiences.

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

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	<i>Very good</i> 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 <i>outstanding</i> 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	<i>Good</i> 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 <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	<i>Satisfactory</i> 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	<i>Fair</i> 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	<i>Weak</i> 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;