



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Subject Inspection: History Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Griffioen Community College
Seoladh na scoile/School address	C/O Kishogue Community College Thomas Omar Way Lucan
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	76454S
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	27-10-2023
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	06/03/2024

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 History under the following headings:

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

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.

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 pupils/students.

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

Subject inspection

Date of inspection	27-10-2023
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal, deputy principal and history teachers• Interaction with students, including focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during five lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and history teachers

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 offers the Junior Cycle (JC), Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate (Established) (LCE), the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). The school has a current enrolment of 417 students.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- Overall, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment was satisfactory.
- Effective collaborative learning opportunities were facilitated in almost all lessons.
- In the majority of lessons, digital learning technologies (DLT) were used effectively to progress learning.
- The pace of class activities was good in more than half of the lessons, and good teacher circulation supported effective student engagement and participation.
- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support for History was very good.
- The overall quality of planning and preparation was good.

Recommendations

- As students' note-making skills and awareness of key historical terms were underdeveloped, teachers should share agreed note-making approaches to support all learners to record and explain key historical terms, and to use them in their appropriate context.
- To develop the capacity of all learners to support their answers with relevant historical evidence, teachers should share agreed approaches with their students to support their capacity to frame their answers with appropriate explanations and historical evidence.
- As the provision of effective formative feedback was limited in the sample of copybooks reviewed, teachers should use success criteria to frame the provision of effective feedback to guide improvements in learners' outcomes.
- In-line with whole school policy, history teachers should review planning for end of term assessments, to ensure that all term assessments are reflective of the agreed learning outcomes for the units of learning being assessed.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- Overall, the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment was satisfactory. Good practices were observed in all lessons, while some areas requiring improvement were also identified.
- All teachers displayed enthusiasm for History and had very good historical knowledge. In all lessons, students were affirmed and encouraged for their efforts and a positive learning atmosphere was evident.
- In the majority of lessons, learning intentions were shared appropriately with students at the beginning of lessons. In a few lessons, the learning intentions were not clearly stated to provide students with an appropriate roadmap for their learning. To improve practice, learning intentions and success criteria should be embedded into all lessons, to facilitate student reflection, self-assessment and a lesson structure that supports the incremental progression of learning.
- Good development of the key skills of source analysis was noted in more than half of lessons. In these lessons, students were given a range of historical images and written sources to analyse for evidence of bias, prejudice and propaganda. Effective talk and discussion, regarding the bias and prejudice that students identified in the sources, supported students to better understand how sources of information could be used for propaganda purposes.
- Appropriate collaborative learning opportunities were facilitated in almost all lessons. To improve learners' experiences, teachers should implement agreed approaches to ensure that all learning collaborative activities are purposefully designed, and roles are appropriately assigned to achieve meaningful learning outcomes.
- In the majority of lessons, DLT was used effectively to progress learning. In these lessons, students used digital devices, worksheets and learning prompts to research a chosen historical personality. To improve learners' outcomes teachers should guide students to use verifiable websites, when researching information from the internet.
- During student focus groups, students spoke positively of their experiences in history lessons. The majority of students expressed a clear interest in the subject. Students described enjoying lessons most when they were facilitated to apply problem-solving skills to tasks and to learn in a way that suited their learning needs, and the needs of their peers.
- In the lessons observed, students' note-making skills were underdeveloped, and a significant minority of students spoken too during lessons expressed difficulty with understanding key historical terms and concepts. All history teachers should implement agreed approaches to scaffold and to support students to note-make, and to explain key historical concepts in their own words.
- The overall quality of assessment was satisfactory. Teachers' approaches to assessment included; effective teacher circulation to monitor student engagement and to provide oral feedback, and some effective questioning approaches, such as scaffolding to prompt students' responses.
- In most lessons, there was an over reliance on lower order and global questioning with missed opportunities for increasing inclusive active learning opportunities. Teachers should share agreed and inclusive formative assessment strategies to support wider classroom participation.
- A review of students' copybooks was undertaken in all lessons. The sample of copybooks reviewed showed limited examples of written feedback by teachers or of students recording or enacting oral feedback. To support more successful attainment of the learning outcomes, teachers should use success criteria to frame the provision of regular written feedback on key assignments and facilitate time for students to enact the feedback provided, either in lessons or as a homework activity.

2. Subject provision and whole school support

- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support for History was very good. The school management team (SMT) was supportive of History and timetabling of History across all year groups met with the requirements in the subject.
- The SMT was supportive of teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) and all history teachers have engaged in subject specific CPD provided for teachers of Junior Cycle History. Further engagement with CPD for senior cycle is recommended.
- In keeping with very effective practice, deployment of history teachers was in-line with their qualifications, skills and knowledge and deployment facilitated good rotation of all teachers across all relevant curricular programmes.
- The SMT actively supported the use of DLT in teaching and learning and a bank of mobile digital devices was available for teachers to use for their lessons.
- The school developed an effective assessment calendar and explanatory note describing the grading systems for junior cycle assessments.
- The SMT was supportive of extra and co-curricular events in History and school trips to places of historical significance for all year groups were facilitated, where possible.

3. Planning and preparation

- The overall quality of planning and preparation was good.
- Planning for individual lessons was appropriate with some areas for improvement identified. To support students to take ownership of their learning, all teachers should encourage students to edit and improve their work.
- History department planning was in its early stages of developments. Formal and informal subject department meetings have begun, and this is a welcome development, which will help to facilitate greater levels of collaboration within the new department.
- Appropriate efforts have been made to develop a department plan for Junior Cycle History. To improve planning practices, the subject department should consolidate its teaching, learning and formative assessment plans to further support effective provision. Additionally, greater emphasis should now be placed on developing, sourcing and sharing resources across all year groups that will enhance students' learning experiences.
- It was positive to note, history teachers collaborate on end of term summative assessments. To further develop this collaborative approach and in keeping with whole school policy, teachers should plan agreed approaches for examining the learning outcomes, before beginning the units of learning.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and history 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;