



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Subject Inspection: Home Economics Report

REPORT FOR SCHOOL RESPONSE

Ainm na scoile/School name	St Angela's Secondary School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Ursuline Convent Waterford
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	64990D
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	22-09-2022
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	11-11-2022

Subject inspection

Dates of inspection	21-09-22, 22-09-2022
Inspection activities undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during five lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and key staff• Interaction with students	

School context

St. Angela's School is a girls' voluntary secondary school with a current enrolment of 975 students. As well as the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate programmes, the school has a compulsory Transition Year (TY) programme and offers the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and Leaving Certificate Applied Programme (LCA).

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- Home Economics is a very popular subject in the school at junior and senior cycle.
- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the lessons observed was good, with some very good practice observed.
- A commendable range of extra-curricular activities provide rich opportunities for students to creatively apply their learning and to see the relevance of their learning in different contexts.
- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support was very good.
- Teachers are a very cohesive and collaborative team and engage in regular reflective practice to support continuous improvements in students' learning.
- The overall quality of planning and preparation was good, with agreed units of learning in use in the shared junior cycle subject plan and very good practice evident in teachers' collaborative work in developing and sharing their practice.

Recommendations

- To build on learners' strengths and further develop collective approaches to teaching and learning, in the few instances where there was a greater level of teacher input observed, teachers should seek a greater balance between their input and student activity and response.
- To strengthen the evident incremental approach to developing learners' practical and procedural skills, additional complexity should be incorporated into all food studies practical lessons, where possible to do so.
- It is timely now for teachers to focus in more detail on their collective review of junior cycle planning on learner outcomes, assessment, and practical and procedural skills development.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the lessons observed was good overall, with some very good practice observed.
- In all lessons observed, student behaviour was excellent. A very good rapport was evident between students and teachers. This created a productive learning environment.
- Students were highly organised and ready to learn in lessons.
- At the beginning of lessons, clear learning intentions were shared by teachers with students. Best practice was evident when student's acquisition of all of the intended learning was assessed during and at the end of the lesson and this practice should be extended to all lessons.
- In one lesson, success criteria were shared with students and this supported students to make informed decisions when engaging in peer assessment and self-assessment. Scope exists for teachers to share success criteria with students and/or to co-construct success criteria with students so that students in all lessons are enabled to make informed evaluations about their work and learning.
- Students in practical lessons were enabled to contribute positively towards the creation of a more sustainable world by segregating waste for composting on the school grounds and limiting food waste.
- In some lessons, teachers highlighted subject-specific terminology. Good practice was evident when students had an opportunity to record key words and they were required to show their understanding of the new vocabulary by using the terminology in a sentence.
- In one lesson observed, students were provided with the opportunity to familiarise themselves with and apply one stage of the design brief process. This incremental approach to developing students' confidence and competence in using the design brief process as a way of working is highly commended.
- It is very positive that in the food studies practical lessons observed, students worked with high levels of independence. Students demonstrated that their subject-specific skills are being developed to a high standard. Teaching practices that enable students to incrementally develop practical and procedural skills in the subject, were generally good, and, given students capacities to work independently, could be strengthened even further. For example, in instances where class groups/students prepare dishes or bake goods very similar as that prepared previously or with limited additional complexity introduced, teachers should consider the range of dishes chosen and ensure that the approaches used maximises the opportunities to progressively develop learners' skills.
- Teachers made some good use of spot demonstrations to support students' progress with a task and this is commended. At times, additional teacher demonstrations or more detailed instruction would support students to refine their practical skills even further. Where possible, teachers may consider using student-led spot demonstrations supervised by the teacher.
- To build on learners' strengths and further develop collective approaches to teaching and learning, in the few instances where there was a greater level of teacher input observed, teachers should seek a greater balance between their input and student activity and response. In these few instances additional student based activities and or formative assessment tasks would encourage greater student response and enhance the consolidation of learning.
- A sample of students' textiles work demonstrated originality and creativity.
- In all lessons, teachers used questioning to provide students with the opportunity to make co-curricular links. Very good practice was observed when higher-order questioning was used by teachers as this facilitated students deep engagement with the lesson content.
- Student copybooks, folders and written tests provide a comprehensive record of student learning and students' note-making skills were evident in copybooks.

- Digital presentation were used by all teachers in lessons to share content, images, learning intentions, and in some instances instructions. Scope exists to explore how students could use digital devices within lessons to take further responsibility for their own learning.

2. Subject provision and whole school support

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support was very good.
- Timetable provision is in line with syllabus and specification guidelines.
- Home Economics is a very popular subject in the school and students have very good access to the subject at junior and senior cycle. It is highly commendable that the school has recognised possible barriers to students studying the subject and have deployed resources, with the support of home economics teachers, to ensure that all students can actively participate in the full range of learning opportunities provided in lessons.
- In-coming first-year students and in-coming fifth-year students are supported by the school to make informed subject choices through an open evening, subject information booklets, teacher presentations and student presentations.
- A range of extra-curricular events including the Ursuline Bake-Off provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their creative flair and learning. School trips to food producers and businesses, both locally and in Italy, enable students to extend their learning and see the relevance of their learning in different contexts.
- All teachers are members of the Association of Teachers of Home Economics and they proactively seek opportunities to engage in continuing professional development.
- The home economics specialist facilities comprise four kitchens. Very good work by school management has ensured the creation of additional kitchen space and optimal learning environments. Where possible, practical food studies classes should be timetabled for the three kitchens which provide optimal learning environments and smaller class groups timetabled in the remaining kitchen.
- School management actively promote a culture of on-going improvement. Teaching approaches to support the current area identified by the school for development, through the school self-evaluation (SSE) process, was evident in lessons.

3. Planning and preparation

- The overall quality of planning and preparation was good with some very good practice observed.
- The subject department, consisting of five subject-specialists, are a very dedicated and cohesive team. Subject department meetings are held on a very regular basis and minutes are available. Minutes of meetings and conversations with teachers show that they are very reflective in reviewing what is working well and identifying areas for improvement. Teachers are continually seeking to develop and share their practice.
- It is good practice that the role of the subject coordinator rotates to provide opportunities for all members of the department to develop leadership capacity.
- Leaving Certificate programmes of work are detailed and well developed. Scope exists to develop to the Leaving Certificate Applied programme plan to include clear timeframes, assessment modes and the inclusion of the practical and procedural skills which should be developed.
- It is good that the practice of using units of learning in the subject plan has been instituted. It is now timely for teachers to focus their review of units of learning in more detail to ensure that: the number of learning outcomes planned for in a unit are achievable in the time allocated, assessment approaches aligned to the chosen learning outcomes are recorded to a greater level of specificity, and the practical and procedural skills which are intended for students to develop are described even further within the units of learning.
- It is commendable that the subject department value student voice and have asked students to evaluate the transition year module.

- A wide range of physical resources and digital resources have been collated and shared by teachers within the department. A selection of these resources were used in the lessons observed.

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