



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Subject Inspection: Geography Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Duiske College
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Graignamanagh Co Kilkenny
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	70590T
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	12-10-2022 & 14-10-2022
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	26/01/2023

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 evaluated learning and teaching in Geography 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.

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.

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.

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

Subject inspection

Date of inspection	12-10-2022 & 14-10-2022
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and key staff• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during 4 lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Duiske College operates under the Kilkenny-Carlow Education and Training Board with a current enrolment of 154 (80 girls and 74 boys). The school offers the Junior Cycle, (JC) the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), an optional Transition year (TY) Programme, the Leaving Certificate Applied and the Leaving Certificate programme. The school participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action plan for education.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment was very high in the lessons observed.
- Good practice was observed in the senior cycle lesson with a clear emphasis on geographical terminology.
- Active learning methodologies were evident in all lessons and students responded enthusiastically by taking responsibility for their own learning.
- Geography is an optional subject at junior and senior cycle; it is a core subject in TY where currently all students study the subject for half the year.
- The geography department is well supported by the senior management team with appropriate timetabling across the junior cycle, TY and senior cycle programmes but current subject choice arrangements for senior cycle may prevent some students from taking Geography.
- The overall quality of planning is satisfactory and planning for the TY and senior cycle is well developed: there is a need for a comprehensive review of junior cycle planning

Recommendations

- Consideration should be given to the pace of lessons to ensure that adequate time is given for students to complete tasks and to reflect on their learning.
- When assessing students' written work, teachers should highlight the geographical terms that are misspelt and ensure that they correct the errors.
- Senior management should review the options for subject choice at senior cycle to ensure all students who wish to take Geography can do so.
- A review of junior cycle planning is required with a particular focus on the inclusion of Units of Learning to ensure that all elements of the revised Framework for Junior Cycle are met.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- Overall, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment was very high in the lessons observed. Few areas for development were identified in aspects of teachers' individual practice. In a small number of lessons, the pace was too fast. Teachers should ensure that lessons are paced appropriately when teaching more complex topics. This will also ensure that adequate time is given for students to complete tasks and to reflect on their learning.
- Teachers were well prepared for lessons with a range of stimuli to engage their students. Very good individual practice by geography teachers was evident when the learning intentions were clearly outlined and where students were engaged and supported through a series of meaningful active learning tasks to build their knowledge.
- Success criteria were used purposefully in a number of lessons to guide and assess students' understanding and learning. In one lesson, the teacher demonstrated the concept of liquefaction in an innovative and effective way, and followed up by encouraging students to create notes on the topic. This is good practice.
- Students effectively demonstrated geographical knowledge appropriate to their stage of development and were motivated to learn.
- In one junior cycle lesson, the teacher facilitated a very rich discussion encouraging students to draw on their experience about the geography of their local area and how it impacted on the local economy.
- Student collaboration was promoted in most lessons with students working in teams to solve geographical problems. Students confirmed that they enjoyed this approach and felt it progressed their learning.
- Teachers used a combination of open and targeted questions appropriately in lessons requiring students to recall prior knowledge and to assess gaps in their learning. However, consideration should be given to expanding the range of questions to promote higher order answers.
- Affirmative and instructive formative feedback was observed in a selection of copybooks which was individualised to meet the needs of learners and progress their learning.
- The effective use of digital tools by teachers to assess prior learning, promote critical thinking through problem solving is to be commended.
- A collection of geography-related books was available to students to read outside of class time and student reviews of these books were displayed in the geography classroom.
- Respectful and supportive engagement between teachers and students was apparent in all lessons creating a very positive classroom atmosphere.

2. Subject provision and whole school support

- Overall subject provision for Geography was satisfactory. First-year students are offered taster modules before confirming their subject choice. Geography is an optional subject at junior cycle and is a mandatory subject as part of the TY programme. However, current subject choice arrangements in senior cycle may be preventing some students from studying Geography. It is recommended that senior management review the options for subject choice at senior cycle to facilitate any student who wishes to study the subject.
- Timetabling in both junior and senior cycles are in line with syllabus guidelines.
- Teachers have base classrooms with the option to use larger classrooms when required.

- The senior management team is supportive of the geography department. There is very good provision of information and communication technology (ICT) to support teaching and learning. The school provides a digital platform to support collaborative planning and the sharing of resources.

3. Planning and preparation

- Teachers' individual planning for lessons was very good and they used a range of resources to engage and differentiate content for students. This preparation extended to planning a variety of active learning tasks to maximise participation by all students in lessons.
- The print rich environment in the classrooms visited was effective in stimulating students and supporting their learning. This included student work, maps, photographs, posters and key geographical terms.
- The geography department work collaboratively to plan their programmes. They meet regularly to share ideas and to consider areas for development in teaching, learning and assessment in the subject.
- The schemes of work for TY and senior cycle are of a high-quality. However, the TY programme could also be re-evaluated to identify opportunities that exist to develop and apply geographical knowledge and skills to inquiry-led tasks. When analysing OS maps, for example, there are opportunities to establish cross-curricular links across other subject areas by focussing on placenames to develop a deeper understanding.
- The Framework for Junior Cycle requires the development of Units of Learning. Therefore a review of the junior cycle plan should be prioritised to incorporate all elements of the framework. A suite of resources has been developed by the JCT Geography team to support this.
- The geography department have reviewed their senior cycle Geographical Investigation to effectively apply and embed the geographical skills acquired during their course.

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.

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;