



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

# Subject Inspection: Business Report

## REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Coláiste Mhuire
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Johnstown Co Kilkenny
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	70600T
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	12-10-2022
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	23/11/2022

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# 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 and Accounting 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"><li>1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.</li><li>2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.</li><li>3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>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.</li><li>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.</li><li>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.</li></ol>

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

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# Subject inspection

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

## School context

Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown, is a co-educational school under the auspices of Kilkenny-Carlow Education and Training Board, with an enrolment of 634 students. It has a broad post-primary curriculum and currently offers, Business Studies at junior cycle, transition year (TY) Accounting and Enterprise and Senior Cycle Accounting and Business. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education for educational inclusion.

## Summary of main findings and recommendations:

### Findings

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment was very good.
- Provision for business subjects is very good and is well supported by timetabling and subject option arrangements.
- Team teaching was highly effective in the lessons observed.
- The overall quality of planning for the subject was very good with highly effective use of the Visual Learning Environment (VLE) to support positive learner outcomes and experiences.
- A highly effective action plan was developed for business subjects which enhanced the quality of subject planning and was linked with the whole school approach to DEIS planning.

### Recommendations

- There is scope to further develop the overall TY business module by incorporating a rotating module of Business, Accounting and Economics to assist students to make informed decisions on senior cycle subject options.
- Modelling of students' work should be developed further to provide opportunities to view exemplars of students' work and engage in constructive feedback, assessment and peer assessment.

# Detailed findings and recommendations

## 1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The overall quality of teaching learning and assessment was very good.
- In some lessons highly effective use of learning intentions was noted. Learning intentions were presented at the outset of all lessons and time was taken to discuss the intentions and progress reviewed. When the intentions were suitably differentiated, students were challenged to go beyond the tasks set for the class. Highly effective practice was also noted when the planned learning intentions were revisited to assess students' learning and affirm understanding.
- Highly effective practice was observed in all lessons where the teacher placed a strong emphasis on the development of the students' literacy and numeracy skills in line with whole school DEIS targets. This was further demonstrated by teachers identifying key words and taking appropriate opportunities to identify and promote financial literacy.
- Highly effective learning was noted when teachers provided a variety of teaching and assessment strategies to meet the individual needs of students. These strategies supported appropriate expectations and challenge for learners across the ability range.
- In keeping with very good practice student participation in classroom activities was monitored closely by teachers. Good circulation by teachers among the students improved the students' levels of engagement. Teachers provided one-to-one support to students when necessary which facilitated oral feedback being provided where appropriate.
- There was good use of questioning in all lessons. Very effective practice was noted when higher-order questioning strategies were used. This type of questioning had a beneficial impact on developing students' understanding. Furthermore, students were active in their own learning through questioning. Additionally, it was good that adequate wait time was provided to allow students to think before answering.
- Effective use of digital learning technologies (DLT) was observed in all lessons. A variety of well selected DLT resources was used. These resources included a range of worksheets, online assessment tools and presentations, all of which enhanced the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. In one lesson, highly effective practice was noted in the use of VLE to enable teachers and students to collaborate and share work.
- On the schools VLE, teachers provided opportunities for students to access notes and homework. There is potential to expand this to provide opportunities for students to note make and not just note take and to place the notes onto the platform. This will reduce time spent transcribing in lessons and would improve learning within the lesson.
- Effective group work was observed in almost all lessons where students worked in a collaborative manner and this had a positive impact on their learning.
- There was evidence of modelling of students work in some lessons. For example, the use of the VLE in a few lessons provided opportunities to view exemplars of students' work and engage in constructive feedback, assessment and peer assessment. This approach was highly effective and should be developed further to allow students to view a piece of work, engage in active constructive feedback through peer discussion and improve student understanding of the topic.

- Students' participation in classroom activities was monitored closely by teachers; good circulation among the students improved the participation level. Teachers provided one-to-one support to students when needed.
- Team teaching was highly effective in lessons observed, with seamless transitions between teachers, this highly effective practice should be further extended across the business department.
- Homework was assigned in all lessons during the evaluation and there was evidence from student journals that homework is allocated regularly. As many class groups are mixed ability, teachers should give consideration to providing differentiated homework.

## 2. Subject provision and whole school support

- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support was very good. School management is supportive of the subject and timetabling of the subject across all years and programmes is very good.
- Business Studies is an options' group subject which is delivered as a six-week subject sample model in first year. Business and Accounting are offered at senior cycle and Enterprise is offered in TY. The Business module within the TY programme should be reviewed in order to provide students with an opportunity to sample all three subjects. This will improve their ability to make informed decisions on senior cycle subject options.
- Students have open access to levels and change of levels is accommodated by following whole-school procedures; the number of students studying Business at higher level in recent years has increased at Senior Cycle.
- The business department has full access to a bank of mobile digital devices. The use of such resources is actively promoted by senior management.
- Team teaching is in place across the business department and is highly effective in improving learner outcomes and experiences. Teachers have planned well for team teaching and regularly reflect on the process.
- Enterprise education is valued in the school with recent involvement in the Local Enterprise awards. Students are encouraged and supported to participate in Enterprise activities by senior management.

## 3. Planning and preparation

- The overall quality of planning for the subject was very good.
- Highly effective use of the VLE allows teachers to collaborate and share resources with one another. There is a high level of engagement and reflection in relation to the use of the VLE. Collaboration is reported as being very strong across the business department.
- The coordination of the subject is undertaken by a business teacher and it rotates. Formal subject department meetings are regularly held with agendas prepared and minutes recorded.
- A centralised school wide system relating to data regarding the number of students taking Business subjects in the certificate examinations and student attainment are reviewed annually against the national norms for the subject and compared at whole school level, in line with DEIS targets.

- Business teachers have actively engaged in recent subject specific Continuing Professional Development and most teachers are active members of their subject organisation, the Business Studies Teachers Association of Ireland. Following attendance at in-service, the business department are sharing professional learning and trialling new methodologies in classes which is highly effective practice.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the 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;