

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection in Science**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Celbridge Community School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Celbridge Co Kildare
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	91614B

**Date of Inspection: 21-03-2018**



## **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 Science 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.

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

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.

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

## SUBJECT INSPECTION

### INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

<b>Date of inspection</b>	21-03-2018
<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 two class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### School context

Celbridge Community School opened in September 2015 under the trusteeship of Educate Together and Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board. The school moved to its current temporary site in 2016. The school has an enrolment of 262 students at present and this is projected to increase substantially in the short term. The Junior Certificate and the Junior Cycle Student Award programmes are offered to students.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The quality of both teaching and learning was very good in all the lessons observed.
- Teaching methodologies were very student centred, encouraged the active involvement of students in their own learning and enabled students' independence as learners.
- Lessons were very interactive, questioning was of a very high quality and teachers' use of the school's digital infrastructure was very creative.
- Support for the provision of Science is very good in Celbridge Community School.
- Extensive provision is in place for co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- Very good quality planning and preparation was evident at individual teacher level and at subject department level.

#### Recommendations

- In some cases, additional developmental written feedback to students on their written work is recommended in order to better encourage them to reach and maintain standards of presentation and content.
- It is recommended that the colour-coded classification of chemicals, to enable safe storage, should be implemented at an early date.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of both teaching and learning was very good in all the lessons observed.
- All the lessons were well planned and well prepared. Very good links were made with students' prior experiences and learning, and this provided a solid basis for progression.
- The learning intention of each lesson was shared with students although, on occasion, these could have been emphasised to a greater extent.
- Teaching methodologies and lesson content were well chosen to achieve the learning intentions and it was evident that the quality of students' learning was central to the lessons.
- The teaching methodologies used were very student centred, encouraged the active involvement of students in their own learning and enabled students' independence as learners. Teachers' adopted an investigative approach in the lessons observed.
- The lessons were very interactive. Questioning was of a very high quality and both the questions and students' responses led to high quality discussions between teachers and students. Higher order questions and discussions were predominant and students were very well challenged.
- Teachers' use of the school's digital infrastructure was very creative and very supportive of students' use of their personal tablet devices as real learning tools.
- It was evident that teachers' expectations of students were very high and success criteria were frequently shared with students during the course of lessons to communicate expectations and set standards for achievement.
- The systematic use of Assessment for Learning techniques was evident in all the lessons observed.
- Differentiation, at a number of levels, was very good. A combination of high-quality questioning, teacher movement and individual attention to students led to very good monitoring of students' progress and to individualised supports for students, as appropriate.
- In some cases, additional developmental written feedback to students on their written work is recommended in order to better encourage them to reach and maintain standards of presentation and content.
- Students engaged very well in all the lessons observed, were highly motivated and they made excellent contributions to the lessons, displaying high quality learning in the process. Teachers' level of interest and enthusiasm served to encourage and motivate students.
- Students were very well challenged, especially to think independently, and they were well supported to respond at a high level.

### 2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Support for the provision of Science is very good in Celbridge Community School.
- Science is a core subject in the junior cycle and timetabling provision meets the requirements of the science specification and all students have at least weekly access to a laboratory.

- Management has been proactive in facilitating teachers' access to relevant continuing professional development and teachers have availed of available opportunities.
- Laboratories are well maintained and equipped and have been developed as high-quality learning environments.
- It is recommended that the colour-coded classification of chemicals, to enable safe storage, should be implemented at an early date.
- There is a good system of formative and summative assessment of students in place, and of reporting on their progress to students' homes.
- Teachers are commended for the extensive provision for co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, providing students with valuable opportunities to engage with the sciences on a broader level.

### **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Very good quality planning and preparation was evident at subject department level.
- A very good and effectively-led science department manages the day-to-day activities related to the teaching of the sciences. Teachers work in a collegial and co-operative manner and planning schedules are continually adapted, at department and individual level, following reflection on experience of implementation.
- Common schedules for delivering course content are in place, leading to the use of common assessments to the greatest degree possible.
- The department is engaged in planning both for current syllabus implementation, for the anticipated growth of student numbers in the short term and the introduction of senior cycle, including a Transition Year programme, in the coming school year.
- Reports of department meetings indicate high-quality work, ranging from practical housekeeping, to pedagogical and curricular matters, including appropriate teaching approached as well as curricular content.
- It is very positive to note that on-going evidence-based planning for improvement is taking place, in order to ensure the best possible outcomes for students.

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 board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

## 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
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

## **Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report**

*(Blank)*

## **Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.**

The Board of Management welcomes the positive findings from this Science Inspection. The fact that the Inspector noted that the quality of both teaching and learning was very good in all lessons observed was very encouraging. Moreover the finding that teaching methodologies were very student centred, encouraged active involvement and interactivity of students and that an investigative approach to learning and teaching was observed aligns fully with the vision for pedagogical practice in the school.

The observation that laboratories have been developed as high-quality learning environments and that the teachers' use of the school's digital infrastructure was noted to be very creative and supportive of student's utilizing their personal tablet devices, as real learning tools, was also a very positive finding in terms of the realisation of the vision of the school in this regard.

The recommendation in terms of developing practice with regard to written feedback and to colour-code classification of chemicals has been noted and incorporated into current practice and will continue to be addressed in future in department plans.

Finally, the observation of the inspector that students were highly motivated and displayed high quality learning coupled with teachers' level of interest and enthusiasm that served to encourage and motivate students in this manner was also very positive in terms of actioning the vision, aim and ethos of the school.