



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Subject Inspection: History Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Colaiste Dun Iascaigh
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Cashel Road Cahir Co Tipperary
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	76063D
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	07/05/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	06/11/2024

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(s) 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

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> or <i>Bí Cineálta (2024)</i> and this policy is reviewed annually.2. The school's current anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and students.

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

Subject inspection

Date of inspection	07/05/2024
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and key staff• Interaction with students, including focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during six lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Coláiste Dún Iascaigh is a multi-denominational, co-educational post-primary school under the patronage of Tipperary Education and Training Board (ETB). Student enrolment at the time of the inspection was 881. The school offered the Junior Certificate, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate (Established) (LCE) and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good, with good assessment practices in some lessons.
- The most successfully planned and taught lessons prioritised student participation.
- The quality of subject provision and whole school support for the subject was very good overall.
- The integration of a comprehensive whole-school plan for students with special educational needs into the History department plan was highly commendable.
- The quality of department planning was very good, and teachers' individual preparation was thorough and comprehensive overall.

Recommendations

- In a small number of lessons, there were few opportunities for student contributions. The History department should collaboratively explore the effective practice observed to develop and implement a departmental plan for student participation in lessons.
- As teachers used a variety of approaches to areas that encouraged active learning and the use of digital technology, the History department should develop an approach to the sharing of good practice.
- There was limited mapping of the extensive School Self Evaluation (SSE) process into the History plan. The History department should undertake further work to align the targets of the plan with the teaching, learning and assessment of History.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good, with good assessment practices in some lessons. The experiences of learners were positive in all lessons. This was achieved through the use of tasks which were designed to build new learning as the lesson progressed. The most effective of these tasks checked students' knowledge at the opening of the lesson and used a variety of questioning strategies to retrieve learning throughout the lesson.
- The most effectively planned and taught lessons prioritised student participation. In these lessons student voice was included through the careful use of differentiated questioning, task design, and the clear assessment of learning through student contributions and responses to teacher questioning. Most lessons featured the very effective use of think-pair-share strategies which gave students more equitable involvement in the lessons and time for discussion. In the small number of lessons with fewer opportunities for student contributions, there was a notable silence during student involvement in the tasks which involved pair work. To standardise the use of pair and group work, the History department should further investigate the constituent parts of think-pair-share activities by exploring together the successful practice observed and what works well in lessons as well as developing and implementing a departmental plan for purposeful student participation in lessons.
- The subject plan referred to questioning, peer-assessment and self-assessment as part of a school assessment policy. While teachers used questioning effectively in most lessons, few opportunities for peer-assessment and self-assessment were provided to students in a small number of lessons. Student reflection in and on their learning should be included in all lessons. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Focus on Learning Workshop document on Student Reflection would aid the History department in this work.
- As teachers used a variety of approaches to areas such as questioning, retrieval activities, use of learning intentions, active learning and the use of digital technology, the History department should develop an approach to the sharing of good practice and collaboration. The associated engagement in professional dialogue should then move from department meetings to teachers' classroom practice.
- The History plan was aligned with the whole-school approach to digital literacy and teachers' use of digital technology was an important part of almost all of the lessons observed mainly through the use of video, visuals, and historical sources. Some further development of this aspect of teaching and learning should be undertaken by the History department, using the plan in place to expand the number of approaches across all lessons. This planning should include the expansion of the use of technology in the classroom research students complete, and the further consideration of the place of note taking when classroom slides are shared on the platform.
- In the focus group with junior cycle students, students were clear on the differences and similarities between the history they learned in their primary schools and what they were learning in Junior Cycle History. Students were able and very willing to discuss their classroom-based assessments (CBA) when asked about an area of learning they were particularly proud of. Senior cycle students had an ability to reflect on why they chose History and what it will allow them to do in their lives ahead. They were particularly interested in discussing their research studies. This ability to discuss and reflect on their research was a notable and welcome effect of the CBA process.

- One lesson focused on local history, as it pertained to the national overarching narrative of a period. This was very good. In a TY lesson the teacher provided students with an activity which enabled students of diverse abilities and interests to engage in local history within the context of a bigger picture. This was highly effective practice.

2. Subject provision and whole-school support

- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support for the subject was very good. The school's leadership provided support for teachers' professional learning both within the school, and in conjunction with the support services available. Time was made available for teachers to meet, and this had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning and on planning and preparation.
- Teacher-based classrooms were a particular benefit for junior cycle teaching and learning. History CBA1: The Past in My Place allows students to present their research in the form of a display, of the type that they may encounter in a museum, heritage centre or library. There was some evidence of these types of display of History work in teacher-based classrooms. If it is not possible for the school to find space in classrooms for the display of student work, a place should be designated for their display to validate student work and to signal to younger learners that this is where their research is exhibited.
- The integration of a comprehensive whole-school plan for students with special educational needs into the History department plan was highly commendable. The History plan reflected a commitment to provision for all students, and it acknowledged that History is uniquely positioned as a subject to provide the skills, attitudes and values that provide support for all students. Space had also been given in the plan for the consideration of student wellbeing. These inclusions in the plan clearly outlined the roles and responsibilities of classroom teachers for the progress of all learners.

3. Planning and preparation

- The quality of department planning was very good, and teachers' individual preparation was thorough and comprehensive overall.
- The use of the school's digital platform for planning was very effective. It was used for the sharing of resources, the recording of both formal and informal meetings of History teachers and the minutes of subject learning and assessment review (SLAR) meetings. Particularly of note were high-quality documents on the professional dialogue fostered in SLAR meetings. This was a good basis on which to promote professional dialogue in the regular meetings the department undertakes.
- The junior cycle subject plan had aligned learning outcomes and learning intentions for each unit of learning. The History department had collected resources for teaching, learning and assessment in comprehensive online folders. These were very successful approaches. The senior cycle History plan included objectives for each unit of learning, consideration of key concepts and personalities, as well as a collection of relevant teaching and learning resources. However, an area for development was the provision of space for teachers to record their reflections on the progress achieved in each unit of learning as it is completed. This would allow for ongoing and regular development of plans.
- The school had a comprehensive and extensive SSE process in train, with particular links to teaching, learning and assessment in the SSE documents. However, there was limited mapping of the school's SSE focus into the History plan. The History department

should undertake further work to align the targets of the plan with the teaching, learning and assessment of History.

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.

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	Examples of descriptive terms
Excellent	Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of learners. This provision provides an example for other schools and settings of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Excellent; exemplary; outstanding; exceptionally high standard; with very significant strengths
Very good	Provision that is very good is very effective in meeting the needs of learners and is of a very high standard. There is potential to build on existing strengths to achieve an excellent standard.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful
Good	Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to build on existing strengths in order to address the aspects to be developed and achieve a very good standard.	Good; of good quality; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; strengths outweigh the shortcomings; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist
Requires improvement to achieve a good standard	Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard is not sufficiently effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is good or better.	Fair; less than effective; less than sufficient; evident weaknesses that are impacting on learning; experiencing difficulty; shortcomings outweigh strengths; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard	Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard is not meeting the needs of learners. There is immediate need for significant action to address the areas of concern.	Weak; poor; ineffective; insufficient; unacceptable; experiencing significant difficulties; serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated; requiring significant change, development and improvement to be effective