

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

**Subject Inspection in Guidance**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Presentation Secondary School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Loughboy Kilkenny
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	61590S

**Date of Inspection: 23-10-2018**



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An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Scileanna  
Department of  
Education and Skills

## **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 Guidance 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.

## **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>Dates of inspection</b>	22-10-2018 and 23-10-2018
<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><li>• Meeting with members of the student support team</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during three class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal, deputy principals and guidance counsellors</li></ul>

### School context

Presentation Secondary School is a voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of Catholic Education, an Irish Schools Trust, with a current enrolment of 772 female students. The school provides the Junior Cycle programme, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme, and the established Leaving Certificate (LC).

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- Teaching and learning was effective, students demonstrated a very good awareness of education and career options; however, assessment of guidance-related assignments is not a significant aspect of the programme.
- Overall whole-school guidance provision is very good in terms of hours allocated and appropriately qualified personnel involved in the delivery of both the curricular programme and the range of one-to-one and small group support for students.
- There is a highly effective student support structure in the school with clear internal referral pathways, referral forms, collaboration with year heads, senior management team, and beneficial links to external agencies.
- It is highly commendable that the guidance department has identified short and long term guidance areas for development and actions to take.
- Individual guidance lesson planning and overall guidance department planning are very good while whole-school guidance planning and evaluation of the guidance programme are less developed.
- An extensive, high quality whole-school guidance plan is currently under review; however, some detail is lacking regarding the curricular guidance programme for junior cycle students.

#### Recommendations

- The guidance department should review current guidance assessment practices and plan additional meaningful tasks for students to submit for formative feedback.
- The guidance department should oversee an annual consultation and evaluation of the guidance programme to ensure it is meeting the needs of students.

- The guidance department should include a detailed junior cycle guidance curricular programme in the guidance plan, indicating clear learning outcomes, assessment strategies, and guidance areas of learning that will form part of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing framework.

### **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT**

- Teachers demonstrated very good planning and preparation for lessons by selecting a variety of methodologies and ensuring valuable resources were available for students. All lessons began effectively with the teacher outlining clear learning intentions. There was some assessment of learning but there was scope to facilitate students to engage in a deeper level of reflection on learning at the end of the lessons.
- Teachers used effective questioning strategies which were targeted to maximise participation of students. Students were relaxed and observed enjoying lessons in a positive and supportive atmosphere for learning. Teachers were responsive to the learning needs of students and provided very good in-class individual support.
- Students were purposefully engaged in all lessons. As part of a study skills lesson, all students participated in a valuable relaxation exercise and were observed fully engaged in this activity.
- Students have developed a high level of proficiency in independent online career and education research and were very familiar with guidance-related websites, career information portals and a wide range of education and training options. Students expressed strong motivation to succeed academically, and a strong interest in a broad variety of career sectors.
- It is good that progress in Guidance is included in TY, fifth and sixth-year school reports. However, assessment is limited to a small number of guidance-related projects. The guidance department should review current guidance assessment practices and plan additional meaningful tasks for students to submit for formative feedback.
- To develop greater learner autonomy and maximise lesson time, guidance counsellors should assign students more guidance-related tasks to be completed at home, such as completion of online interest assessment tests. In this way students could make a larger contribution to lesson development, share their ideas and engage in richer discussions about their career and education options.

#### **2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- Overall, whole-school guidance provision is very good in terms of hours allocated and appropriately qualified personnel involved in the delivery of both the curricular programme and the range of one-to-one and small group support for students.
- There are two highly effective guidance counsellors leading the guidance programme. Additional one-to-one support for students is provided by another guidance counsellor and a school chaplain. Some students are further aided through participation on the National Behaviour Support Service ALERT programme, which encourages students' use of sensory motor strategies to support self-regulation.
- All TY, fifth-year and LCA students participate in a comprehensive weekly guidance programme, while sixth-year students receive a valuable modular programme of inputs. The

TY programme includes appropriate areas such as self-assessment of career interests, values, aptitudes, career skills, LC subject and programme options, and preparation for the world of work. Students complete a career investigation and present it to their class, thus developing key communication and managing information skills. This is very good practice.

- There is a very collaborative and a highly effective working relationship between the guidance department and the special education core team. Applications for disability access to college are jointly managed and the administration is shared between both departments. This is to be commended.
- There is a very effective student support structure in the school. A new referral form has been successfully introduced this year. There are clear referral pathways from the year heads to the student support team and an action-oriented approach to managing concerns is working well. Very good links have been established with external partners such as the National Educational Psychological Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, and the Special Education Needs Organiser.
- Effective study skills training is provided for students by subject teachers and external organisations. To acknowledge this good whole-school practice, all teachers should document in their subject department plans, the educational guidance support and training they provide to students regarding subject-specific study skills.
- There is a very valuable variety of whole-school guidance activities planned including maths and science week, mental health promotion events, speakers on various education and career options, Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Women in Technology event, and a beneficial induction programme for first-year students. The guidance department should plan and co-ordinate a college awareness week.
- It is commendable that both guidance counsellors are committed to continuing professional development and have attended a large number of upskilling events including new Junior Cycle Wellbeing, European mobility guidance, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), and psychometric assessment training.
- It is praiseworthy that senior management facilitate both guidance counsellors to attend regular counselling supervision. This is very good practice and an essential support for the personal counselling work undertaken by the guidance counsellors.

#### **4. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Individual guidance lesson and overall guidance department planning are very good while whole-school guidance planning and evaluation of the guidance programme are less developed.
- A high quality guidance plan has been developed and is currently under review; the updated plan is due to be ratified by the board of management in 2019. Senior management should ensure the guidance plan is updated and ratified by the board on an annual basis.
- It is highly commendable that the guidance department has identified short and long term guidance areas for development and actions to take. One action identified is a guidance needs' analysis whereby it is envisaged that students and parents will be consulted. The guidance department should oversee an annual consultation and evaluation of the guidance programme to ensure it is meeting the needs of all students.
- The curricular guidance plan for senior cycle groups is good, contains learning outcomes and a clear list of topics to be covered.

- The curricular guidance plan for junior cycle students is lacking in detail and needs to be developed to include a description of the guidance areas covered, assessment strategies, and learning outcomes. If an area of learning in guidance is to be included as part of the new Wellbeing framework it should be documented in the guidance plan using the new Junior Cycle areas of learning planning template.
- The guidance plan contains a well-defined list of month-by-month priority tasks to be completed by the guidance counsellors. This is very good practice and establishes a systematic guidance task focus each month.
- Both guidance counsellors effectively use standard recording templates for meetings with students. Best practice was noted in the management of student files, storage and appropriate file destruction.
- It is notable that guidance-related policies are regularly reviewed. The critical incident management plan and the anti-bullying policy are up-to-date. Senior management should consider developing a policy for meetings with students to support all teachers dealing with students on a one-to-one basis.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principals, and guidance counsellors 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 of quality 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;