

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in History

REPORT

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| Ainm na scoile / School name | Saint Mogue's College |
| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Bawnboy County Cavan |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number | 70360C |

Date of Inspection: 11-04-2018



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 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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

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 1 & 3 of the checks above. The school did not meet the requirements in relation to 2 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

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| Dates of inspection | 10-11 April 2018 |
| 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 three class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff |

School context

Saint Mogue's College is a co-educational school under the trusteeship of Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board. There are 233 students enrolled currently. The following programmes are available; Junior Certificate, Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP), an optional Transition Year (TY), Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme. The school participates in DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good, with aspects of very good practice also evident.
- Students demonstrated very high levels of interest and participation in learning through their involvement in group work.
- The quality of assessment was good overall with student progress assessed in a variety of ways including teacher observation, questioning and written tasks.
- The overall quality of whole-school support and subject provision for History is very good; the majority of classes are mixed-ability.
- Management is very supportive of teachers' continuing professional development.
- The overall quality of planning and preparation is satisfactory; there is scope to further develop subject planning.

Recommendations

- Consideration should be given by senior management to mixed-ability groupings for all junior-cycle history classes, in line with the current practice of mixed-ability settings in senior-cycle classes.
- The history department should update their common schemes of work where learning intentions are explicitly linked to methodologies, resources and modes of assessment.
- Planning for whole-school targets related to DEIS and for students taking JCSP should be integrated into the subject plan.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good, with aspects of very good practice also evident.
- Overall, students displayed an interest in the topics being studied, confidently engaged in collaborative tasks and were comfortable contributing their views or giving feedback during lessons.
- An enquiry-based approach to learning was supported by teachers' use of key questions to stimulate student interest and provide a clear focus to their work. This very effective introduction to lessons was complemented by some opportunities for students to engage both individually and in pairs with historical material. When planning lessons, teachers should ensure time for a plenary in order to refocus students on the key questions.
- Students demonstrated very high levels of interest and participation in learning through their involvement in collaborative tasks. This was most effective when group work involved a jigsaw approach. This strategy provided opportunities for students to discuss and share information they learned from each other and identify links between contemporary and historical events such as Brexit and the evolution of the European Union. To further optimise the learning from this type of approach, time should be built in for feedback, to allow students to apply and process the learning from the group task.
- Effective use of the whiteboard and information communications technology (ICT) brought a visual reinforcement to important issues during lessons. For example, key questions relating to political cartoons and maps were integrated into high-quality electronic presentations for students to discuss, thus encouraging historical enquiry and analysis on topics such as the Cuban Missile Crisis.
- Students in all lessons commented on the benefits of using their own electronic devices for research, presentations and to access additional resources provided by the teacher. Commendably, clear guidance on appropriate websites is provided.
- All lessons are of one-hour duration. At times, an overly teacher-centred approach was evident in the reading of information from electronic presentations to the class. In these instances, history teachers should be mindful of providing sufficient time for students to discern what is important by themselves and support the development of their critical thinking skills.
- The quality of assessment was good overall. Students' progress was assessed in a variety of ways including through teacher observation, questioning and written tasks. For example, think, pair, share tasks were utilised for students to demonstrate their understanding and to prompt consideration of the context, cause and consequences of historical organisations such as Hitler's Youth movements.
- In addition, good examples of assessment-for-learning techniques were employed such as using graphic organisers to summarise key events and venn diagrams to categorise and make comparisons to information. To ensure students are supported to demonstrate fully

their understanding, teachers should be mindful of the balance between teacher-led questioning and explanation of content and student input.

- A selection of students' copybooks and journals was reviewed and it was evident that there is regular monitoring and assessment of students' work. Primarily, students receive oral feedback on areas for improvement. There is scope to integrate strategies for students to reflect on their progress and act upon the feedback provided by teachers.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of whole-school support and subject provision for History is very good. History is a core subject in both junior cycle and TY, and is one of a number of optional subjects for Leaving Certificate. Subject options are based on student choice and uptake is good.
- Currently, the majority of classes are mixed-ability. However, this year, one class group is streamed. It was reported that the reason for this was the numbers facilitated the formation of two class groups and senior management believe this approach would benefit student outcomes. Management should keep this approach under review and assess the impact of streaming on student experience and outcomes. Consideration should be given to mixed-ability groupings for all junior-cycle history classes in line with the current practice of mixed-ability settings in senior-cycle classes.
- Management is very supportive of teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) and a good range of whole-school in-service opportunities have taken place. Senior management encourages teachers to attend CPD events and to share good practice.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall quality of planning and preparation is satisfactory. The subject plan appropriately outlines the provision and organisation of the subject in the school. In the annual review, the department should update the common schemes of work where learning intentions are explicitly linked to methodologies, resources and modes of assessment.
- It was noted that aspects of DEIS and JCSP planning are not fully incorporated into the history subject plan. Planning for whole-school targets related to DEIS and for students taking JCSP should be integrated into the subject plan.
- The TY history subject plan provided an appropriate indication of the areas of study, with a good emphasis on student choice of individual research. Expansion of this plan to link the expected learning outcomes with the development of key skills, such as research and presentation, is advised.
- Analysis of certificate examination results, including a comparison with national data, takes place at whole-school level. The history department should become more involved in reviewing certificate examination results. Such a review by the history teachers should provide a context to the results, and lead to strategies and targets for improvement year on year. It is recommended that the history department identify and implement specific actions related to teaching and learning that would support improvements in student attainment.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

- The Child Safeguarding Statement was ratified at the Board of Management meeting on 17th May 2018.
- Results in History consistently outperform the National Average. The uptake at Higher Level ranges from 70%-90%.

Part B: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

- Mixed ability setting is common practice in Junior Cycle classes
- Schemes of work will be updated to reflect the new Junior Cycle Curriculum

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 |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Very Good | Very good 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 outstanding 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 | Good 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 | Satisfactory 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 | Fair 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 | Weak 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; |