

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Guidance

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Ramsgrange Community School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Ramsgrange New Ross Co Wexford
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	91431Q

Date of Inspection: 15-11-2018



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 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 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.

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

Dates of inspection	14-11-2018 and 15-11-2018
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and key staff• Interaction with students• Meeting with members of the student support team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during two class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and guidance counsellor

School context

Ramsgrange Community School is a co-educational post-primary school under the auspices of Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board, and Sisters of Saint Louis, with a current enrolment of 435 students. The school provides Junior Cycle, the Junior Certificate School Programme, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), and the established Leaving Certificate. The school participates in 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

- Teaching and learning was of a high quality, students were engaged purposefully in valuable activities to develop their career and education goals.
- While students at senior cycle submit a small number of valuable guidance-related assignments, assessment of junior cycle guidance-related learning is not as well developed.
- Guidance provision is very good with a comprehensive whole-school curricular and co-curricular guidance programme for students at both junior and senior cycle.
- Students are very effectively supported by a wide range of interventions and teachers provide emotional, social, career and academic support.
- Commendably, there is a highly integrated whole-school guidance approach to planning, all subject department plans include a section on subject-specific guidance activities.
- Formal review and evaluation of the guidance programme through consultation with all partners is not a feature of the guidance planning process.

Recommendations

- The guidance department should review current assessment of guidance-related learning and explore how junior cycle guidance areas of learning could be included in the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Framework.
- The whole-school guidance planning team should annually review and evaluate the guidance programme through consultation with teachers, students and parents.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- Teaching and learning was of a high quality, students were engaged purposefully in valuable activities to develop their career and education goals.
- The teacher was well prepared for lessons and created a positive and supportive atmosphere for learning. A variety of resources including slide shows, video clips, and worksheets were used effectively to engage students throughout the lessons.
- Students were observed successfully interacting with their peers through a mixture of group and pair work. The teacher selected activities that were appropriately challenging and facilitated students to progress their key skills such as working together and managing information.
- The teacher used effective questioning strategies which were differentiated, targeted and inclusive of all students. Students participated in discussions and offered their views on the future of the world of work.
- Students have made very good progress in guidance-related learning; they were knowledgeable and able to research independently online. Students effectively complete guidance activities both online and in their paper workbooks.
- Students expressed high career aspirations and academic motivation, citing a range of career interests in Science, Technology, Journalism, Sociology and professional apprenticeships.
- It is positive that TY and LCA students do a number of guidance-related projects such as a work experience diary and career investigation. However, there is scope to include more detailed progress in Guidance on school reports and for the guidance department to create additional opportunities for junior and senior cycle students to submit guidance-related assignments for formative feedback.
- Work experience is well managed, students identify work placements in line with their career interests. This is commendable and facilitates a more purposeful work placement.
- Assessment and student progress are systematically monitored by a tracking and monitoring system. The senior management team is making very effective use of available student data to build a learning profile for each student. A comprehensive student file is compiled encompassing the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Education Passport, entrance assessment scores, school examination results, school-based interventions, and additional screening test results.
- Psychometric tests are used appropriately by the guidance counsellor to assist students to develop a career plan linked to their career interests, abilities, values, and personality.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Overall guidance provision is very good with a comprehensive whole-school guidance curricular and co-curricular programme for all students. All senior cycle students receive a weekly guidance lesson.
- The junior cycle guidance programme is effective; it is praiseworthy that junior cycle students begin their career and education guidance programme at the beginning of

secondary school. It is commendable that the guidance counsellor brings junior cycle students to college open days, which raises students' career aspirations from a young age.

- To build on the valuable junior cycle guidance programme, it is recommended that the guidance department identify in the guidance plan, guidance-related areas of learning. These should be incorporated into the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Framework so that students can receive credit for their guidance-related learning in their Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement.
- Guidance is a whole-school activity with many exemplary practices. During college awareness week, TY students assist with the organisation of events and prepare education and career guidance presentations which they deliver to the first-year students. It is praiseworthy that the school promotes student leadership and peer-teaching and learning.
- A highly effective student support structure functions in the school, there is a student care team and a student support team. Both teams meet weekly, all key personnel work collaboratively to support students, including the senior management team, School Completion Programme officer, home-school-community liaison officer, behaviour for learning teacher, special education team, guidance counsellor and the chaplain. Beneficial links are maintained with the year heads and wider staff.
- A wide range of valuable social and personal supports are available for students. These include a social skills development group, individual counselling appointments and programmes to promote positive behaviour and develop communication skills.
- Parents are supported very effectively and are invited to participate in a number of useful activities such as an induction programme when their children begin first year, *Working Things Out Parents Plus* programme, and a number of talks about subject options and college access schemes.
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) are actively promoted in the school. Students take part in Science and Maths week, speakers are invited from physics and engineering courses, there are close links with a local university robotics department, and the female students have attended events such as College and Beyond, a STEM careers promotion event for young women.
- The student support team cultivates very positive links with the primary feeder schools through worthwhile visits to all schools in advance of the formation of first-year groups. Potential first-year students are invited to attend an Easter camp, in the term pre-entry, to build friendships and connection to the school. Staff report that students settle in very well and make a smooth transition. This is to be commended.
- There is a very effective working relationship between the guidance counsellor and the special education support team. Student disability access to college forms are discussed and allocated appropriately and efficiently.
- The senior management team supports the guidance counsellor to attend both continuing professional development and guidance counselling supervision. The guidance counsellor demonstrates a very good commitment to upskilling and has attended a large number of relevant training events covering all three aspects of guidance: personal, educational and vocational.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall quality of guidance planning is very good. There is a distinct and integrated whole-school approach to guidance planning and delivery. All subject department plans include a section on subject-specific guidance activities.
- The guidance plan is comprehensive and includes a valuable guidance curriculum for first to sixth year students. To further develop the guidance programme it is recommended the whole-school guidance planning team should annually review and evaluate the guidance programme through consultation with teachers, students and parents and include the areas identified for development in the guidance plan.
- The guidance plan includes a comprehensive list of visits to colleges and training centres exposing students to a very good breadth of further education and training options. It is positive that the guidance counsellor maintains strong connections with past students who visit the school to share their college and work experiences with current students.
- Guidance-related policies and procedures are up-to-date. These include assessment, and anti-bullying policies, critical incident plan and procedures regarding making subject choices and changing subject levels. It is suggested that senior management consider developing a one-to-one meetings policy.

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

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

- The Board of Management acknowledges that the reports states that “students are very effectively supported by a wide range of interventions and teachers provide emotional, social and academic support”.
- The Board of Management acknowledges that the report states that “overall guidance provision is very good with a comprehensive whole school guidance curricular and co-curricular programme for all students”.

Part B 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 can confirm that the Guidance Core Team have commenced a formal review of the guidance programme. The Guidance Core Team will also review junior cycle guidance areas of learning and their inclusion onto students ‘junior Cycle Profile of Achievements. This will be reviewed annually.

The Board of Management confirms that senior management has completed a first draft of a One to One meeting Policy.

END.