



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Subject Inspection: Geography

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name Coláiste Treasa

Seoladh na scoile/School address Kanturk
Co Cork

Uimhir rolla/Roll number 71000A

Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation 05/02/2026

Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report 24/09/2026

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.

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.

How to read this report

During this inspection, the inspector(s) evaluated learning and teaching in Geography 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.

Included in this subject inspection report is a student-friendly page that provides information for the children/young people in your school about the inspection that occurred recently. It outlines for them some of the main findings and recommendations.

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>Bí Cineálta</i>
1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) are prominently displayed near the main door of the school / in the reception area. <i>Following the school's adoption of the updated procedures 2025, it is also required to display a student-friendly version incorporating the name of the DLP beside the CSS.</i> 2. The school's child safeguarding statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment. 3. All teachers visited were aware of who to go to if they had a child protection concern.	1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy using Appendix A of <i>Bí Cineálta</i>, <i>it is reviewed annually (or earlier if required) and includes a student/pupil friendly version that is displayed where students/pupils and the school community can see it.</i> 2. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, staff, parents and students/pupils. 3. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides an update to the board at each ordinary board meeting that meets the requirements of <i>Bí Cineálta</i>.

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

Subject inspection

Dates of inspection	03/02/2026 & 05/02/2026
Inspection activities undertaken • Review of relevant documents • Discussion with principal, deputy principal and key staff • Interaction with students, including focus groups	• Observation of teaching and learning during five lessons • Examination of students' work • Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Coláiste Treasa is a co-educational post-primary school under the patronage of the Cork Education and Training Board. The school offered the Junior Cycle programme, an optional Transition Year programme (TY), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, and the Leaving Certificate (Established). Geography was an optional subject at both junior and senior cycle. At the time of the evaluation, there was an enrolment of 644 students.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment was very good overall.
- Students took part in excellent geographical discussions, enabled by high-quality teaching and a scaffolded approach that gradually built knowledge and confidence with complex concepts.
- Students used digital learning technology to a very high standard, with teachers effectively using the school's digital platform to share resources and notes, allowing more time for explanation during lessons.
- Whole-school provision for Geography was very good and senior management was highly supportive of the subject department.
- Approaches to timetabling ensured all lessons took place in a well-resourced Geography classroom, with displays, resources and literacy supports that enriched the learning environment.
- The overall quality of planning and preparation was good: a comprehensive and detailed subject plan reflected the established approaches to collaboration within the department.

Recommendations

- To support students' understanding of the level of investigation required in geographical questions, it is recommended that Geography teachers allocate time in junior cycle lessons to explicitly unpack action verbs and command words.
- To ensure high-quality assessment of learning outcomes and ensure that teachers' formative feedback helps students understand their progress and next steps, the subject department should collaboratively design key assessments for junior cycle units of learning, with clearly defined success criteria.
- To build on the very good reflective practice evident within the department, it is recommended that the Geography teachers identify clear, targeted priorities for improvement by developing a subject action plan and reviewing progress on these priorities on an ongoing basis.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment was very good overall.
- Student engagement with learning tasks was very good in all lessons. In all cases, positive student-teacher rapport supported an inclusive and productive learning environment.
- Students demonstrated a very high level of digital competence, and their confident and effective use of digital learning technology was a notable feature of the learner experience, enhancing engagement and supporting deeper analysis of information and images through immediate access to key maps and visuals at their desks. The school's digital platform was used effectively by teachers to share resources and notes, freeing up more time for explanation during lessons.
- Students readily used key geographical terminology in discussions and in their written work, the outcome of an ongoing focus on literacy. There is potential to support their understanding of geographical concepts, such as climate patterns and population trends, through more structured links to numeracy skills, including interpreting graphs, maps, and data.
- One example of excellent practice in collaborative learning involved students being assigned a type of rock with identifying hints. Students moved around the room to find peers with the same rock type, and once groups were formed, collaborated to summarise their understanding. This approach was highly effective in consolidating learning.
- Students had opportunities to reflect in most lessons. Where most effective, this reflection occurred at appropriate stages of the lesson and students had adequate time to reflect, using carefully considered prompts to structure their thinking. Prompting students to consider how they learned, in addition to what they learned, would further enhance their reflection experiences.
- Students experienced very good differentiation across the observed lessons and were meaningfully engaged in activities and tasks that were well matched to their differing ability levels and learning needs. In a few lessons, there was scope to provide more challenging tasks to further extend and deepen learning for more able students.
- Students took part in excellent geographical discussions, enabled by high-quality teaching and a scaffolded approach that gradually built knowledge and confidence with complex concepts.
- To support students' understanding of the level of investigation required in geographical questions, it is recommended that Geography teachers allocate time in junior cycle lessons to explicitly unpack action verbs and command words. This should involve teachers guiding students to identify what the question asks them to do (e.g., describe, explain, compare), discussing the differences in expectations between them, and modelling how answers vary depending on the command word. Students should then be given opportunities to practise applying this understanding when interpreting questions and planning or structuring their responses.
- The use of meaningful real-world connections stimulated very high levels of student interest and local Geography featured prominently in most lessons. In one case, there was excellent use of integrated approaches, in which samples of local rocks and maps supported exceptionally clear explanations by the teacher. This extended students' understanding of the geology of their locality very effectively. In this lesson, strong links with other aspects of the Geography specification, including primary and secondary economic activities, also enhanced students' geoliteracy.
- A clear balance between teacher-led and student-led learning was evident, with effective teacher instruction supporting students' understanding and progression. Students had frequent opportunities for active learning, and group work was well planned and structured. In most lessons, the collaborative activities would have

benefited from additional opportunities to allow students to fully develop and consolidate their learning.

- Learning intentions and success criteria were shared in all lessons, and in some, a clear distinction was made between the two. Where this was done effectively, students were provided with greater clarity regarding the purpose of the learning and the specific indicators of successful achievement. This good practice presents an opportunity for the department to collaborate further to ensure a more consistent implementation of this approach across lessons.
- Students in the focus group commented very positively on their experiences of learning Geography in school, and in particular the passion and enthusiasm that their teachers had for the subject.

2. Subject provision and whole-school support

- Subject provision and whole-school support for Geography were very good, with clear evidence of strong resourcing and alignment with whole-school priorities, particularly in relation to digital learning and student support.
- Approaches to timetabling ensured that all lessons took place in a well-resourced Geography classroom featuring maps, rock samples, geographical imagery, student work, local area displays, careers information and literacy-support materials, all of which enriched the learning environment. Ready access to weather instruments and other geography-specific physical resources also facilitated valuable experiential learning opportunities.
- There was strong evidence of high-quality professional development within the Geography department. Teachers had taken part in professional learning that supported whole-school priorities and developed their subject knowledge in Geography. All first-year students studied Geography for the full year as part of a taster programme. Evidence indicated that Geography was a very popular subject among students, with two class groups in both second and third year. All TY students completed a Geography module lasting about eight to ten weeks, and there was strong uptake of Geography as a Leaving Certificate subject.
- Numerous trips were organised for some junior and senior-cycle class groups to local geographical places of interest. To build on this positive practice, consideration should now be given to formally planning local, Geography-related walking trips for all year groups.
- The role of the subject co-ordinator was clearly defined and rotated from year to year between teachers, a practice that is encouraged as it contributes to developing leadership capacity within the department.

3. Planning and preparation

- The overall quality of planning and preparation was good.
- A comprehensive and detailed subject plan reflected highly effective approaches to collaboration within the department. A strong commitment to the creation, development and sharing of high-quality resources to support teaching and learning was demonstrated.
- Junior-cycle units of learning had been developed for all three year groups. A review of the junior-cycle scheme of work to ensure the sequencing of topics is best suited to the first-year taster experience would be worthwhile. Consideration should be given to introducing map work and geographical skills earlier in the first year. This change would enable the integration of skills across a broader range of topics for students continuing with Geography, while providing those not continuing with a wider set of transferable geographical skills for real-world application.
- For each junior-cycle unit of learning, the department should collaborate to agree on a key assessment task supported by clearly defined success criteria. This approach would

strengthen the provision of formative feedback, create more opportunities for peer assessment, and enhance students' understanding of quality in their work.

- To build on the very good reflective practice evident within the department, it is recommended that the Geography teachers identify clear, targeted priorities for improvement by developing a subject action plan and reviewing progress on these priorities on an ongoing basis.
- The subject plan included links to whole-school initiatives in areas such as Special Educational Needs and literacy. However, there was scope to articulate more clearly how these initiatives ought to impact the teaching, learning and assessment of Geography at classroom level.
- There was a very good plan for TY Geography, which was in keeping with the ethos of TY. It included units of learning focused on local Geography and on developing key geographical skills to support progression to the senior cycle.

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.



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For the students of **Coláiste Treasa**
about their learning in **Geography**

Date of inspection:

05/02/2026

What kind of inspection did your school have?



A subject inspection was completed in your school. The inspector observed lessons and spoke with the principal and teachers. The inspector met with a group of students to talk to them about their learning in **Geography**.

What were the main findings of the inspection?



- Learning, teaching and assessment were very good.
- There was a positive and respectful atmosphere in all lessons and students showed great interest and enthusiasm for learning.
- Teachers gave students very good support in their learning. Very good explanations were a key feature of lessons.

What did the inspector recommend to make teaching and learning better in **Geography**?



- Students should have opportunities, before and after some assessments to help identify and discuss what good work looks like.
- The Geography department should start teaching map skills and other geographical skills earlier in junior cycle, so students can use them in more topics.

Thank you for taking the time to read this page.
Special thanks to the students who participated in the focus group.

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