

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Programme Evaluation
Junior Certificate School Programme
REPORT

Collinstown Park Community College
Neilstown Road, Dublin 22
Roll number: 70041J

Date of inspection: 27 April 2016



AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS

REPORT ON THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN JUNIOR CERTIFICATE SCHOOL PROGRAMME (JCSP)

INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Dates of inspection	26 th and 27 th April 2016
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 six class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from good to very good.
- Management provides excellent support and leadership for JCSP in the school.
- The overall co-ordination of JCSP is excellent with a range of effective practices in place to monitor and track students' progress during the JCSP and after completing the programme.
- Supports offered by the home-school-community liaison co-ordinator (HSCL), school completion co-ordinator and the librarian significantly enhance JCSP in the school.
- The quality of JCSP planning is excellent and communication about the programme is very effective.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- A variety of methodologies that facilitates greater students' ownership in their learning should be used more often in lessons where appropriate.
 - More frequent use of higher-order questions and the use of more directed question strategies should be included in all lessons.
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INTRODUCTION

Collinstown Park Community College operates under the trusteeship of the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB). The school has a current enrolment of 596 post-primary students, 94 of whom are following JCSP. Collinstown Park Community College offers a broad curriculum including a compulsory Transition Year (TY).

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from good to very good. The majority of lessons were well planned allowing for some good or very good progress to be made.
- In the majority of lessons, learning intentions were shared with the students. In some instances a review of the intentions was undertaken through a question and answer session and in one lesson a ranking ladder was used. In others, the lesson concluded without a review of the learning that had been achieved, this is an area for further development.
- Resources were prepared in advance of lessons and used at key intervals to support student learning. In all lessons, information and communication technology (ICT) was used to very good effect. In one lesson very effective use was made of online resource materials which have been developed in collaboration with a number of teachers in DDLETB schools. Students accessed these resources via a class set of tablet devices.
- Teaching methodologies varied with many teachers using a combination of teacher-led instruction and some collaborative learning opportunities. Very good practice was noted where the lesson was structured to include a number of short achievable tasks. Effective use was made in many lessons of paired activities where students were encouraged to think, pair and share, allowing students to be fully engaged in their learning.
- In the majority of lessons there was a good balance between teacher input and student activity. Less effective was the over reliance on an activity that took the form of students working through a series of questions from a worksheet and once completed a second worksheet was distributed. In this situation there were limited opportunities for students to work collaboratively or to share learning experiences. It is therefore recommended that teachers ensure that the chosen methodology is sufficiently engaging to promote collaborative learning.
- Questioning strategies were used in lessons and their success varied. In some lessons teachers regularly used global questioning which resulted in chorus answering. The use by some teachers of randomiser, where students' names were written on sticks enabling the teacher to select a student at random to answer a question was very effective. This is a good assessment for learning strategy that could be used more often where appropriate.
- The practice of using students' questions as a learning opportunity was missed by some teachers. For example, rather than redirecting student's questions to the entire class, the teacher provided the answer to students' questions. Teachers are encouraged to seek opportunities to challenge students' thinking through higher-order questioning strategies.
- Teachers placed an appropriate high emphasis on literacy development in lessons, including the use of keyword journals, and the recording of keywords on JCSP posters which were displayed in classrooms. Very effective use was made in one lesson of a school developed writing wheel. The writing wheel comprises six segments each of which provides a step by step guide for students on how to improve their writing.

- Very good oral feedback was provided to students during lessons with some evidence of formative written feedback noted in some student copybooks. There is scope for increasing the regularity of formative feedback. Teachers should discuss ways in which this can be done. The use of JCSP stickers was also noted in many of the students' journals and work.
- Classrooms showed good displays of key words and student-generated work. A dedicated JCSP noticeboard is used to display upcoming events and notices about the programme.

PROGRAMME PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Management provides excellent support and leadership for JCSP in the school.
- Teachers are deployed to JCSP in line with their subject specialism and expertise. Management encourages and facilitates ongoing staff continuing professional development with very good in-school supports for newly appointed teachers in JCSP.
- A broad and balanced curriculum is provided to JCSP students. A range of JCSP initiatives are arranged each year to enhance and support students' learning including *Make a Book*.
- Timetabling arrangements practices reflect the school's desire to construct a timetable to meet the needs of the JCSP students. Time allocated to subjects is very good. An annual review of the timetable of JCSP is undertaken in consultation with JCSP teachers and school management. Banding of subjects facilitates students to access the most appropriate level. To support the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills, classes in these areas are timetabled.
- Student selection for JCSP is clearly documented. Very good structures are in place to support students before and during their transition from primary to post-primary. Effective supports have been developed to support this transition including the school's peer mentoring programme *Gluais* and regular communication and contact via the school's HSCL services.
- There are many very effective links throughout the school year between parents and the school to promote and encourage parental involvement with their son's or daughter's education. In addition, to ongoing communication a range of parenting courses are arranged by the HCSL co-ordinator encouraging parental involvement in the school.
- The school benefits significantly for the JCSP demonstration library and a librarian who arranges a wide range of activities during school time and school holidays to encourage and support students to engage with their learning. All events contribute to the effective delivery of the JCSP in the school.

PROGRAMME PLANNING, CO-ORDINATION AND EVALUATION

- The overall co-ordination and planning for JCSP is excellent.
- Regular meetings take place for the core team, a planning team and for teachers of JCSP. The various team meetings facilitate discussion about the planning of the programme, the pastoral needs of the students and opportunities to profile students.
- A very comprehensive JCSP plan is in place. The plan details the overall organisation for the programme, a calendar of events, a list of JCSP initiatives and the link teachers

involved in the initiatives. Subject planning documents reviewed indicated that plans include a link with the various statements of learning. This is very good practice.

- Very good communication systems within the school have been developed to inform staff and students about JCSP developments.
- The school's strategic planning process has identified a review of the JCSP for 2016/2017. Commendably, this review will include the views of all stakeholders, a practice that has already been used by the JCSP during the development of the school's JCSP policy.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and relevant key staff at the conclusion of the evaluation. The board accepts the report as the final inspection report available for publication and does not wish to respond formally to the report.