

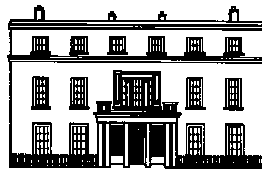
An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Programme Evaluation
Junior Certificate Schools Programme

REPORT

Coláiste Eoin
Cappagh Road, Finglas, Dublin 11
Roll number: 70180A

Date of inspection: 9 February 2016



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

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

INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Dates of inspection	8 th and 9 th February 2016
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and key staff• Interaction with students including a visit to Ferguson class (Autistic unit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during five class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP) co-ordinator

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from good to very good.
- The Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP) is highly supported by management.
- The school library is well resourced and benefits from the services of a qualified librarian.
- The programme is well co-ordinated.
- The teachers showed great commitment to and enthusiasm for the programme.
- Programmes of study were provided for all subject areas with good focus on planned learning outcomes for students.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should incorporate more challenging activities for students into their lessons.
- The programme plan should be reviewed with input from a core team of JCSP teachers.
- A formal review of the programme should be carried out and input from parents, teachers and students should be included.

INTRODUCTION

Coláiste Eoin is a co-educational school which operates under the auspices of City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb). Currently, the school caters for 131 students and has provided the JCSP since its inception. Coláiste Eoin participates in the Department of Education and Skills' Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative and benefits from the services of a home-school-community liaison (HSCL) teacher and a School Completion Programme (SCP) co-ordinator. The school has a compulsory Transition Year (TY) and offers the Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) at senior cycle.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from good to very good in the lessons visited. Teachers shared the planned learning outcomes with students at the outset of lessons and used them to structure the lesson.
- JCSP resources, such as the visual verbal square, '54321' worksheets and placemats, were used appropriately. There was a very good focus on developing students' literacy skills through the use of keywords and the JCSP keyword posters. In other lessons, students engaged with numeracy strategies such as *Maths Goggles*.
- Some very good active learning methodologies were used; for example, following discussions, students made decisions as to whether or not they agreed or disagreed with a statement. In another lesson, students compiled group responses on the whiteboard as a reinforcement of learning. These active methodologies served to engage student and their more widespread use is encouraged.
- Very good practice was observed in instances where teachers incorporated higher-order challenging questions into their assessment strategies to vary the pitch of lessons and to challenge the more able students. In addition, some very good collaborative learning exercises were observed. For example, in one lesson students worked in small teams to complete a task and recorded their results using iPads. In other lessons, students presented outcomes from their work to the rest of the class. These activities served to challenge students and encourage them to reach their potential. All teachers should be mindful of including appropriate challenge for all students in their lessons.
- Classroom management was very good in all classrooms visited and teachers went to great lengths to relate new material to students' everyday experiences.
- Homework was allocated in all lessons and students were encouraged to record it in their journals. Students maintained good records of their work and their notebooks and folders were, in the main, well organised.

PROGRAMME PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The programme is well supported by management and teachers are facilitated and encouraged to attend continuing professional development (CPD) courses. Most recent CPD has been in the areas of literacy and numeracy.
- The school benefits from a well-resourced library which gives students a positive experience of reading and acknowledges their successes in reading. The library is run by a qualified librarian who provides school management with a monthly report detailing student-contact hours, special events and highlighting potential areas for development.
- Some new initiatives have been introduced to the JCSP programme. The vocabulary enrichment programme has been the most recent intervention adopted by the school in order to develop students' literacy skills. It takes place in the school library and all JCSP classes are timetabled for two class periods in the library each week.
- A study hub has been introduced which takes place after school, two evenings per week. The school also offers a homework club and evening activity after school. There has been a focus on developing students' digital literacy and it is noteworthy that iPads for second-year students have been subsidised by the school.

- Other successful initiatives include the *Wrapparound* initiative (Writing, reading and performance poetry), make a book, accelerated reader and lunchtime clubs. The JCSP students have also benefited from inputs from *Dave's Jungle Storytellers* including the writer in residence, maths magician as well as opportunities for pony club, fly-fishing and orienteering.
- Students' numeracy is developed through the *Back to Basics* numeracy programme, additional maths classes after school and the school-improvement targets for numeracy.

PROGRAMME PLANNING, CO-ORDINATION AND EVALUATION

- The co-ordinator of JCSP works in a well-organised, enthusiastic manner and is very committed to progressing the programme in the school. The co-ordinator is new to the role and has attended CPD for co-ordinators as well as cluster-group meetings in order to up-skill in this area. She has set in place a calendar of events for the year that gives structure to the programme in the school as well as including some new initiatives. The role of the co-ordinator is clear to all staff and appropriate duties are assigned.
- A JCSP programme plan is in place that gives a good overview of the organisation of the programme. There is scope to make this a whole-school JCSP plan with input from a core team of teachers.
- Profiling meetings are scheduled at appropriate times during the school year and are used to select statements, monitor student progress and build the student profile.
- Informal review of the programme has been carried out at intervals and has resulted in some changes. While this is good, a formal review that incorporates inputs from teachers, students and parents should be carried out on an annual basis.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and programme co-ordinator at the conclusion of the evaluation. 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.