Subject Inspection in Physical Education

REPORT

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<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>St. Joseph's C.B.S.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Newfoundwell Rd Drogheda Co Louth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>63840C</td>
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Date of Inspection: 14-11-2018
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 Physical Education 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 each of the checks above.
SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

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<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>14-11-2018</th>
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| Inspection activities undertaken | • Review of relevant documents  
• Discussion with principal and key staff  
• Interaction with students  
• Observation of teaching and learning during five class periods  
• Examination of students’ work  
• Feedback to principal, deputy principals and relevant staff |

School context
Saint Joseph’s C.B.S. Secondary School is a voluntary Catholic school for boys under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST). The school has a current enrolment of 797 students. The school offers the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

• The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was good; in lessons delivered by a qualified physical education (PE) teacher, very effective practice was observed.
• Good peer assessment practices were observed in one lesson; there is scope to further develop and broaden the assessment practices across the subject department.
• The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support is good; junior cycle provision is in line with the requirements of Circular 0015/2017, provision for the LCA programme is satisfactory.
• The school has continued to increase the number of qualified PE teachers on staff; in the current school year, a small number of classes are being taught by teachers who do not hold qualifications recognised by the Teaching Council for the teaching of PE.
• The facilities available for the teaching and learning of PE are very good; well-established links with local sporting groups provide access to additional facilities.
• Subject planning for junior cycle PE is well developed; planning for senior cycle PE, in particular LCA Leisure and Recreation, is underdeveloped.

Recommendations

• The PE department should review their assessment procedures to develop areas such as peer assessment, formal practical assessments and reporting strategies.
• Senior management should ensure that all students receive a double period of timetabled PE each week for the full school year and that those lessons are delivered by teachers who hold qualifications recognised by the Teaching Council for the teaching of the subject.
• The PE department should review their subject department plan with a particular emphasis on developing the plan for all senior cycle students.
1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good with some exemplary practice observed; best practice was observed in lessons delivered by a qualified PE teacher.

- Some very good use of questioning to support student learning and assist with assessment was observed in lessons. Good peer assessment was observed in a junior gymnastics lesson. However, other opportunities to utilise peer assessment were missed.

- Effective use was made of school self-evaluation priorities such as sharing the learning intentions and focusing on developing subject specific terminology. It was clear that these routines, designed to support student learning, are well established in the PE department.

- All lessons were conducted in a safe, positive and affirming manner. Students participated enthusiastically and demonstrated age-appropriate skills and knowledge.

- Activity levels were high in the majority of lessons observed. In some lessons, students were inactive for periods of time as they had to wait for their turn in groups that were too large. Care should be taken, when planning lessons, to avoid activities that require the use of inappropriate group sizes.

- The level of challenge in a minority of lessons had scope for development. In these lessons, insufficient attention was paid to students’ prior knowledge resulting in inappropriate activities being selected. Teachers should, when planning lessons, consider the stage of development of the students and select appropriately challenging tasks to support better learning outcomes for them.

- Differentiation was seamlessly integrated in a junior gymnastics lesson. Tasks were set that allowed all students to select their own level of challenge and engagement with the activity. Students in all lessons would benefit from this highly commendable use of differentiation.

- Good attention was paid to the development of subject specific terminology in the majority of lessons observed. The pre-teaching and displaying of key words as part of the introduction to lessons was a significant support to all students. Oral literacy was well attended to in most lessons when, for example, students were provided with opportunities to give feedback to small groups of their peers.

- Good classroom routines such as roll call and sharing the learning intentions have been established which reinforced a positive student experience. Plenary discussions held at the end of some lessons provided an opportunity to deepen student learning. Teachers should, when planning lessons, consider how student learning can be consolidated in all lessons.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support for PE is good.

- Students in all junior cycle year groups and in fifth and sixth year have good provision for PE; all of these students are timetabled for a double period for the full school year. However, the structure of PE in TY should be reviewed as students are withdrawn from PE for ten weeks on a rotational basis to facilitate the inclusion of Home Economics on the TY curriculum. While the inclusion of Home Economics is commendable, the impact on the continuity of the PE classes should be considered.

- TY students are provided with other physical activity options such as swimming, a weekly outdoor pursuit’s class and a nutrition module from the GAA Future Leaders programme.
Commendably, an additional double period of Wellbeing is provided to all first-year students. This includes modules such as introduction to secondary school, swimming, lifesaving, cookery and first aid. Senior management are currently planning for future modules as this double period will be provided to first and second years in the coming school year.

- While the vast majority of lessons are delivered by qualified PE teachers, a small minority are currently delivered by non PE specialists including all PE lessons provided in the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme. Efforts have been made to ensure, insofar as possible, that non-specialists work in conjunction with qualified PE teachers. Notwithstanding these attempts, the student experience is limited by this provision and the breadth and balance of the full PE curriculum cannot be provided for. Senior management should ensure that all PE lessons are delivered by teachers who hold qualifications recognised by the Teaching Council, for the teaching of PE.

- Extensive facilities are available to support teaching and learning in PE and are maintained to a high standard. The recent addition of the fitness suite complements the large sports hall, Astroturf, hard court and pitch available onsite. The school also makes good use of a nearby swimming pool and full sized Gaelic football pitches.

- Students have access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities including competitive sports such as athletics, basketball, chess, Gaelic football, golf, hurling, rugby, soccer and swimming. In addition, non-competitive opportunities are provided for students through the badminton and gym club. The dedication of staff both within and outside the PE department to the provision of extra-curricular opportunities is highly valued by school management.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall quality of planning and preparation is good; effective collaborative practice was noted in the use of a shared online platform.

- A detailed scheme of work is in place for Junior Cycle PE. This includes well developed units of work in each of the curricular areas. Senior cycle plans are a work in progress and require further development. There were evident weaknesses in the planning for the LCA programme.

- Overall, individual lessons were well planned. The majority of lessons had a clear structure with clearly identified learning intentions which were shared with students at the beginning of the lesson.

- The PE department meets formally approximately three times a year. Minutes reviewed as part of the evaluation indicate that much progress has been made on organisational matters. Consideration should be given to including aspects of teaching, learning and assessment on the agenda in future meetings.

- It is positive to note that PE is included on formal school reports; very useful information is provided to parents including references to national averages on fitness tests. Further development of the range of information shared with parents in formal reports would be beneficial.

- The qualified PE teachers form a committed team of reflective practitioners who are changing a culture within their school. They have made some very positive steps on the journey towards the development of an ethos of a broad and balanced physical education programme for all students.
The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principals and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.
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 of St. Joseph’s Secondary School welcomes the feedback contained in the attached report. Senior Management and the teaching staff were appreciative of the positive affirmation given during the inspection.

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 will put in place the supports necessary to address the three recommendations outlined in the report.

The school is currently undertaking a review of assessment procedures and is in the process of developing an assessment strategy.

Senior management has recognised the need to increase the number of teachers who hold qualifications recognised by the Teaching Council for the teaching of P.E. A third P.E. teacher was employed this academic year to address the shortfall. Investment in this area will continue as our student numbers grow.

The development of a plan for senior cycle students is currently taking place. The P.E. department hope to offer P.E. as a leaving certificate subject in September 2020.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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</td>
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<td>Good</td>
<td>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 very good standard.</td>
<td>Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils’ learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;</td>
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