

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Physical Education

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Dundalk Grammar School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	The Crescent Dundalk Co Louth
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	63920A

Date of Inspection: 06-03-2019



**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 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

Date of inspection	06-03-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal, deputy principal and key staff• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during four class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and relevant staff

School context

Dundalk Grammar School is a fee-charging, co-educational, post-primary school with a current enrolment of 564 students. The school provides the Junior Cycle, a compulsory Transition Year (TY) programme and the established Leaving Certificate.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was very good; the focus on refining the quality of student work was a particular strength.
- The overall quality of assessment was good although opportunities to use peer and self-assessment practices were missed.
- Deployment of teachers is less than optimal as a significant minority of physical education lessons are being delivered by non-qualified physical education teachers
- Provision for PE in the school is fair; timetabling arrangements for many students are not appropriate.
- A wide variety of whole-school extra and co-curricular opportunities, supported by teachers and management, add significant value to the overall student experience.
- Individual lessons were well planned but subject department planning, in particular for TY, is under-developed.

Recommendations

- The PE department should develop an over-arching assessment strategy for all year groups that is clearly linked to reporting procedures.
- Senior management should ensure that all teachers involved in teaching PE hold qualifications recognised by the Teaching Council for the teaching of the subject.
- Senior management should ensure that all students receive a minimum of a double period of timetabled PE each week for the full school year.
- A review of the practice of separating students by gender for PE should be undertaken by the PE department.
- Subject department planning should be progressed to include units of work for all curricular strands and an overarching TY plan to include assessment practices.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in lessons observed during the evaluation was very good; highly commendable practice was a key feature of the lessons delivered by a qualified physical education teacher.
- The overall quality of assessment was good; teacher questioning was the predominant mode of assessment used in lessons observed. However, opportunities were missed to utilise peer and self-assessment. The PE department could usefully develop an over-arching assessment plan.
- High quality questioning was a key feature of the majority of lessons observed. Students were prompted to make links with prior learning and student responses indicated a very good understanding of the work at hand.
- Digital media was used to very good effect where it was observed. Appropriate video clips were integrated into lessons to support student learning. In addition, handouts used to support student learning were well designed and provided appropriate scaffolding to enable students to improve on their skill level. It would be worthwhile for the PE department to expand their use of digital technology to support student assessment.
- Students in two junior games lessons were provided with multiple opportunities to develop their leadership skills. In one lesson a number of students led different aspects of the warm up. In both lessons, some students were provided with the opportunity to take on a coaching role. It was evident students were familiar with these routines and comfortable in these roles.
- A focus on quality was at the heart of the majority of lessons observed. This very effective practice provided student with opportunities to refine and improve on their technique. Students responded very positively to this focus.
- The development of technical, sports specific language was supported and reinforced in the majority of lessons observed. Students were encouraged to use correct language and showed a good understanding of theoretical concepts of PE.
- Student behaviour was exemplary in lessons observed. In particular, students who took on the role of coach during lessons were very positive with their peers. All lessons were conducted in a positive and respectful manner.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole school support is fair.
- In addition to their double PE lessons, it is commendable that General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) PE is offered as an optional exam subject to current first and second-year students. However, the timetabling of PE as an optional subject for current third-year students is inadequate and should be addressed.
- TY students have very good provision. They are timetabled for a triple lesson of sports activities in addition to their double PE lesson. They also undertake a module of sport and recreation studies in which they complete elements of the GAA Future Leaders programme. However, despite recommendations made in a previous PE subject inspection in 2004 and two previous Whole School Evaluations, fifth and sixth-year students still have no access to

PE. This is unsatisfactory. Senior management should ensure that all students are timetabled for a double period of PE for the full school year.

- The subject is organised and delivered by a team of committed and conscientious teachers. Currently, only one member of staff holds qualifications recognised by the Teaching Council for the teaching of PE. Management should ensure that all lessons in Physical Education are delivered by teachers who hold qualifications recognised by the Teaching Council for the teaching of the subject.
- In contrast to the co-educational ethos of the school, the PE curriculum is provided to the majority of students in gender divided groups. In light of the effective provision of PE to mixed gender groups in first year, it is timely that a review of the practice of separating students by gender for PE should be undertaken.
- Very good, well maintained, facilities including a large sports hall, fitness suite, astro pitch, tennis courts, grass pitches and outdoor hardcourt area are available to support the teaching and learning in PE.
- A very wide range of extra-curricular activities are provided to encourage students to extend their learning outside of timetabled PE lessons. The support of staff, both within and outside the PE department, and management for the provision of these activities is commendable.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall quality of planning and preparation is satisfactory.
- The PE department meets formally approximately three times a year and more frequently informally. In keeping with good practice, minutes of department meetings indicate some time has been dedicated to discussions on teaching and learning.
- A subject plan is in place and the PE department has begun to plan for the introduction of the PE short course. Some strands of the course have not yet been developed and planning for TY is underdeveloped. Planning for these strands and for TY should be progressed in the short term.
- The majority of lessons were well planned with students experiencing appropriate educational activities. TY activities, while providing an active experience, were not underpinned by an educational philosophy and lacked a clear assessment strategy. When reviewing the plan for TY, a clear assessment strategy should be developed.
- It is positive to note that student attainment in PE is reported to parents on Christmas and Summer reports.
- The members of the PE department show good engagement with continuous professional development and have attended relevant workshops including planning for the introduction of Leaving Certificate PE.

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.

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 wishes to acknowledge the instances of good and very good practice in teaching and learning noted during the inspection process.

The Board accepts the main findings and recommendations as outlined in the PE inspection report.

The Board welcomes the introduction of a national roll-out of the Leaving Certificate PE curriculum, recognising that this will provide additional opportunities for achieving optimum results for students in the subjects best suited to them.

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 intends to support the Headmaster and school in addressing the findings and recommendations in the following ways:

- Provide assistance to all PE teachers in ensuring they undertake appropriate CPD to obtain qualifications as recognised by the Teaching Council for the teaching of the subject.
- Explore the possibility of timetabling a minimum of a double period of PE for all students in Senior Cycle.
- Encourage the PE department to further develop the practice of integrating students by gender in as many activities as possible.
- The school management will encourage and support members of the PE department to ensure subject department planning includes units of work for all curricular strands and an overarching TY plan to include assessment practices.

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;