

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection in Physical Education**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Our Lady's Secondary School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Belmullet via Ballina County Mayo
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	64570E

**Date of Inspection: 10-04-2019**



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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 of the school 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

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	9 – 10 April 2019
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and relevant teacher</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during three lessons</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant teacher</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Our Lady's Secondary School is a co-educational school serving the town of Belmullet and a wide rural hinterland. It participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the Department's action plan for educational inclusion. It also receives additional supports through the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme (GSRS), which started in 2017. The school offers the Junior Cycle, all three leaving certificate programmes, and an optional Transition Year (TY). There is a special class for students with autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs) sanctioned by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). Enrolment stands at 212 post-primary students currently. While Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses are also offered to the wider community, this evaluation did not assess the operation of PLC courses.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good, including excellent practice.
- Whole-school support and subject provision are good overall; most students are timetabled for eighty minutes of Physical Education per week, but fifth and sixth-year students are timetabled for only forty minutes of Physical Education per week.
- The current deployment of teaching resources to Physical Education is not adequate to deliver eighty minutes of Physical Education to all class groups; the deployment of additional teaching resources to Physical Education is necessary in order to fulfil this requirement.
- The facilities for teaching and learning are very good overall; there is scope for increased access to digital learning technologies.
- Planning and preparation are very good and there is an excellent, reflective subject plan in place.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Senior management should ensure that teaching resources are deployed to provide all students with at least eighty minutes of Physical Education per week.
- The physical education hall should be equipped with digital learning technologies and a whiteboard to support teaching, learning, assessment and reporting in Physical Education.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good overall, including examples of excellent practice.
- Lesson planning had a very high-quality alignment of learning outcomes and assessment. For example, the teacher created effective tasks which developed the students' learning incrementally towards the overall goal of performing in a modified game of tag rugby, with a tactical focus on width and a technical focus on the pop pass.
- Students were proactive and self-directed when choosing differentiated tasks. They worked effectively in groups and demonstrated the ability to negotiate, discuss and reason. They engaged in highly effective social development, skill enhancement and problem-solving tasks. It is advised, as an extension, that students could create and share their own group balances.
- Students were provided with the opportunity to demonstrate their learning through a variety of effective assessment modes. Highly commendable moments of formative assessment were observed during all lessons including effective questioning, teacher observation, excellent use of wait time and constructive feedback. An example of highly effective summative assessment was observed in a performance criteria-based assessment during senior-cycle gymnastics.
- Students' engagement in peer assessment, with success criteria to promote a shared responsibility for learning, was an area for improvement. Students should be guided to co-create success criteria for rich-tasks with teachers and to apply them to exemplars of different levels of achievement, to create an awareness of the learning destination and the key markers along the way. The co-creation of success criteria for proficiency from demonstrations and models to engage students in the assessment process was discussed.
- Reflective moments were designed effectively to give students the opportunity to self-regulate and set goals. The appendix of the Physical Education Short Course Assessment Guidelines contains reflective statements which would be useful to extend current formative assessment practices.
- In all lessons, there was evidence of democratic and student-led learning opportunities. For example, small groups of students worked in a three-versus-two modified game situation to problem solve the implementation of the principle of width in an invasion game. However, the students' depth of understanding of the difference between a tactic and a skill was limited. The physical education department indicated its intention to work on this aspect of student learning as an area for development.
- Literacy strategies, as part of the school's DEIS plan, were implemented in the lessons observed. Numeracy and literacy visuals were on display. The key words were applied and integrated effectively throughout lessons.
- Examples of students work in Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) were examined. The structure, presentation and reflections in students' work were of a very high standard.

## 2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Whole-school support and subject provision are good. The facilities for the teaching of Physical Education are excellent, including a full-sized hall, fitness suite, outdoor tennis court, astro-turf pitch and playing field.
- Timetable provision for the subject is good. While most students are timetabled for eighty minutes of Physical Education per week, fifth and sixth-year students are only timetabled for forty minutes of Physical Education per week. It is recommended that senior management ensure that teaching resources are deployed to provide all students with at least eighty minutes of Physical Education per week.
- There is no projector or whiteboard in the hall. Digital learning technologies would allow students to capture their learning and to create a digital portfolio of their learning journey. School leadership indicated its willingness to ensure better digital technology to the physical education department so as to support its use within the subject.
- *Active Schools Week* is a component of the yearly calendar. All staff collaborate to organise a week of different physical activities; such collaboration is commended.
- An examination of a sample of report comments indicates the need for the physical education department to use the language of learning. Implementation of the guidance provided by the National Council of Curriculum and Assessment in the booklet *Ongoing Reporting for Teaching and Learning* is recommended in this regard. Such implementation would also support the parental engagement target outlined in the current DEIS plan.

## 3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Overall planning and preparation are very good.
- It is noteworthy that the physical education department is trialling the integration of student voice and negotiation in the planning and preparation of junior-cycle units of learning which align with learning outcomes and assessment. At the outset of the unit, the teacher shares the overall unit learning goals and assessment with the students. The students share their prior knowledge, discuss interests and set goals with the teacher. The teacher incorporates these factors effectively into a series of learning intentions for the unit of learning. This is commendable practice as it facilitates the sharing of the goals of each unit of learning with students, generating motivation and interest.
- The transition-year and senior-cycle physical education programme is planned effectively into units of learning for the *Games* and *Gymnastics* strands of the curriculum. *Health-related fitness* and *Aquatics* including water safety should be included as additional units of learning.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the 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 welcomes the very positive report and accepts its findings in full.

### **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 provision of eighty minutes of Physical Education for fifth and sixth year groups will be implemented from September 2019.
- The provision of digital technologies (whiteboard and projector) in the P.E Hall has been implemented since the inspection date.
- The use of language of learning in the reporting process is to be developed and implemented at a whole school level from September 2019.

## 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
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;