

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection in Social Personal and Health Education
(SPHE), including Relationships and Sexuality Education
(RSE)**

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Ard Scoil Na nDéise
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Convent Road Dungarvan Co. Waterford
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	64900W

Date of Inspection: 03-05-2019



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 Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) 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

Dates of inspection	29 April and 03 May 2019
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 three class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and relevant staff

School context

Ard Scoil na nDéise is an all-girls voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of Catholic Education an Irish Schools Trust (CEIST). The school has a current enrolment of 357 students. In addition to the Junior Cycle programme and the Leaving Certificate (Established), the school offers an optional Transition Year programme (TY).

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching of SPHE is very good, with rich opportunities for very good student learning provided in all lessons.
- Experiential learning is facilitated, with individual learning for students well accommodated in all lessons; a means for students to log such learning would build on this good work.
- Provision and support for the subject is very good, and management's regard for related learning is evident in the school's additional provision for senior cycle health education.
- A number of relevant key school policies have been ratified by the board; a draft RSE policy exists and the development of an external facilitator policy is planned.
- Management intends to re-establish a core team of junior cycle SPHE teachers; this is encouraged as it will enhance collaborative planning for teaching, learning and assessment.
- The planning work of the subject department is of a good quality; there is scope for development in the area of planning for assessment.

Recommendations

- The draft RSE policy should be finalised and a policy on the use of external facilitators should be developed; both should be ratified by the board.
- Further facilitation of formal, collaborative planning for teachers of SPHE and RSE, as well as for all those involved in the design and delivery of the school's Wellbeing programme, is required.
- Planning for assessment needs to be prioritised; this should include provision of opportunities for students to maintain relevant activity records and to formally reflect on learning, as both would support student self-review and self-assessment.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching of SPHE is very good, with rich opportunities for student learning provided in all lessons.
- Students' seats were arranged in a large circle. This is highly praised, as it facilitates easy interaction between students, promotes a greater sense of belonging and fosters greater levels of participation.
- It was positive to see that each class groups' ground rules were referenced at lesson start, as this reminded students of the agreed, operating principles.
- Good attention was paid to reviewing learning from previous lessons, a practice which is particularly beneficial in SPHE where students' contact with the subject may be but once weekly.
- The plan for the lesson was openly communicated. Carefully considered learning intentions were shared, and these incorporated student-friendly language and action verbs, whilst emphasising student activity and learning.
- When revisiting learning intentions, it is important that activities designed to capture actual levels of students' learning and understanding are provided.
- Well-chosen, highly relevant, video clips were used to evoke student reaction and to promote discussion. The inclusion of accompanying, active-listening strategies is recommended.
- Lessons were highly student-centred. All planned activities required students' hands-on participation, which promoted their meaningful engagement with subject matter.
- Well-planned and well-managed collaborative learning opportunities were provided for students. Carousel was extremely well utilised in one lesson to foster high levels of student participation, engagement and critical thinking.
- High-level processing of student activities, which was most inclusive of student voice, was evident, and students were supported in drawing relevant generalisations.
- The overall approach to teaching and learning in SPHE is one that supports students to apply their learning to real life situations.
- It follows, therefore, with reference to the previous four points, that lessons were well aligned with the four phases of the experiential learning method – experiencing, processing, generalising and applying.
- It was advised that, at times, the teacher needed to take a step back, with a view to asking more of and getting more from the students themselves.
- Personal learning for students was accommodated in all lessons. The benefits of providing students with a means to formally log this learning and, thereby, be able to reflect on it into the future, would be very valuable.
- Classroom atmosphere was highly conducive to student learning, which was founded on a culture of respect for both self and others. The teacher-student rapport was most positive, and students' demonstrated highly co-operative working relationships. The latter is fuelled by clearly communicated expectations in relation to attention and application to work. Students were highly appreciative of the learning opportunities they were offered in lessons.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Provision and support for SPHE is very good.
- Timetabling of junior cycle SPHE is appropriate, and management's high regard for related learning is evident in the provision of a health education module for fifth and sixth-year students.
- The intention to re-establish a core team of junior cycle SPHE teachers is fully encouraged. The rationale for this will be provided in the planning and preparation section.
- RSE in junior cycle is delivered as part of SPHE, while the religion department is largely responsible for senior cycle RSE, with external facilitators complementing class work. The school provides very generously for RSE in TY.
- Teachers involved in the delivery of both SPHE and RSE have engaged in relevant training, and demonstrate a keen interest in continuing to engage with relevant professional development opportunities. Ongoing and systematic training is key to very good quality teaching and learning in SPHE and RSE.
- A large number of supporting school policies have been ratified by the board and their relevance is being informed by a policy review schedule.
- The school's draft RSE policy should be ratified by the board as a matter of priority, although it requires some additional work in advance of ratification, as advised during oral feedback. Informed by Circular 0043/2018, consideration should also be given to the development of a policy to inform the use of external facilitators.
- Communication with parents in relation to the delivery of RSE is well accommodated. The language of reporting will need to be modified in due course to reflect the changing requirement on teachers to specifically report on students' progress and achievement in SPHE.
- Management is most supportive of teachers in their planning for and provision of a wide range of initiatives and activities aimed at promoting students' holistic development and related provision is rich. It is strongly suggested that all such events be incorporated into the SPHE programme plan, as this would greater facilitate a corresponding, in-class exploration of relevant subject matter.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The planning work of the subject department is of a good quality.
- Planning will further benefit from the planned expansion of the team, as this will facilitate more formal and more structured collaborative teacher planning. This is especially important at this time, when a new specification is being introduced, and where planning in SPHE needs to take account of the school's wider planning for a Wellbeing programme.
- Outline programmes of work are in place. Junior cycle programmes provide more topic or unit-specific information in terms of resources, activities, methodologies and assessment modes. This more detailed planning could be further developed, and this approach should be extended to TY and senior cycle. In junior cycle, programme planning should also be guided by the planning templates provided by the Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT).
- It is recommended that planning for assessment be particularly prioritised, to include documentation of both ongoing assessment as part of lesson delivery and assessment tasks provided at the end of a module or unit of learning. Learning outcomes, learning intentions, and related action verbs, are key considerations when planning for assessment. Linked to

this recommendation is the need to ensure that student copybooks, files or the previously suggested learning log, are an accurate reflection of work undertaken each year.

- The SPHE plan contains evidence of very high quality evaluation of the TY RSE programme. This very good practice should be extended to all year groups and should take place on an annual basis following delivery of RSE.
- In planning for senior cycle RSE, despite the very generous provision of a double period of RSE every week in TY, it is important to ensure that sixth-year students receive a minimum of six RSE lessons each year. The contribution that the *TRUST* pack, as well as the corresponding *Growing up LGBT* pack, could make to the TY programme should be further considered.
- Planning and preparation for lessons was very good, which resulted in lessons that were well structured, sequenced and paced. A range of resources supported high levels of student motivation and engagement.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

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;

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 acknowledges receipt of the report and notes the recommendations. The areas addressed in this report will continue to form part of the subject department planning process.

Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

1. A committee has been established to update and finalise the draft RSE policy.
2. Work is ongoing in terms of creating a forum for collaborative planning for teachers involved in delivery of SPHE, RSE and Wellbeing
3. Assessment and reporting continues to be under review as we transition from Junior Certificate to Junior Cycle.