

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Social Personal and Health Education
(SPHE)

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Le Cheile Secondary School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Hollystown Road Tyrellstown Dublin 15
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	68083N

Date of Inspection: 13-09-2018



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 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.

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	12-09-2018 & 13-09-2018
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 six class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and relevant staff

School context

Le Chéile Secondary School is a co-educational, post-primary school which operates under the auspices of Le Chéile Schools Trust. The school opened in 2014 and has a current enrolment of 602 students. Le Chéile offers Junior Certificate, Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY), the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme. The school recently introduced a class for students with autistic spectrum disorders.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning in the observed lessons ranged from good to very good; the quality of assessment ranged from satisfactory to very good.
- Teachers facilitated active and collaborative learning in all lessons, however there is scope to develop more effective use of the experiential learning cycle.
- The overall quality of whole-school support for SPHE is very good.
- A small team of teachers is responsible for the delivery of SPHE, however teacher allocation to classes is not consistent.
- Very high quality SPHE-related policies have been developed by school management; the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy is not yet ratified.
- The overall quality of planning for SPHE is very good.

Recommendations

- SPHE teachers should further develop effective use of the experiential learning cycle to ensure that all students are facilitated to share their views, and develop attitudes and values as well as skills, knowledge and understanding in SPHE and RSE.
- Senior management, in collaboration with the SPHE department, should implement a time-bound action plan to implement consistent allocation of suitably trained SPHE teachers to class groups from first to sixth year, as set out in the school's SPHE policy.
- The draft RSE policy should be ratified by the board of management.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed ranged from good to very good.
- Learning intentions were shared in all lessons. This practice was most effective in lessons where these were referenced during the lesson and reviewed at the end to consolidate learning. The intended learning generally focussed on knowledge, understanding and skills pertinent to the topic. This should be extended to encompass the development of students' attitudes and values.
- A very good rapport was noted between teachers and students, and SPHE is taught in a positive, caring atmosphere in line with the whole-school emphasis on care and wellbeing of students. Teachers provided a student-centred learning environment, where classroom layout facilitated active and collaborative learning.
- SPHE contracts were displayed in a few classrooms. Very good practice was noted where the contract was referenced during the lesson to focus learners' attention on their responsibilities as SPHE students. This approach is particularly important where sensitive topics are being discussed and should be extended to all lessons.
- All lessons were very well prepared. A range of teacher-generated supplementary materials, including ICT, was used creatively and effectively in most lessons. Students used tablet devices to collaborate, and share ideas and learning through a range of digital platforms. This was most effective where students had the opportunity to apply their shared learning, and to use collated ideas to inform further activities.
- Collaborative learning was facilitated in all lessons. Learning was most effective when group-work activities were well structured and students fully understood the purpose of the activity. Very good learning was also facilitated where teachers provided plenary sessions for students to exchange ideas, draw conclusions and share their learning. This approach should be extended to all group activities.
- Teachers facilitated active learning in all lessons observed. In the best lessons teachers provided effective transitions between activities and used the experiential learning cycle to explore topics. All teachers should further develop use of experiential learning to facilitate students to consider and critically evaluate issues arising out of activity-based learning, and to apply this learning to subsequent tasks.
- The quality of assessment in lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to very good. Teachers used a range of formative assessment strategies including student self-assessment and verbal feedback. Written formative feedback was not provided on student work. In some lessons effective questioning was used to challenge students' values and opinions, and students' questions were used to open debates and empower learners to take ownership of their own decision-making.
- Through their school self-evaluation process the school has correctly identified formative assessment as a target area. Strategies developed through this process should be implemented by the SPHE department.
- Teachers take a range of approaches to recording and storing student work. The SPHE department's policy of teachers keeping student work is currently under review due to General Data Protection Regulation concerns. The school should now develop a consistent approach to the setting, monitoring, assessment and storage of student work.

- Commendably, students' progress in SPHE is shared with parents at parent teacher meetings and in written termly reports. Students are awarded certificates for participation in SPHE.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support is very good. Management have put considerable work into developing very high quality policies related to SPHE and Wellbeing. Timetabled provision of SPHE and RSE is very good.
- In line with good practice a small team of SPHE teachers is in place. The school's SPHE policy is to allocate teachers through consultation, and with continuity, training and gender balance in mind. At present members of the team vary from year to year and not all SPHE teachers are yet consistently timetabled for the subject. As the school grows senior management should ensure that responsibility for teaching SPHE is shared more evenly among members of the core team with a view to building the requisite expertise and capacity in the subject, and to ensure continuity for students.
- School management is supportive of continuing professional development (CPD) and a few teachers have accessed training. Many of the teachers are new to the subject and are awaiting places for subject-specific training. In the interim, teachers should avail of the expertise available within the subject department.
- An RSE policy has been developed and should now be ratified by the board.
- The school provides a very good range of supplementary activities to support and enhance the SPHE programme. This includes valuable whole-school initiatives such as *Mental Health Awareness Week*, *Cosy Clothes Day*, the Amber Flag, the *Angels* student mentoring programme, and extra-curricular activities that promote health, fitness and Wellbeing.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The quality of planning for teaching, learning and assessment of SPHE and RSE is very good. The subject plan is spiral and developmental and includes an outline of the modules to be delivered in each year.
- The SPHE department has developed detailed schemes of work that were followed in all lessons visited. Schemes for SPHE take cognisance of Junior Cycle key skills and Wellbeing where appropriate. To build on this good practice, the SPHE department could now investigate links with pillar subjects of Wellbeing and include a review section to ensure that planning evolves in line with students' needs.
- Commendably, collaborative planning is facilitated through provision of monthly meetings. Minutes of meetings indicate a good focus on CPD of teachers, and planning for SPHE teaching, learning and supplementary activities.
- A new SPHE co-ordinator is in place this year. Management envisages that the role of subject co-ordinator will to be rotated among the core team as the school grows. This is to be encouraged to build leadership capacity in the SPHE department.

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.

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.

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.

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;