

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

**Subject Inspection in Social Personal and Health Education  
(SPHE)**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	St. Kevins College
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Clogher Road Crumlin Dublin 12
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	70160R

**Date of Inspection: 29-01-2019**



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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 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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

## **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>	28 and 29 January 2019
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and key staff</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during three class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### School context

St. Kevin's College is a co-educational, multi-denominational post-primary school under the patronage of City of Dublin Education and Training Board with a current enrolment of 186 students. The school offers the following programmes: Junior Cycle, Junior Certificate School Programme, Transition Year which is compulsory, the established Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the Leaving Certificate Applied programme.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory overall with some elements of good practice noted in all lessons and scope for improvement in relation to active learning methodologies and development of the student voice.
- Provision and overall school support for SPHE is very good overall and there is a clear understanding among key staff members of the importance of SPHE and wellbeing.
- There is a very good whole-school approach to SPHE and effective relationships have been established with relevant support agencies.
- The overall quality of planning is good; however, there is scope for development in relation to planning for individual lessons.
- There is scope for development in the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and other resources to further engage students' interest in lesson content and their own learning.
- There was some commendable attention given to literacy and numeracy development in some lessons, however, this is an area for further improvement.

#### Recommendations

- It is recommended that teachers plan carefully for the one-hour lessons, with a view to improving student engagement, acquisition of skills and attainment of learning outcomes.
- Teachers should work together to source attractive and interesting resources including ICT resources that are age-appropriate and motivating for students.
- Active learning should be a central feature of lessons with teachers taking a facilitative approach to ensuring students' interest in and responsibility for their own learning.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching was satisfactory overall with some good practice noted. There was considerable scope for improvement in some cases with regard to planning for active learning, skills acquisition and achievement of learning outcomes.
- The quality of learning was satisfactory overall but varied considerably between lessons. In some lessons, students were quiet, compliant and passive and in another, students became disengaged. The student learning experience was not as effective as it could have been in either case.
- Learning intentions and a rationale for the lesson were not given in some lessons. In one lesson, learning intentions were given at the end of the lesson but not in time to engage students sufficiently or encourage them to take responsibility for their learning. This needs to be addressed so that students are aware of what they are learning and why and to provide them with a focus for skills acquisition. There was good recall of prior knowledge and learning in some lessons.
- In one lesson, tables were arranged to facilitate and support learning. This good practice could be usefully applied to all settings. Group discussions and active pair and group work should be a central focus of SPHE lessons and classroom layout should facilitate this if at all possible. Brainstorming, place mats, graphic organisers and digital quizzes to assess learning are all valuable ways of engaging students and helping them to learn.
- While some pair activities were used in all lessons, not enough thought was given to allocating specific times for tasks, leading to a less than effective pace. Teachers should plan carefully for individual lessons giving thought to learning intentions, timed activities, the use of resources and the monitoring of skills and knowledge acquisition.
- Teachers invested considerable time in preparing notes and worksheets for students in advance of lessons. However, the use of a wider variety of resources, including age-appropriate and relevant video clips and other ICT resources, is recommended. These will help to further engage students and to put their learning in a stimulating realistic context so they can apply what they have learnt to their own lives and to a wider societal context.
- In one lesson, the teacher had commendably brought in some food props and other resources to illustrate points about healthy eating. This good practice should be further developed so that students can see what kinds of meals can be provided from certain foods by the use of photographs or film clips. Healthy eating plans should be relevant to students' life experience.
- Teachers circulated during classroom tasks helping students and ensuring that they remained on task. Teacher support for students was evident and in the main student interactions with teachers were respectful and polite.
- There were some good references to literacy and numeracy development in one lesson. This good practice could be usefully extended to all lessons to support students' general development in these important areas of learning.
- Folders of work for SPHE are kept in classrooms. Teachers should discuss the best ways of assessment for SPHE and it would be beneficial to report on progress made in the subject and in wellbeing overall at parent and teacher meetings.

## **2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- The provision for SPHE is very good. All class groups in junior cycle have a one-hour lesson a week and some second-year groups get additional time in order to address identified needs.
- Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is appropriately delivered to senior cycle classes. Only one teacher is currently qualified to deliver the TRUST programme for RSE. It is recommended that management facilitate staff to attend the relevant Department-funded courses to develop capacity among the staff to deliver RSE.
- It was clearly evident during the evaluation through meetings and discussions with senior management and relevant staff that SPHE and the whole area of wellbeing is highly valued. Staff members indicated a clear understanding of the importance of the subject and the possibilities it provides to impact positively on students' lives.
- There is a very good whole school focus on SPHE. Teachers organise regular events such as friendship week, mental health week and LGBT week to help students develop an understanding of the questions addressed during these celebrations.
- A wide range of supports is in place for students, including a breakfast club and a dedicated care team. Teachers conduct wellbeing surveys and plan targeted interventions based on the results of these surveys. These interventions include programmes such as friends for life, mindfulness, behaviour for learning programme and other developmental courses designed to help students address issues such as examination stress and anxiety.
- A planning team has been established to plan for the implementation of Wellbeing as part of the new Junior Cycle and this work is well underway.

## **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The quality of planning is good overall. Curriculum plans observed during the evaluation were well laid out and were clearly working documents. Plans also included reflection sections, some of which were filled in by teachers, which is very good practice. Statements of learning linked to SPHE and key skills acquisition were also included in planning documentation.
- The SPHE plan would benefit from more detail on methodologies and resources. This further development will help teachers to source and plan for the use of resources in lessons and will facilitate the sharing of best practice among teachers in the use of methodologies.
- SPHE and RSE policies are also in place. The school regularly invites guest speakers to talk to students on a range of current issues pertinent to student lives. It is timely now to develop a policy on visitors to the school including guest speakers.
- A core group of teachers delivers SPHE and RSE; this is good practice. Teachers are assigned to SPHE with their prior agreement and a co-ordinator for SPHE organises regular meetings. Minutes of meetings are kept and indicate a focus on the practical elements of SPHE and RSE delivery. Teaching and learning and the sourcing of relevant and age appropriate resources should be a standing item on meeting agendas.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the acting 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
<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;