

**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

School name	Ringsend College
School address	Cambridge Road Ringsend Dublin 4
Roll number	70200D

Date of Inspection: 19-05-2017



WHAT IS A 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 SPHE including RSE under the following headings:

1. Learning, teaching 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.

Subject Inspection

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Date of inspection	19-05-2017
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 one-hour class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teacher

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Ringsend College is a co-educational school under the patronage of City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb). At the time of the evaluation there were 128 students enrolled. The school participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action plan for improvement. The curriculum includes a compulsory Transition Year (TY) programme in addition to junior cycle provision and Leaving Certificate programmes.

FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to good, and best practice was observed when a wide range of methodologies were used which varied the learning experiences for students.
- The quality of learning ranged from satisfactory to good, and was best in instances where student active participation and collaborative learning were maximised.
- Interactions among students and between students and their teacher were very positive.
- Assessment in SPHE needs some further consideration and development.
- Provision and support for SPHE and RSE are generally good but it is necessary to build staff capacity in the subject and to make provision for RSE in TY.
- The quality of planning at department and individual lesson level for SPHE was good.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Greater use should be made of active and participative learning activities that elicit a wide range of skills development, including working collaboratively.
- Management and the teacher should give further consideration to how students' progress and achievement in SPHE are formally assessed and reported on in school reports.
- Management should build staff expertise in SPHE and RSE by facilitating systematic and continuous professional development; establish a core team of teachers that can be deployed; make provision for RSE in TY; and further promote RSE as a distinct programme in senior cycle.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to good.
- Best practice was observed when students were required to participate in a variety of ways including working collaboratively on tasks. This approach was recommended for the third years, where placing more varied requirements on the students and challenging them in a wider set of tasks, would develop a broader range of skills.

- All learning was purposeful. The teacher clearly identified the intended learning outcomes and the key terms that were to be the focus of the lesson from the outset.
- Teaching instruction was directed at eliciting responses to texts, video clips and scenarios. The resources were well selected and they progressed learning in the topic being explored.
- Students were capable in contributing their ideas and opinions. Their oral and written contributions during lessons were good. Most of the students demonstrated high levels of interest in the learning activities combined with responsibility for their own learning.
- During questioning and discussion, the teacher sought to involve all students and demonstrated effective encouragement, understanding and support to achieve this. The teacher had the requisite subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and classroom management skills. Some well-chosen warm-up activities engaged students actively from the outset.
- Good practice was observed when students were tasked with extending their written and oral responses on the basis of points shared by other students. On a few occasions, learner outcomes could have benefited from an extension of this type of challenge.
- In one lesson, meaningful connection was made between the lesson's learning intentions and expectations for students' educational progression. As this was one of the school's DEIS action plan themes for improvement, this is very good practice.
- Teacher circulation was very good at times and included in-class support for students' individual skill development and the assessment of individual student's progress. In a few instances, better teacher circulation was recommended.
- Classroom atmosphere was good. Interactions among students and between students and their teacher were very positive. Students listened respectfully to each other's points of view. This provides a very good foundation to further encourage students to become even more involved in their lessons.
- Students were regularly provided with constructive, affirming feedback on their contributions. Further attention, however, needs to be given to providing students with feedback on their written work. In addition, further consideration needs to be given to how students' progress and achievement in SPHE are formally assessed and reported on in school reports.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- There is good curricular provision for SPHE in each year of junior cycle and the programme provided includes RSE.
- Currently, in senior cycle, provision is made for RSE during religious education (RE) classes.
- Some improvements are needed in the provision for RSE at senior cycle. The positioning of curricular RSE with curricular RE could present challenges for students of the subjects and its distinction within the curriculum. In addition, teachers had not yet participated in recent senior-cycle RSE training and this is advised. At the time of the evaluation, RSE was not being provided in TY; management must now ensure its provision within the programme in future years.
- Provision of resources for the subject is good. A base room is provided for the subject. There are many up-to-date posters around the school relating to important and useful SPHE themes including healthy eating, emotional health and personal safety. It is suggested that the school enhances the range of information and leaflets for young people in the theme of relationships, sexuality and gender identity.
- Teacher deployment in SPHE is good as the teacher involved is experienced and has engaged in relevant professional development. However, the establishment of a core team of teachers interested in being trained and deployed to SPHE and RSE and in working collaboratively to plan for the subjects in the school is recommended.

- A draft RSE policy is in place. It is recommended that this policy progress to being ratified by the board of management as soon as possible. It is also recommended that a brief outline of the school's RSE programme provided from first year through to sixth year be appended to the RSE policy. This would provide clarity to learners and parents.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The SPHE department is a single-teacher department and it is recommended that ways of fostering a professional network or extending the SPHE team be sought by management. This would enable a forum for discussing teaching and learning approaches.
- Planning at department and individual lesson level was good. A good subject plan for SPHE has been developed. However, the plan would benefit from greater focus on assessment in SPHE, particularly how and when assessment is to take place. In addition, evidence from lesson observation and the set of resources in use suggested that the worksheets and texts used with third years in particular should be diversified.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and subject teacher 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 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;