

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

**Subject Inspection in Physical Education**

**REPORT**

|   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Ainm na scoile /<br/>School name</b>       | Inver College                     |
| <b>Seoladh na scoile /<br/>School address</b> | Carrickmacross<br>County Monaghan |
| <b>Uimhir rolla /<br/>Roll number</b>         | 72180K                            |

**Date of Inspection: 22-11-2017**



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

## SUBJECT INSPECTION

### INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

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|--|---|
| <b>Date(s) of inspection</b>   | 22-11-2017  |
| <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 five class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul> |

### School context

Inver College is a co-educational secondary school operating under the auspices of Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board. The school has a current enrolment of 295 students. In addition to the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes, the school offers an optional Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate Applied programme. The school also offers the Junior Certificate School Programme as part of its participation in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was good; very effective practice was observed in lessons delivered by a qualified physical education (PE) teacher.
- Very good levels of differentiation were observed in junior-cycle lessons with a variety of equipment provided and activities presented as challenges.
- Subject provision is satisfactory; however, currently fifth-year students must choose between Religion and PE, while sixth-year students eligible for LCVP have no access to PE.
- The facilities available for teaching and learning in PE are good; however, a number of potential health and safety concerns were noted during the evaluation.
- TY students expressed an interest in adding additional PE experiences to their programme, in keeping with the spirit and ethos of the programme.
- The overall quality of subject planning is satisfactory; while planning for junior-cycle PE is well developed, there is scope to further develop the subject plan for senior-cycle students.

#### Recommendations

- Senior management should ensure that all PE lessons are delivered by teachers who hold qualifications recognised by the Teaching Council for the teaching of the subject.
- All students should receive a minimum of a double period of timetabled PE each week for the full school year.
- Senior management should, at the earliest opportunity, commission a full health and safety audit.
- The PE department should investigate the interest in and feasibility of providing additional PE modules as part of the TY programme.
- The PE department should review the subject plan so as to ensure the provision of suitably progressive learning activities to accommodate the interests of senior-cycle students.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment in observed lessons was good; highly commendable practice was a key feature of the lessons delivered by a qualified physical education teacher.
- There was a key emphasis in all lessons on putting students at the centre of their learning. For example, many students were provided with leadership opportunities. To enhance this very good practice, teachers should, when planning lessons, provide opportunities for students to select and plan their warm-up activities and skill drills as appropriate.
- High-quality questioning was a key strength of the very good lessons observed. Students were challenged very effectively to reflect on their learning and to understand why and how something impacted on their activity. In other lessons, teachers relied on global questioning and, in some cases, asked and answered their own questions.
- All lessons were conducted in a safe and affirming manner and students participated enthusiastically, for the most part, in all activities. Activity levels were very high in the majority of lessons.
- In junior-cycle lessons, differentiation was integrated seamlessly into all lessons. Students were provided with options in terms of equipment selection and activities were framed in terms of challenges. The very effective use of challenges allowed students of all abilities to access the curriculum. There was scope to further differentiate the activities in the senior-cycle lessons observed.
- Students in junior lessons had an opportunity to participate in a peer-assessment task. Providing opportunities for self and peer assessment is very effective practice. Care should be taken, however, to ensure the assessment task matches the experience and age level of the students involved.
- Colourful displays of key words for junior-cycle curricular areas were displayed on the walls of the sports hall. Students were provided with opportunities to develop oral literacy, and sports-specific key terminology was reinforced correctly in junior-cycle lessons. There was scope to further develop aspects of numeracy in PE lessons.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) was used to good effect in those lessons where it was observed. Appropriate, skill-specific videos were used to good effect to illustrate and reinforce key teaching points. The PE department should investigate further options to develop ICT as a learning and assessment tool as well as continuing its effective use as a teaching tool.
- The PE department has planned to introduce formal physical assessments, one per year, to junior-cycle classes. They intend to use the language of the junior-cycle framework to report on these assessments to parents; this is a worthwhile initiative.

### 2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support is satisfactory.
- First-year students have very good PE provision; they are timetabled for a double and a single period of PE each week with students in other year groups having good provision receiving a double period of PE. However, fifth-year students choose between Religion and PE and a small number of sixth-year students who qualify for LCVP have no access to PE. As a

matter of priority, school management should ensure that all students are timetabled for a minimum of a double period of PE for the full school year.

- The subject is organised and delivered by a team of conscientious teachers who are mostly deployed according to their qualifications. Senior management should ensure that all lessons in PE are delivered by teachers who hold qualifications recognised by the Teaching Council for the teaching of the subject.
- The facilities available for teaching and learning in PE are good. A small fitness suite has been developed recently in the sports hall balcony area and the hard court and pitch areas outside provide for additional teaching spaces. Potential health and safety concerns were brought to the attention of management during the evaluation. A full health and safety audit should be commissioned at the earliest opportunity.
- The time allocated to TY PE currently is insufficient to provide the broad student experience a TY programme has the capacity to offer. TY students expressed an interest in adding additional PE experiences to their programme. In keeping with the spirit and ethos of the TY programme, the PE department should investigate the interest in and feasibility of providing additional PE modules.

### **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The overall quality of planning and preparation is satisfactory.
- There is good evidence of planning for junior-cycle PE with detailed schemes of work for almost all curricular areas. However, there is a very limited plan in place for senior-cycle PE currently, as the PE department has focussed its attention on increasing participation in recent years. Commendably, senior-cycle participation has increased. The PE department should now review their senior-cycle PE plan to provide students with a more structured experience.
- Individual lessons were well planned, in particular the junior-cycle lessons observed. Equipment required was, in many instances, set up in advance of the lesson and worksheets and task cue cards were a significant aid to student learning.
- Currently, five blocks of work are planned for each year. The PE department should continue to review this system to ensure all blocks of work receive adequate time. A reduction to four blocks a year would allow for deeper student engagement and the development of rich task-assessment practices.
- The PE department, supported by school management, shows a commitment to continuous professional development that is commended. Planning for the junior-cycle framework is well advanced and the school has indicated an interest in introducing a short course for PE in the near future.

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  |
|---------------------|---|---|
| <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;   |