

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Physical Education

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Coláiste Na Sceilge
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Cahersiveen Co. Kerry
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	76068N

Date of Inspection: 15-10-2019



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agus Scileanna
Department of
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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.

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	15 and 16 October 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 four lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Coláiste Na Sceilge is a co-educational community college under the patronage of Kerry Education and Training Board (ETB) and the joint trusteeship of Kerry ETB and the Presentation Order. In the current school year, it has an enrolment of 511 students, slightly more than half of whom are boys. The school offers the Junior Cycle programme, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) as well as the established Leaving Certificate. Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses are also provided.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was very good in the lessons observed, with minor scope for development noted regarding students' independent learning.
- Students are achieving very well in Physical Education and the high quality of performances observed indicates a very good level of learning.
- Classroom atmosphere is very positive and affirming.
- There are good assessment and reporting strategies in place.
- While subject provision and whole-school support are very good overall, there is scope to re-visit the timetabling arrangements for Physical Education.
- There is a strong sense of collaboration among the subject department and overall planning has been very positively influenced by the educational leadership of Kerry ETB.

Recommendations

- The physical education department should consider greater use of a rich task approach at junior cycle and plan for increased student autonomy in learning, particularly at senior cycle.
- The school should re-visit the timetable arrangements for Physical Education with a view to minimising the sharing of the physical education hall, especially between different year groups.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching was very good in the lessons observed. Lessons were characterised by high levels of student activity, very good student engagement in learning and excellent levels of co-operation between students.
- Students are achieving very well in physical education lessons and the standard of practical performances, both in the tasks set by teachers and in games situations, was very good.
- Learning intentions were shared with students at the start of lessons and very good opportunities for peer learning and reflection on learning were provided throughout lessons. Lessons typically ended with the teacher referring to the lesson learning intentions and often with the teacher providing information as to what would be covered in subsequent lessons. The use of these strategies is highly commended.
- All lessons were very well planned and an extensive range of high-quality, appropriate resource materials was prepared by teachers. Particularly useful were the worksheets and other materials aimed at promoting student self-reflection and peer-reflection. These were of considerable benefit to student learning and engagement.
- A senior cycle lesson which took place in the school's fitness suite was exemplary for the manner in which the teacher used digital technologies and in which students demonstrated very high levels of physical fitness and the ability to work independently and with minimal direction from their teacher. It is recommended that strategies aimed at further developing students' capacity for independent learning should be used. This might involve, for example, senior cycle students working on their own, personalised fitness plan when using the fitness suite with review and modifications made to such plans periodically in consultation with their teacher. At junior cycle, this might involve greater use of the rich task approach as a pedagogical tool throughout a series of lessons.
- A very strong sense of collegiality was in evidence among the five teachers of Physical Education in the school. The respective roles of school management in promoting this, and Kerry ETB in advancing the work of communities of practice, is highly commended. The move to increased use of digital technologies in the school can be expected to further enhance teamwork within the department and management hopes that the software being used will provide a single, focussed point of communication and collaboration. There is some scope also for increased use of digital technologies to enhance teaching and learning in the school as the school has recently taken delivery of a suite of tablet devices.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Subject provision and whole school support for Physical Education is very good. The subject is well resourced and the school is commended for the fact that there are five qualified physical education teachers on staff. All classes have a double period of the subject each week and a range of additional learning opportunities is also provided.
- The facilities available are very good and the school's involvement with the local Cahersiveen Sports Hub has been very beneficial in the development and maintenance of the school's fitness suite.

- Despite the very good focus on student learning which was evident in all lessons, it was difficult for teachers to engage in thorough questioning and to re-direct questions in some lessons due to noise levels in the hall. This also negatively impacted on students' opportunities to share learning and provide feedback to each other. The main reason for this was the sharing of the physical education hall involving two classes. While it will be inevitable that this will occur at times, and weather conditions mean that it will not often be possible for one lesson to take place outdoors, management should attempt to ensure that more than one class is not timetabled to use the hall whenever possible. If such sharing is necessary, it would be better if classes from the same year group were timetabled concurrently as this could allow for shared activities and team teaching, as appropriate.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall quality of planning and preparation in the school is good, with individual physical education lessons being very well planned.
- Kerry ETB has outlined a clear strategic vision for the development of the subject, part of which involves a shared, rich task event organised for junior cycle students in which all Kerry ETB schools participate. This is very good practice. Additionally, the school's physical education department has engaged in in subject learning and assessment review (SLAR) meetings as part of classroom based assessments (CBA) at junior cycle. Assessment strategies are very good and reports in Physical Education are sent to parents twice per year.
- The subject department plan is thorough and comprehensive and is available to all teachers on the school's shared hard drives. In keeping with the values promoted during physical education lessons, there is clear evidence in the plan of the school's attention to the personal needs of its students as individuals and as learners. While the school benefits from the strategic approach to the development of Physical Education promoted by Kerry ETB, it is recommended that the school should also include a development section in its plan, outlining the short-term, medium-term and long-term plans for the development of the subject in the school's own, unique context.
- There is a very healthy level of co-curricular and extra-curricular physical activity taking place in the school with Gaelic games, rugby and basketball being particularly popular. Management is greatly appreciative of the efforts of a large number of teachers in promoting these and other activities in the school. The redevelopment of the school's website will be important in the promotion and further development of extra-curricular activities in the school. The school had previously been awarded the Active School Flag and, although this has lapsed in recent years, the school is well placed to renew its application and is encouraged to do so.

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;