

**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

Ainm na scoile / School name	Maria Immaculata Community College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Dunmanway Co Cork
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	76086P

Date of Inspection: 13-12-2018



An Roinn Oideachais
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

Dates of inspection	10-12-2018 and 13-12-2018
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 three class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal, chaplain and relevant staff

School context

Maria Immaculata Community College is a mixed post primary school under the joint trusteeship of Cork Education and Training Board (CETB) and the Diocese of Cork and Ross. The school has a current enrolment of 480 students. The school offers the Junior Cycle programme, the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Established (LCE) and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in observed lessons was very good, with much excellent practice noted.
- Lessons were highly student centred and, in addition, students were facilitated to work collaboratively either in pairs or small groups.
- Opportunities for students to consider emotional responses to varying stimuli were richly accommodated in all lessons; systems to log relevant self-learning should be developed with students.
- SPHE and RSE are prioritised and provision and support for both is of a very high quality; work in relation to two remaining key policies relating to SPHE and RSE needs to be prioritised.
- The planning and preparation work of the subject department is of a very high quality; Programmes of work demonstrate a learning outcomes approach but there is scope for the further development of these over time, especially in relation to planning for assessment approaches and strategies.

Recommendations

- To support students to self-evaluate, and to recognise both their progress and their learning needs in SPHE, students should be facilitated to file relevant materials and to log their learning.
- An RSE policy should be ratified by the board as a priority. A policy on the use of external facilitators and programmes should be prepared in line with relevant circulars and, subsequently, this policy should also be ratified by the board.

- In the further development of programmes of work, particular consideration should be given to how students' progress and achievement in SPHE will be determined, both within and across units of learning.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in observed lessons was very good, with much excellent practice noted.
- The plan for each lesson was framed within a series of well-considered learning intentions which were presented in student friendly language and unpacked with students as lessons commenced.
- Teachers very effectively drew on students' prior learning or life experience to support new learning.
- Lessons were highly student centred and, in addition, students were facilitated to work collaboratively either in pairs or small groups.
- Students' participation in activities was well supported by the provision of clear instructions and, as relevant, the introduction of examples or teacher modelling. Learning was enhanced by high-level monitoring, which was well supported by the arrangement of desks in learning centres. Activities were expertly organised, managed and processed, except in one instance where over ambitious planning compromised the latter.
- Teachers made very effective use of visuals to support student understanding and learning. In two instances the students, either directly or indirectly, created or supported the creation of visuals as part of their in-class work. This facilitated powerful recognitions and realisations amongst students.
- Questioning was most inclusive and teachers regularly posed questions which supported the development of students' higher -order thinking skills.
- Opportunities for students to consider emotional responses to varying stimuli were richly accommodated in all lessons. Activities designed to promote personal reflection were provided including, for example, thought provoking, teacher facilitated final inputs such as a meditation or a poem.
- Classroom atmosphere was very positive. Students demonstrated interest and enjoyed the lessons. Students responded well to classroom management strategies that were grounded in the principle of respect for all. Classroom walls displayed high quality student work which is supporting the creation of a relevant and stimulating learning environment.
- As relevant, a small number of areas for improvement were identified. The potential value of all planned activities should be fully considered against the backdrop of the desired learning intentions. Provision of sufficient time to check levels of understanding and consolidate intended learning should be accommodated. Finally, when facilitating group activities, teachers should consider the value in assigning roles and responsibilities to individual students in order to ensure fuller participation.
- One key area for development exists, the explicit assessment of students' progress and achievement in SPHE. In order to support teachers in planning and providing for assessment, and to gain a deeper understanding of and appreciation for formative assessment in SPHE in

advance of planned Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) workshops, teachers are referred to the *SPHE Junior Certificate Guidelines for Teachers* and the relatively recently revised resource packs produced by the Health Service Executive (HSE). To support students to self-evaluate, and to recognise both their progress and learning needs in SPHE, students should be facilitated to file relevant materials and to log their learning.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- SPHE and RSE are prioritised and provision and support for both is of a very high quality.
- Timetabling of SPHE and RSE at junior cycle, as well as RSE at senior cycle, is consistent with published guidelines.
- It is highly commendable that the deployment of teachers is well informed by best practice principles. These include: the development of a small core team of interested teachers for SPHE in junior cycle and RSE in senior cycle; the selection of teachers who are happy to be involved; and continuity of teacher deployment throughout junior cycle and senior cycle.
- The decision in recent years to devolve responsibility for teaching and learning in SPHE to year heads has proved very beneficial, promoting cohesion between the SPHE teachers and other key student support personnel. This includes the chaplain who also contributes very valuably to students' learning in SPHE. It is noted that this approach is effective because all three year heads are interested and experienced SPHE teachers, an important context-specific consideration.
- Teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) records indicate a clear interest in upskilling in relation to relevant knowledge and skills. It is suggested that the SPHE teachers consider the value in reengaging with the programme of in-service provided by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). It is recommended that all senior cycle RSE teachers be facilitated to complete training workshops.
- Many of the relevant key supporting school policies have been ratified by the board. While a good quality draft RSE policy has been prepared, it should be ratified. A policy on the use of external facilitators and programmes should also be developed.
- In line with good practice, parents are notified when the RSE programme is being delivered, supporting them to play a role in this important aspect of their child's education.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The planning and preparation work of the SPHE and RSE subject departments is of a very high quality.
- A highly experienced and enthusiastic subject co-ordinator oversees, in a systematic manner, the planning work of the SPHE team; related outcomes are of a high quality. A comprehensive SPHE subject plan provides clear information in relation to provision, programme planning and the deliberations of department members, which are positively linked to review processes and the all-important and related action planning.
- As the RSE team is relatively new, a commendable team approach has been adopted to planning the senior cycle RSE programme. Once again, related outcomes are very good. In addition to agreeing a programme of work, resources to support consistency and coherence in the delivery of the programme have also been agreed, developed and filed. This level of

planning is highly commended. Consideration should be given to the contribution that the TRUST resource could make to programme content. It is recommended that students should be formally facilitated to participate in the annual review of the programme.

- Programme planning in SPHE takes cognisance of whole-school events which are coordinated by the chaplain and designed to support students' learning in SPHE.
- SPHE programmes of work are prepared in line with the learning outcomes approach espoused in the junior cycle framework. In first-year programmes, the transitioning from syllabus to short course specification is underway.
- All programme plans should be developed in time to accommodate the documentation of 'unit of learning' specific information in relation to resources, methodologies and the increasingly important area of assessment. Bearing in mind the vast experience of the current teachers, programme planning should not be curtailed by the chosen textbook.
- Overall, there was very high quality planning and preparation for lessons. On one occasion, it was advised that the plan should be less ambitious, so as to ensure more time for student engagement and whole-class processing.

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