

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Physical Education

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Coláiste Pobail Acla
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Achill Sound Westport Co. Mayo
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	76150V

Date of Inspection: 01-10-2019



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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 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	30 September 2019 - 1 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 three (eighty minute) lessons• Examination of students' learning• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers

School context

Coláiste Pobail Acla is a co-educational school under the auspices of Mayo, Sligo, and Leitrim Education Training Board (ETB). Current enrolment stands at 234. The programmes offered are the Junior Cycle, the Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP), an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate. One of the school's supports for students is a special class for students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) sanctioned by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). The school also receives additional supports through the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme (GSRS), which started in 2017 and Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the Department's action plan for educational inclusion.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- Teachers and senior management have a very positive attitude towards developing the subject and encourage a very strong appreciation of Physical Education among students.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good, with high-quality student-teacher rapport, inclusive practices and student-teacher relationships a feature of all lessons observed.
- The overall quality of learning is very good, and student-centred approaches with collaborative learning activities enable and empower students to become active learners.
- Assessment practice is an area for improvement; authentic, practical assessment practices are required to develop a learning culture in Physical Education, within the constraints of the current facilities.
- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support is good, with appropriate timetabled provision with qualified teachers and very good support for students in the special class; the absence of an indoor learning space for mainstream lessons is impacting on the student experience.
- The overall quality of subject planning and preparation is satisfactory with room for improvement in certain aspects.

Recommendations

- Authentic, practical assessments, which align with the learning outcomes and the amenities in the locality, should be embedded in Physical Education.
- The board of management should continue to explore every possible avenue to provide a specialised, indoor space for Physical Education.

- All units of learning across the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle should be collaboratively planned by backward design from learning outcomes.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- Teachers and senior management have a very positive attitude towards developing the subject and encourage a very strong appreciation of Physical Education among students.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good; high-quality student-teacher rapport, inclusive practices and positive student-teacher relationships were a feature of all lessons observed.
- Lesson planning incorporated a very good range of active methodologies which provided deep learning experiences in all lessons. Classroom routines were highly effective in ensuring that lessons progressed smoothly. The routines included roll call, linking the focus of the current lesson with previous lessons, reflecting on learning, brief linking to the next lesson, and experiences in deep learning of the understanding and application of warm up routines.
- Teachers communicated learning intentions to students at the outset of lesson. However, at times, the learning intentions were too broad in nature, and clarity in the intended learning was not evident. It is advised that the development of oral learning intentions and practical exemplars be explored, supported by the National Council of Curriculum and Assessment *Focus on Learning* toolkits.
- In every lesson, students were observed to work in pairs to lead a whole class warm-up appropriate for their age and stage of development, thus cultivating their ability to make choices about how they can best present a physical activity specific warm-up to others. Warm-up task cards and small groups would maximise student participation and opportunity during these tasks.
- Very good collaborative learning opportunities were incorporated into lessons. Students were placed in mixed-ability, co-educational groups, enhancing engagement in learning and increasing physical activity levels. Students worked together to progress through developmental tasks integrating fundamental skills with tactical awareness. Further support to learning would be provided by teachers sharing success criteria with students, using laminated posters as necessary.
- All Junior Cycle, TY and special class students experience a unit of learning in *Aquatics* and *Health-related fitness* in a local hotel facility. Students reported that they do not receive instruction on swimming strokes or water safety at the pool. It was reported that, going forward, instruction on swimming strokes and water safety will be provided.
- Assessment practice is an area for improvement. Authentic, practical assessment practices are required to develop a learning culture, within the constraints of the current facilities.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support is good.
- All students are timetabled for at least eighty minutes of Physical Education per week, by teachers who possess the appropriate qualifications. TY students are timetabled for one hundred and twenty minutes per week. The students in the special class have four hundred minutes of Physical Education per week, through a combination of individual lessons and reverse integration timetabled lessons; such access accords with the recommended requirement for moderate physical activity per day.
- The outdoor facilities are good with the presence of an all-weather AstroTurf pitch in the school grounds. Also, the installation of a bespoke Adapted Physical Activity suite to support the special educational needs of students through the medium of physical activity and providing students in the special class with access to level three Physical Education is exemplary.
- The equipment available for Physical Education is satisfactory. The baseline equipment required for all lessons is not sufficient. It is advised that an inventory of essential equipment be created and purchased incrementally by the school, as part of the ongoing development of Physical Education.
- The on-site indoor facilities are poor. The students fund travel to, and rental for a hall or a local hotel facility for Physical Education throughout the winter. Planning permission has been submitted to build a physical education hall on-site.
- There is a projector and speakers in a small, general purpose area of the school. This space should be kept clear during lesson time and made available for physical education lessons during inclement weather. A set of mobile digital devices and heart rate monitors should be considered to advance assessment and reporting.
- Students have access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities including soccer, table-tennis, Gaelic football and hurling, as well as individual and team activities such as a walking club, athletics and orienteering. Whole-school events such as a charity cycle, sports day, the school walk and wellbeing week also support and extend students' learning of the benefits of physical activity for health. The voluntary involvement of all staff, parents and the support of management for these initiatives is praiseworthy.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall quality of subject planning and preparation is satisfactory.
- The Junior Cycle plan is based on a school-designed short course for Physical Education. The plan is adequate. A collaborative approach developed by backward design from learning outcomes, aligned to a real life, authentic assessment, relevant to the natural amenities surround the school, is required to develop this plan further.

- TY Physical Education provides a broad and balanced learning experience, incorporating units of learning in *Aquatics* and lifesaving, *Health-related fitness*, *Invasion Games*, and a myriad of stand-alone outdoor adventure activities. It is advised that planning for all off-site Physical Education be integrated into units of learning in the related curricular physical education plan for the year group.
- The senior cycle plan is under-developed and units of learning for senior cycle should be developed to reflect the learning opportunities and the learning outcomes of the senior cycle curriculum.
- Given the school's outdoor amenities such as the Great Western Greenway starting in Achill and the proximity of the sea, it is advised that the school consider further increasing students' access to Physical Education, as part of its wellbeing plan.

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