

**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	Rosmini Community School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	All Hallows College Campus DCU Gracepark Road Dublin 9
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	91344V

Date of Inspection: 22-05-2019



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), including Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), 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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

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.

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Dates of inspection	22-05-2019 & 23-05-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal, deputy principal and key staff• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during three junior-cycle SPHE lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and relevant staff

School Context

Rosmini Community School operates under the trusteeship of the Rosminian Order and the City of Dublin Education and Training Board. The school is closely associated with Child Vision: National Education Centre for Blind Children. It also participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. The current enrolment is 134 students. The school provides a broad range of curricular programmes that includes an optional Transition Year (TY). SPHE, which incorporates Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), is a core component of the school's Junior Cycle and TY programmes. RSE is currently provided as a module during Religious Education (RE) lessons in fifth and sixth year.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good; the most effective lessons visited facilitated experiential learning, but this practice was not fully embedded in some lessons.
- The quality of in-class assessment was satisfactory, although the assessment framework for SPHE is underdeveloped.
- The relationships between students and their teachers were observed to be warm, supportive, affirming and very inclusive.
- The quality of whole-school provision and support for both SPHE and RSE is good; the school provides a highly commendable range of initiatives to promote student wellbeing.
- The quality of collaborative planning for SPHE and the new Junior Cycle short course is less than satisfactory, due to the infrequency of meetings and the absence of a coordinated, core SPHE team.
- The quality of collaborative planning for RSE is good.

Recommendations

- Facilitative teaching strategies that support experiential learning should be an integral component of all lessons.
- The SPHE department should further develop its assessment strategies, including an agreed approach to setting, assessing, reporting and providing formative feedback on students' written work.
- School management should establish a smaller core team of SPHE teachers, from whom a subject coordinator should be appointed on a rotational basis.
- The SPHE department should meet more formally and more regularly to share and discuss best practice in relation to teaching, learning and assessment in the subject.
- The SPHE team should, through collaborative planning, develop appropriate units of learning to support the implementation of the new Junior Cycle short course in SPHE.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed in lessons was good. The lessons visited were well planned, and included well-prepared work sheets, case studies and digital presentations. The relationships between students and their teachers were observed to be warm, supportive, affirming and very inclusive.
- Commendably, each lesson began with an assessment of the students' prior learning and teachers proceeded to build incrementally on students' knowledge and understanding of the subject matter.
- A clear statement of the learning intentions was made at the outset of each lesson and revisited at the end to consolidate learning. Student learning was enhanced by the facilitation of *think, pair and share* activities, walking debates and personal self-reflection exercises.
- Students demonstrated good levels of participation and engagement in their learning, and were provided with opportunities to work both independently and collaboratively, in pairs and groups.
- In the most effective lessons observed, the experiential learning cycle was clearly evident. In one lesson, for example, students were asked to name everyday situations where caution might have to be exercised in relation to one's personal safety. Students were then presented with scenarios and asked to reflect on how they themselves would react, before sharing their ideas in a group task. Feedback from the task led to a whole-class discussion in which students demonstrated that they understood key concepts and were able to apply their knowledge and skills to real-life situations.
- In another lesson observed, there were occasional instances where there was too much focus on the text book and students confined themselves to providing one-line answers to questions posed by the teacher. Overall there was scope to extend student responses and to provide greater opportunities for students to discuss, process and apply their learning to real-life contexts. SPHE is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, the fostering of positive attitudes and the development of skills that have implications for behaviour. Therefore it is recommended that facilitative teaching strategies that support experiential learning be an integral component of all lessons.
- The quality of in-class assessment was satisfactory. Elements of assessment were incorporated into all lessons, mainly through good questioning and verbal feedback. Some good practice was evident in lessons where students self-assessed and maintained a reflective journal, but this practice was not universal across all classes.
- While all teachers assign written work at times, there was little evidence of monitoring or written formative feedback. SPHE teachers should implement a consistent approach to the assignment of student written work and project work.
- It is recommended that the SPHE department further develops its assessment strategies, including an agreed approach to setting, assessing, reporting and providing formative feedback on students' written work; this should be developed in line with the whole-school assessment strategy.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of provision and whole-school support for both SPHE and RSE is good.

- SPHE is appropriately timetabled for all junior-cycle groups, as well as TY. Currently RSE in fifth year and sixth year is appropriately provided during RE lessons. School management reported that they will extend the timetabling of SPHE lessons, to include RSE, to all senior-cycle students from the start of the next academic year 2019/20.
- It is commendable that all of the teachers currently teaching SPHE have received the appropriate training. However the number of teachers involved is quite large for the size of the school, and there is a significant turnover of SPHE teachers every year. It is recommended that school management establish a smaller core team of subject teachers to ensure a more consistent and team-based approach.
- The school is highly commended on the very wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular initiatives it provides to promote student wellbeing at whole-school level. These programmes include student mentoring, *Cool Schools*, *Webwise Lockers*, *Shout-Out*, a student course on child protection, and a Friendship Day. Commendably the school's Wellbeing Week, with a daily theme linked to one of the Wellbeing indicators, won a national award recently. Another positive development is the current participation of Rosmini as a pilot school in Jigsaw's *One Good School* initiative, aimed at promoting positive mental health.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Individual planning and preparation for the lessons observed was good, but the quality of collaborative planning for SPHE is less than satisfactory, due to the infrequency of meetings and the absence of a coordinator who teaches the subject. It is recommended that school management appoint a subject coordinator on a rotational basis.
- A subject plan for SPHE, outlining schemes of work for each year group, has been developed by a small number of individual teachers within the department. A range of very useful resources for SPHE is available on a shared on-line folder in the school, but not all teachers are accessing it.
- While it was reported that members of the SPHE department have been meeting both formally and informally, minutes of those meetings have not been maintained. It is recommended that the subject department meet more formally and more regularly to share and discuss best practice in relation to teaching, learning and assessment in SPHE. Key decisions at these meetings should be recorded and included in the subject department plan.
- School management has decided to implement the Junior Cycle short course in SPHE from the start of the next academic year 2019/20. At the time of the evaluation, collaborative programme planning to support the implementation of this short course was underdeveloped. As an important initial step, it is recommended that the SPHE team, through collaborative planning, develop appropriate units of learning to support the implementation of the new Junior Cycle short course in SPHE, in line with national guidelines.
- The quality of collaborative planning for Senior Cycle RSE is good. The small number of teachers involved have all received the appropriate training and work effectively as a team. It is a positive development that a RSE co-ordinator has been appointed who demonstrates a particular expertise in this area.
- It is commendable that policies on RSE, SPHE and Visiting Speakers have recently been updated and ratified by the board of management.

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.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management welcomes the positive feedback contained in this inspection report, in particular the acknowledgement of the warm, supportive, affirming and very inclusive environment as well as the high commendation on the very wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular initiatives we provide to promote student wellbeing at a whole subject level.

Part B: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

- A new planning document has been introduced to facilitate the collaborative planning approach and includes details of assessment.
- In-house CPD took place at the beginning of the academic year with a focus on the facilitation approach to teaching which is also commensurate with the new Junior Cycle.
- A complete review of assessment practices across the school has begun.
- As of August 2019, SPHE has been timetabled for all year groups from 1st to 6th year.
- A small SPHE core team has been established
- An SPHE and RSE Coordinator have been appointed.
- SPHE is now included in all “meeting” periods throughout the school year.

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;