

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Social Personal and Health
Education (SPHE)
REPORT**

**Sancta Maria College
Ballyroan, Dublin 16
Roll number: 60341P**

Date of inspection: 4 March 2015



**AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS**

REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN SPHE

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	4 March 2015
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during four class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- A high standard of teaching and learning was observed in all of the lessons evaluated.
- All lessons were well structured and paced and there was an appropriate balance between teacher instruction and student activity.
- A range of active methodologies was observed and used to very good effect.
- There is good whole-school provision and support for Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE)
- Good planning practices are in place to support the effective delivery of the SPHE programme.
- A whole-school policy for Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is in place and a subject plan has been developed for the delivery of the RSE programme.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Students should be encouraged to speak in the first person when answering questions in order to further embed their learning within their own personal domain.
 - To support ongoing assessment, students should be asked to record their learning in a personal journal at the end of each lesson or at home.
-

INTRODUCTION

Sancta Maria is a voluntary girls' secondary school with a current enrolment of 520 students. It has a mixed socio-economic catchment and serves the urban community of Dublin 16. The school offers the Junior Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, the established Leaving Certificate and an optional Transition Year (TY) programme.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from very good to excellent in all of the lessons observed.
- All teachers began by establishing the lesson aims and objectives. To further this good practice, teachers should articulate them as learning outcomes, setting out what the students should have learned by the end of the lesson. This will facilitate the revisiting of the outcomes which should be carried out at the end of the lesson to assess student progress.
- All lessons were well structured and paced and the lesson content was in line with the needs and interests of the students and the rigours of the curriculum. There was clear delivery of information throughout and there was an appropriate balance between teacher instruction and student activity in all of the lessons observed. The quality of teacher-student rapport, noted during the lessons, supported a learning environment conducive to an effective SPHE programme.
- Lessons were well sequenced and, in most instances, progressed from an opening ice-breaker activity, to teacher instruction, student task and follow-through discussion. A range of active methodologies including brainstorming, placemat exercises, individual and group tasks supported this process. The student tasks were seamlessly integrated into the lessons observed.
- Question and answer sessions were effectively used to elicit information and students' opinions and there were some good examples of higher-order questions and answers. To enhance this practice it is recommended that students be encouraged to speak in the first rather than the third person when answering questions in order to bring their learning more into their personal domain, thereby consolidating it.
- PowerPoint was used very effectively in one lesson to support the lesson delivery and to highlight keywords. Artwork, prepared by the teachers in advance, served in other lessons to progress an action task in a very creative manner.
- Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) formed the lesson content to be delivered in one instance. The manner in which the lesson was prepared and delivered enabled all students to actively participate in open and meaningful discussion of a sensitive topic.
- Ongoing assessment of student learning was integrated into lessons through the question and answer sessions. In one lesson, moments of palpable silence indicated the depth of student engagement with the work in hand. Students were also asked to record their learning in their workbooks. To further enhance this good practice, it is recommended that students be asked to record their learning into a personal journal which could be kept from year to year and could reflect the progression of their learning over time. This work could be completed at the end of the lesson or at home.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- There is very good whole-school provision and support for SPHE. The deployment of teachers, allocation of time, timetabling and the provision of resources all support the effective delivery of the programme.
- Classrooms are teacher based. The seating arrangements in these rooms facilitated ease of movement and group work and this is good practice.
- The development of a core SPHE team is commendable practice as it facilitates continuity of provision, in-service training and the building up of subject specific expertise. Some members of the SPHE team have engaged in the ongoing professional development available for both SPHE and RSE, while others will undertake the necessary training as soon as it has become available to them.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- A range of good planning practices is in place to support the effective delivery of the SPHE programme. The members of the subject department meet regularly and there was evidence of good collaboration in the well-tabulated schemes of work.
- It is recommended that whole-school activities such as friendship week be incorporated into the teachers' planning in order to show how they support the SPHE programme and consolidate learning.
- There is an RSE policy and plan of work in place.

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 board of management of the school 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.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board wish to highly commend the SPHE teachers on an excellent Subject Inspection Report.