

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Physical Education
REPORT**

**St Kieran's College,
College Road, Kilkenny
Roll number: 61560J**

Date of inspection: 04 March 2014



**A N R O I N N | D E P A R T M E N T O F
O I D E A C H A I S | E D U C A T I O N
A G U S S C I L E A N N A | A N D S K I L L S**

**REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	04 March 2014
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 three double classes• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good in the lessons observed.
- Lessons were very well structured and appropriately paced with high levels of engagement and enjoyment.
- Many students demonstrated very good levels of proficiency in the focused activities and articulated a good understanding of relevant concepts and principles underpinning human movement.
- Physical Education enjoys a valued status on the curriculum, is well resourced and with excellent facilities available to support the organisation and delivery of the curricular and extra-curricular programmes.
- Students' engagement in physical activity, exercise and sport is promoted and provided for through an exemplary extra-curricular programme.
- Subject department and individual lesson planning and preparation are of a very good standard.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Assessment-for-learning (AfL) practices should be revisited and reinforced to further support the high quality of teaching and learning.
 - The further development of the assessment process should be advanced and based on agreed over-arching learning outcomes for each year group.
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INTRODUCTION

St Kieran's College is a voluntary secondary school for boys with a current enrolment of 707 students. The school provides the Junior Certificate, a compulsory Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the established Leaving Certificate.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of learning and teaching in the lessons observed was very good.
- Lessons were characterised by high levels of student engagement, enthusiasm and enjoyment. A positive culture of active participation in Physical Education has been fostered, underpinned by an affirming and supportive rapport between students and their teachers. The inclusion of some students who were unable to participate in the practical activities is good practice. The continued development of approaches to purposefully engage these students, including the use of peer-teaching and peer-assessment, should be explored.
- Planning and preparation was very effective in all lessons. Lessons were appropriately structured and very well paced, with clear progressions identified to scaffold learning. There was also very good attention paid to ensuring tasks provided students with sufficient moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, commensurate with their ability.
- The content and direction of lessons was clearly outlined at the outset. This should be extended to include what students should know and be able to do as a result of their engagement. To this end the use of a whiteboard in the sports hall would be beneficial. This will facilitate the display of relevant skills, concepts, principles and strategies as they relate to the lesson and provide a clear focus for learning.
- Initial warm-up tasks were appropriately focused on ensuring that students were physiologically prepared to engage in the subsequent activities. Students were self-motivating and required little prompts from teachers to complete the initial locomotion-based activities. The selection of mobility exercises was particularly impressive, with a clear focus on ensuring students had sufficient technical competency in a range of functional and dynamic exercises. A continued focus on the underlying postural and mechanical components of these exercises will further build on the high quality of initial preparation.
- Teacher demonstration of the technical components of exercises or skills was excellent. Combined with the high quality of instruction, students had very clear criteria to apply to their learning and improvement. Many students demonstrated very good levels of proficiency, both in terms of their general movement ability and in their technical competency in the performance of the discrete skills of the focused activities.
- The tasks set by teachers optimised students' opportunities for skill acquisition and application. Teachers ensured tasks were open-ended, which helped to differentiate for the varying levels of motor ability and fitness of students. This was particularly impressive in the selection of exercises for a health-related fitness circuit, where students were provided with options from which to choose their preferred level of physical challenge.

- Questioning was used effectively to develop and assess understanding. Engaging students in reciprocal feedback was particularly effective when used and this approach should be extended, whenever appropriate.
- Future developments should focus on the further use of collaborative learning practises that engage students as critical analytical performers. The use of video would greatly enhance this approach and subsequent learning, particularly during the skill acquisition phase.
- Teachers keep detailed records of students' participation and progress in Physical Education. A number of effective formative and summative assessment methods are used including certified courses in TY, end of module self-assessment and the use of project work on occasion. To build on these practices, the further formalisation of the assessment process should be considered. Teachers should agree a number of key assessment tasks for each year group.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Physical Education enjoys a valued status as a core subject on the curriculum for all students. The time provision and timetable arrangements support the delivery of a comprehensive physical education programme.
- The physical education programmes are organised and delivered by a team of appropriately qualified and highly committed teachers. Very good attention is paid to professional learning, with a recent focus on functional movement and strength and conditioning. The impact of the expertise developed by teachers in these areas was evident in the lessons observed.
- The school has a range of excellent facilities to support participation in Physical Education, physical activity, exercise and sport. The subject department is well resourced with sufficient equipment and materials to support teaching and learning. Resources permitting, consideration should be given to the purchase of additional equipment, such as heart-rate monitors, pedometers and tablet computers. The use of these devices should aim to further enhance students' understanding of their functionality and physical activity behaviours.
- The attitude and application of students and teachers to a physical activity culture in the school is exemplary. The numbers of students involved in a range of sports training, recreational leagues and self-directed physical activity programmes is very high. Whilst the achievement of some students at provincial and national level in several sports is outstanding, students also value and enjoy opportunities to participate in recreational sports and fitness-enhancing activities at their own level. Consideration should be given to applying for Active School Flag status to endorse the high quality provision.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Subject department planning is well advanced and all elements of the physical education programmes are appropriately documented.
- Teachers presented as reflective practitioners, who strive to design their programmes to meet the interests and needs of their students. Subject department meetings include many elements relevant to providing students with a diverse range of learning experiences through many differing physical activities. The inclusion of health-related nutritional

advice, along with age and ability appropriate fitness training programmes is also very good practice.

- The subject plan presents a broad, balanced, developmental and progressive programme of work for all year groups, with all strands of the syllabuses appropriately provided.
 - The broad aims of the subject plan are appropriate to support students' understanding of the benefits of physical activity, exercise and sport across the lifespan. To build on this good practice, it is recommended that a small number of over-arching learning outcomes for each year group be prioritised from the range of outcomes identified in the subject plan. This will provide a clearer focus to guide the assessment process.
 - Appropriate attention is paid to health and safety issues in the subject plan.
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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 on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.