

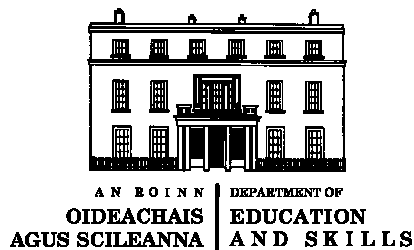
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of Physical Education  
REPORT**

**Coláiste na Trocaire,  
Rathkeale, County Limerick  
Roll number: 76061W**

**Date of inspection: 27 January 2016**



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

---

## **INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Date of inspection</b>	27 January 2016
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during four class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

## **MAIN FINDINGS**

- The quality of teaching and learning observed during the evaluation was very good.
- Students are achieving very well in Physical Education and were very well engaged in all lessons.
- Good assessment procedures are in place and very good formative commentary is provided to students to inform their learning in Physical Education.
- The quality of subject planning is excellent with the range of activities planned in Transition Year (TY) being particularly praiseworthy.
- Individual lessons were very well planned.

## **MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The physical education department should plan to incorporate one assessment per year of practical performance in physical education for each class group.
  - All lessons in Physical Education should be taken by teachers who hold appropriate qualifications in the subject, as recognised by the Teaching Council.
  - The school should try to ensure that all students have access to a minimum of one double-period of Physical Education per week.
-

## **INTRODUCTION**

Coláiste na Trocaire is a co-educational school with a total enrolment of 444 students in the current school year. The school is under the joint trusteeship of the Sisters of Mercy and Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB). In addition to the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate, the school also offers the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). An optional Transition Year (TY) programme is also available to students.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- The quality of teaching and learning observed during the evaluation was very good in all lessons.
- A good range of teaching methodologies was observed and students were very well engaged by the tasks set by teachers.
- Very good differentiation was in evidence in the tasks set for students. This strategy was very effectively augmented by opportunities for student choice which the teachers frequently facilitated. This is highly commended as it can have a very positive motivational effect on the learner and can also help them to become more autonomous in the learning process.
- As a further development in this area, it is recommended that the physical education department should plan to provide senior cycle students in particular, with opportunities to plan and take greater responsibility for aspects of their physical education programme.
- Lesson atmosphere was warm and friendly and students participated enthusiastically in all aspects of their physical education lessons. Students co-operated fully with each other and with their teachers, and lessons were characterised by high levels of student activity.
- Lessons of single period duration posed significant challenges for the teacher in terms of trying to ensure a meaningful and worthwhile learning experience for students. While both teachers and students coped admirably with this situation, it is nonetheless recommended that all students be provided with a minimum of one double period of Physical Education.
- Students responded very well to questioning by teachers and their responses indicated a very good quality of learning. While the range and levels of questions posed by teachers was very good, the eliciting of learning through questioning was recommended as a strategy which merits greater use, within the confines of available time in lessons.
- Scope was provided for students to both record and reflect on their achievements during physical education lessons and good opportunities for self-evaluation and discussion were provided. This is highly commended.

## **SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- There is good provision for Physical Education on the school's timetable with all students having access to the subject.
- While a double period is the norm for all year groups, sixth-year classes are provided with just one period and some fifth-year classes have two single periods. It is

recommended that all students be provided with a minimum of a double period of Physical Education per week. It is very positive to note that TY classes have four periods per week of Physical Education as this allows for a wide range of activities to be scheduled which would otherwise not be possible.

- Reporting to parents takes place at parent-teacher meetings and in two written reports per year. Physical-education specific comments are available to teachers as part of the school's reporting software. This is very positive as it allows teachers to provide formative, relevant comment to students with regard to their learning and progress in Physical Education. In order to further develop the school's assessment and reporting practices, it is recommended that teachers incorporate an assessment of practical learning in Physical Education for all year groups, once per year, in order to inform progress and reporting in the subject.
- The resources available for the teaching of Physical Education are very good and are very well maintained. The school's fitness suite has been recently developed and is made available to students outside of school time. Locally available facilities are also accessed to extend the range of activities provided, particularly in TY. This is commended.
- Extracurricular sport and physical activity is very strong in the school with a wide range of activities provided. The commitment of teachers to providing these activities is noted and greatly valued by school management.
- The school has two fully qualified physical education teachers on staff and another staff member, who does not hold physical education teaching qualifications, is also involved in the teaching of the subject. While the quality of teaching in all lessons observed was very good, it is nonetheless recommended that all timetabled physical education lessons are taken by teachers who hold qualifications recognised by the Teaching Council for the teaching of the subject.

## **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The quality of subject planning is excellent and the subject plan is a comprehensive document that shows evidence of careful consideration on the part of the school's physical education department.
- The range and variety of activities planned in TY is particularly praiseworthy, facilitating the involvement of students in activities that would not normally be possible in the physical education programme.
- It is recommended that the physical education department plan for slightly longer blocks of activity, of approximately five to eight weeks duration, in many topics to facilitate more in-depth learning.
- Individual lessons benefited from thorough, well-considered planning and lesson materials, which had been prepared in advance, were a significant aid to learning.
- The physical education department uses a range of fitness and other tests to provide valuable feedback to students regarding their physical performance. It is positive to note that the use of fitness testing has a developmental rather than a competitive focus whereby the emphasis is on the helping the individual to understand their performance in relation to their own growth and maturation.

---

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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

*Published June 2016*