Subject Inspection of Guidance
REPORT

Coláiste Eoin
Baile an Bhóthair, Bóthar Stigh Lorgan
Contae Átha Cliath

Roll number: 60041D

Date of inspection: 03 May 2012
REPORT ON THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN GUIDANCE

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

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| **Inspection activities undertaken** | **•** Observation of teaching and learning during one class period  
• Discussion with principal and teachers  
• Interaction with students  
• Examination of students’ work  
• Feedback to principal and guidance counsellor |

MAIN FINDINGS

- The ex-quota allocation is used fully in the provision of an effective programme of Guidance.
- The standard of learning and teaching observed was good.
- A range of information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively in the delivery of the guidance programme.
- The programme of Guidance is well-balanced across personal, educational and vocational guidance, and between the provision of a guidance service and guidance inputs into the curriculum.
- The psychometric instruments used in assessing students are selected appropriately and are used collaboratively in support of the learning needs of students.
- The guidance department plan in well formed and whole-school guidance planning has been initiated in collaboration with senior management.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- A small task group should be formed in collaboration with senior management to direct the process of whole-school guidance planning.
- It is recommended that whole-school policies regarding confidentiality, referrals and assessment be developed in the context of whole-school guidance planning.
INTRODUCTION
Coláiste Eoin is an all-Irish boys’ school under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST). 477 boys are currently enrolled. In addition to the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes, the school offers a compulsory Transition Year (TY) programme. A unique feature of the school is its location in one block of a building shared with Coláiste Íosagáin, a girls’ post-primary school located in the second block. The school’s recently constructed sports hall has been recognised for its architectural merit.

TEACHING AND LEARNING
- A good standard of teaching and learning was noted during the lesson observed. The methods used were in keeping with the material being presented. They included a presentation, made through the effective use of existing ICT and internet-based materials. The topic was relevant to the level and aspirations of students, illustrating the ladder of career progression and the associated national framework of qualifications.
- The learning objectives were stated clearly at the outset of the lesson. The lesson was well planned and structured. A thorough knowledge of the subject matter was displayed. Lesson content was presented clearly and accurately, and was well linked to material covered in the course of previous lessons and in lessons during TY. It is suggested that the recapitulation of stated learning objectives would be an effective enhancement of good practice and would be an appropriate conclusion to lessons.
- Student management was effective. Students remained engaged throughout the lesson. It was clear that good relationships had been established between the teacher and students. This facilitated effective, reciprocal communication based on the knowledge of students’ interests that had been gathered in the course of previous classroom work and while working individually with students.
- The questions used were stimulating and well pitched. Students’ responses were insightful and showed evidence of prior learning. Given the clear good will of students it is suggested that, where appropriate, students be encouraged to engage in self-directed learning, enabling a more facilitatory role for the teacher.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT
- The ex-quota allocation for Guidance from the Department of Education and Skills was 17 hours per week at the time of the evaluation. The allocation was used fully and effectively in the provision of Guidance by a newly-qualified guidance counsellor.
- The facilities for Guidance are good and include an office with the requisite electronic and administrative equipment. The office is suited to the practice of counselling.
- The timetable for Guidance shows a well-balanced allocation for work in personal, educational, and vocational guidance and a clear commitment to the guidance service, including one-to-one work with students. The visual displays of guidance material observed throughout the school, confirmed the school’s inclusive approach to Guidance that is in keeping with national policy. This is good practice. The use of the term Guidance is advised where appropriate, when referring to the work of the guidance department and to whole-school guidance. Such usage would more accurately symbolise the totality of personal, educational and vocational guidance.
• The role of the guidance department is being developed with the clear support of senior management. Existing links with, for example, parents, students and with external agencies, such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), are being reviewed in the light of the potential for guidance department involvement in those links.

• The programme of standardised psychometric assessment carried out by the guidance department is based on the use of instruments that are appropriately normed. It is of note that the co-ordinator of the additional educational needs department is also a recent appointee. The collaborative approach being taken by the two departments to standardised assessment and to subsequent diagnostic assessment is of clear advantage to the school in catering for the learning needs of students. It is suggested that consideration be given to the earlier assessment of general ability in light of its value in the formation of classes of mixed ability and in the identification of the individual learning needs of students.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

• Good progress has been made in the development of the guidance department since the qualification of a member of staff as a guidance counsellor in 2011. The senior management team is supportive of these developments and facilitates continuing professional development (CPD) and attendance at guidance-related events.

• The guidance department plan is well developed. The formation of the whole-school guidance plan has been initiated. It is recommended that a small team be formed to advance this process. It is clear that the general withdrawal of the ex-quota allocation for Guidance poses challenges for the school, especially in the context of the newly formed guidance department. The planning team should comprise, in addition to a representative of senior management and of the guidance department, the co-ordinators of the additional educational needs department and of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) department and a small number of interested staff. The overall objective of the team should be the integration of all supports, both professional and curricular, into an effective, overarching and whole-school system in keeping with the school’s mission of care under the Edmund Rice Schools’ Trust.

• A system of student leadership that includes the mentoring of new students by senior students is being revived. It is suggested that, as an element of the plan recommended above, a formal communication channel be developed to include issues that emerge from this process in the whole-school guidance planning process.

• The recommended planning provides opportunities to develop relevant policies, as short-term tasks. It is recommended that these should include whole-school policies regarding confidentiality, referrals and assessment.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and guidance counsellor 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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

Published May 2013.
Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of Coláiste Eoin accepts the report for the school response on the subject inspection of Guidance. The Board thanks the inspector for the professional and courteous manner in which the inspection was conducted, for the affirmation, and for the recommendations made. The inspection was clearly in the interests of the College. It is intended that the recommendations will be implemented without delay.

Area 2: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

Emanating from the recommendations of the inspection, the following are being implemented:

(a) As recommended, a guidance planning team has been formed to direct the guidance planning process as part of the school planning process.

(b) Policies regarding confidentiality, referrals and standardised assessment are being drafted, as recommended.

(c) In the context of school planning, methods are being considered that will facilitate the communication of proposals that emerge through the leadership/mentoring system.