

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

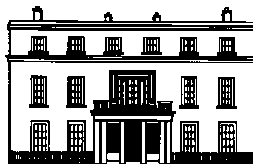
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of Civic, Social and Political  
Education (CSPE)**

**REPORT**

**Coláiste de hÍde,  
Tamhlacht, BÁC 24  
Roll number: 70021D**

**Date of inspection: 8 Nov 2011**



**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 CIVIC, SOCIAL AND**  
**POLITICAL EDUCATION (CSPE)**

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Date of inspection</b>	8 Nov 2011
<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 three class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- Teacher preparation for lessons was good or very good in most lessons observed; good use of active learning methodologies supported student learning in the majority of cases.
- Classroom management was very effective in all instances. Very good relations between students and teachers were evident.
- A wide range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities supported the delivery of CSPE in the school.
- The new CSPE team is enthusiastic and committed to their students.
- Curriculum provision and timetabling is satisfactory.
- There are some positive aspects to department planning such as the analysis of results. However, there is considerable scope for development in other areas of departmental planning.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Teachers should be facilitated to attend additional in-service training for the subject.
- A co-ordinator for the subject should be appointed
- Departmental planning should be advanced. The schemes of work should be reviewed and laid out for each term, with agreed learning outcomes, in order to facilitate common assessment and to ensure adequate coverage of all syllabus topics.
- Teachers should refer closely to the department schemes of work and the CSPE syllabus when planning lessons.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Coláiste de hÍde is a post-primary co-educational school under the patronage of County Dublin Vocational Education Committee (VEC). The main language of instruction is Irish. At the time of the evaluation there were three hundred students enrolled.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- Teacher preparation for lessons was good or very good in most lessons observed. Lesson routines were strong, good pace and timing was observed and a variety of teaching methodologies were used.
- The topic of the lesson was introduced clearly at the start of all lessons. This brought good structure to the lessons observed. In one case a review at the end of the lesson allowed the teacher to assess the learning achieved. It is recommended that this good practice be extended to all lessons.
- Active learning was encouraged in most lessons observed as recommended in the CSPE syllabus. In these cases well organised group work facilitated cooperative learning.
- Very good use of ICT was evident in one lesson observed to show a PowerPoint presentation and to link to an archived news clip. It is commendable that electronic resources are downloaded to the school's intranet system.
- In one lesson observed the lesson content was only loosely linked to the CSPE syllabus. Teachers should check the CSPE syllabus and the department plan carefully when planning lessons.
- In one classroom visited students were preparing for the action project. Good emphasis on the development of skills was noted in this lesson. It is recommended that where two class groups are undertaking the same project, as was the case in this instance, that tasks and responsibilities are clearly defined between the two class groups.
- Little attention was paid to subject specific vocabulary in lessons observed. It is recommended that the seven concepts of CSPE be displayed prominently in classrooms in which CSPE is being taught. Attention should also be paid to the keywords associated with each topic and students should be encouraged to note these keywords in their copybooks. Resources left with the school by the inspector may prove helpful in this regard.
- Good assessment strategies were in evidence such as good quality questioning and frequent testing. Homework is given frequently in most classrooms visited. Some monitoring of homework was evident. It is recommended that homework is given and monitored regularly in all classrooms as outlined in the school's assessment policy. There was no evidence of common testing for the subject.
- Classroom management was very good in all instances. Very good relations between students and teachers were evident.

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

- There is good curricular provision for the subject in the school. All junior cycle students have the recommended one period of CSPE per week. Most students have their CSPE teacher for another subject as recommended in Circular M13/05.
- The delivery of CSPE is supported very well by the school community through the establishment of a student council and prefect system, the provision of resources and the facilitation of a wide range of co-curricular activities such as guest speakers and visits to places of civic interest. It is commendable that the school has achieved a Green Flag. The CSPE team should continue to support this good range of activities.
- There are good assessment procedures in place in the school. Student reports are sent home six times a year for non-examination classes. CSPE is represented on student reports, in house examinations and at parent-teacher meetings.
- As a result of recent changes to school personnel a completely new team of teachers is involved in teaching CSPE. While teachers are enthusiastic and committed to their students, it was noted that only one member of the team has had training and experience in the area of CSPE before this school year.
- While it is acknowledged that some in-school induction has taken place it is recommended that management seek to further up-skill the team of CSPE teachers. The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) should be consulted as to the in-service courses that are available.
- Membership of the Association of Civics teachers (ACT) is recommended to CSPE teachers.

## **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Department planning is in its initial stages. It is positive that frequent meetings are held and that minutes are taken at these meetings
- No co-ordinator for the subject had been appointed at the time of the evaluation. A co-ordinator should be appointed from among the three teachers teaching CSPE to take responsibility for department planning.
- A good range of documents was available in the department folder including schemes of work, a catalogued list of resources and an analysis of examination results.
- An examination of certificate examination results revealed a notable downturn in the number of students in the school achieving high results in CSPE in recent years. To reverse this downturn it is recommended that the department discuss and agree assessment practices for all junior cycle year groups. It is strongly recommended that common assessment be introduced across the department.
- The sharing of good practice in relation to teaching methodologies and resources should take place more frequently at department meetings.
- Schemes of work for the subject should be laid out for each term, with expected learning outcomes for each section, to help teachers plan their lessons. The CSPE syllabus should be consulted when the learning outcomes are prepared.

- While good teacher preparation for individual lessons was evident it was noted that teachers in many instances worked independently of the schemes of work. In one case an examination of student copybooks showed that time had been spent on the teaching of topics outside the remit of the CSPE syllabus.
  - Teachers should follow the agreed schemes of work to ensure that the syllabus is adequately covered and to facilitate common assessment.
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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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.