

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Physical Education
REPORT**

**Coláiste Íde Agus Iosef
Abbeyfeale, County Limerick
Roll number: 76093M**

Date of inspection: 6 May 2016



REPORT ON THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	6 May 2016
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 five class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning was good with some very good practice observed, particularly with regard to the use of peer assessment and aspects of assessment for learning.
- Students were well-engaged, co-operative and on-task in all lessons.
- There was very good evidence of student learning in the lessons observed.
- Provision for co-curricular and extra-curricular physical activities is strong in the school.
- Physical education has a very good status in the school and it is positive to note that it features on all school reports sent to parents.
- There is a very good subject plan in place.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- The warm-up phase of all lessons should include a gradual increase in intensity to prepare students for more vigorous physical activity.
 - All physical education lessons should be taken by teachers who hold appropriate qualifications as recognised by the Teaching Council.
 - Planning in Physical Education should aim to include one assessment of practical performances per year and should facilitate more opportunities for student autonomy as students progress through the school.
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INTRODUCTION

Coláiste Íde agus Iosef, Abbeyfeale, which opened in September 2011, is a co-educational post-primary school under the trusteeship of the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. The school has a current enrolment of 655 students. As well as the traditional Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate, the school offers the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) as well as an optional Transition Year (TY) programme.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning observed was good with some very good practice observed, particularly in relation to opportunities provided to students to engage in self and peer assessment and the use of aspects of assessment for learning.
- Students were well-engaged, co-operative and friendly in all lessons and, although lesson management was more difficult when a very large group of students were being taught, there was a positive work ethic evident at all times.
- Some suggestions were made and discussed with teachers with regard to the nature and structure of warm-up activities in which students engage prior to participation in more vigorous physical activity. It is recommended that the warm-up phase of all lessons include a gradual increase in intensity in line with best practice.
- The use of assessment for learning was very good in the lessons observed with students provided with opportunities to comment on each other's performances and to reflect on their own performances. The use of students' own mobile phones to video record their peers during a lesson on sprinting was particularly praiseworthy in this regard, as were opportunities provided for students to provide feedback to the teacher on the lesson as a whole.
- Learning intentions were shared with students at the start of lessons, were regularly referred to during lessons, and were used as a basis for self-reflection and discussion at the end of lessons. This is very good practice.
- Good attention to detail, clear explanation of technical terms and precise instruction by teachers, assisted students' understanding of the tasks set. The fact that differentiated responses to these tasks were both facilitated and encouraged by teachers allowed all students to participate in line with their own ability. This practice is commended.
- Students are achieving very well in Physical Education and the subject has a healthy status in the school. Students' answers to questions, their engagement in the learning process, and the quality of their performances, indicate a very good level of learning in Physical Education.
- While it is noted that some opportunities for student choice and self-directed learning are currently provided, it is recommended that the physical education department provide opportunities for greater student autonomy in the planning and organisation of the physical education programme, especially as students progress through the school to senior cycle.
- Students' literacy skills and understanding were aided by the writing of lesson objectives and key words on the whiteboard and the regular reference to these during lessons.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- All students have access to a double-period of Physical Education in all years. This is good practice.
- There are four teachers timetabled to take physical education lessons in the school, only one of whom holds teaching qualifications recognised by the Teaching Council for the teaching of the subject. In line with best practice, and in order to ensure breadth and balance in the range of activities offered to students, it is recommended that all physical education lessons are taken by teachers with qualifications in the subject that are recognised by the Teaching Council.
- The school provides a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular sports and physical activities to students, facilitated by the generous commitment of a significant number of teachers.
- As part of the school's approach to assessment in Physical Education, it is recommended that one assessment of practical performances per year take place for all classes. This can be used to inform reporting on student achievement in Physical Education. It is noted that some student performances at the end of blocks of learning in dance, gymnastics and orienteering have taken place and have been video recorded. This is commended as it can be highly motivational for students and can play an important role as part of formative assessment in the subject.
- The facilities and resources available for the teaching of Physical Education are excellent and are maintained to a very high standard.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- A comprehensive subject plan has been documented with all of the key areas included. The recruitment of an additional qualified physical education teacher and the involvement of the school in the Active School Flag award have been identified as areas for future development in the plan. It is suggested that the future development of teaching and learning in Physical Education in the school might also be included in the plan.
- Conscientious efforts have been made in the plan to include students with special educational needs in all aspects of Physical Education in the school. This is very positive.
- The level of cross-curricular planning which has been documented in the plan is noteworthy and will be of significant benefit to the school as it plans for Wellbeing in junior cycle.
- In addition to regular, informal meetings and discussions, formal meetings of the teachers involved in the delivery of Physical Education take place approximately once per term and minutes of these meetings are maintained.
- Individual lessons were very well planned and teachers had prepared a range of relevant, useful resource materials that clearly benefited students' learning. Information and communications technology was used effectively both by students and teachers during lessons.

- It is positive to note that Physical Education is included on written reports to parents for all year groups and that teachers have the opportunity to provide a formative comment on students' learning in Physical Education.

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.