

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of Physical Education  
REPORT**

**Coláiste Chill Mhantáin,  
Burkeen, Wicklow, Co. Wicklow  
Roll number: 76099B**

**Date of inspection: 09 October 2013**



**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**

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Date of inspection</b>	09 October 2013
<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 five class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- Teaching and learning was of a high quality in the lessons observed.
- Lessons were well structured and appropriately paced and had a positive and productive atmosphere.
- Students were actively engaged in purposeful and developmental tasks.
- The subject department is well resourced.
- Exemplary efforts are made to provide a diverse extra-curricular sport and physical activities programme to meet the interests of students, with several initiatives to further support students' wellbeing.
- The planned physical education programmes are appropriately documented and provide a broad and balanced programme for each year group.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The further development of the assessment process should focus on aligning key learning outcomes with specific assessment milestones for each year group.
  - Where appropriate, the greater use of co-operative learning strategies should be considered.
  - Management should review the time provision and timetable arrangements to ensure all students have appropriate access to Physical Education.
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Coláiste Chill Mhantáin is a co-educational designated community college, established in 2011, under the trusteeship of the Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (ETB). The Archdiocese of Dublin is a partner in this school. The school has a current enrolment of 795 students and provides the Junior Certificate, the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), a compulsory Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the established Leaving Certificate.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- Overall, learning and teaching in the lessons observed was of a high quality.
- A positive and productive atmosphere was evident. Lessons were well planned, purposeful and progressive. Students approached their lessons enthusiastically and made good progress in developing their competency and understanding of the focused topics.
- The intended learning outcomes were established at the outset and were appropriately contextualised. This was effectively achieved through the use of the whiteboard and keyword posters to illustrate and clarify relevant vocabulary, concepts, principles and strategies.
- Lessons had a very good commitment to engaging students in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity. Warm-up activities were well structured and appropriately paced. Demonstration was effectively used to model, and emphasise, the efficient execution of stretching exercises or skills. Opportunities to rehearse previously learned skills, exercises or routines also supported students in consolidating their motor learning and in extending their competence and confidence in the focused activities.
- Questioning was effectively used to assess learning and support understanding. Instructions were clear and precise. Developmental tasks helped to scaffold students' acquisition of skill and to further their understanding of the underlying concepts. The organisation of these tasks optimised students' opportunity for skill acquisition and application. Small sided games, pair work, or individual application to exercise routines, ensured that students were purposefully engaged throughout.
- Ample equipment was available with a good selection of resources to support learning. The use of resource cards and information sheets further supported students' engagement and understanding. Where possible, the use of video should also be considered to provide a visual representation of the focused skills, movement patterns or themes. The use of digital video recording devices and activity monitoring equipment, such as heart-rate monitors and pedometers, have considerable merit in further augmenting students' learning.
- To build on the good practice observed in the lessons, it is recommended that teachers consider the greater use of co-operative learning strategies, where appropriate. For example, the deployment of responsibility to students to lead elements of their lesson or to engage in peer teaching. This will support students in applying their competencies and will enhance their ability to analyse and evaluate their own and others performances.

- Differentiated instruction and attention was a common feature of lessons, with high levels of teacher mobility and interaction with students. Of particular note was the full and active inclusion of some students with particular physical challenges. Good efforts were also made to appropriately include students who were unable to participate in the practical activities.
- Students made very good progress in all lessons observed. In one particular group, who were involved in the Dublin City University's Youth Physical Activity Toward Health (DCU Y-PATH) project, there was a noticeable level of movement competency and co-ordination across the class group.
- Good work has been undertaken in developing the assessment process. Formative assessment, through teacher observation, questioning and oral feedback was an integral component of the lessons observed. The use of student self-evaluation worksheets, the planned introduction of a personal performance portfolio, JCSP key statements and LCA key assignments represent useful tools to assess students' engagement and learning.
- To further develop the assessment process, it is recommended that the subject department identify, using the syllabus documents and their schemes of work, the key learning outcomes that students should achieve in each year group. This will allow for a number of assessment milestones to be set for each year group, with associated criteria on which to gauge levels of attainment.
- Recording of participation is well developed, with regular reports to parents in line with school policy.

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

- With the exception of sixth-year students, the time provision of two periods per week, mostly organised as double periods, is adequate to support the organisation and delivery of the physical education programmes. In a few instances, classes are provided with two single period lessons. It is preferable that these are arranged as a double period to optimise students' engagement and learning. The allocation of an additional treble period per week for TY activities is exemplary. Management should continue to work towards providing all students with appropriate access to the subject in line with Department guidelines.
- The physical education programmes are organised and delivered by two appropriately qualified and committed professionals. The subject department is well resourced with sufficient equipment and materials, including information and communications technology (ICT) equipment to support teaching and learning. The school is fortunate to have a broad range of high quality facilities to support the delivery of the physical education and extra-curricular sports programmes.
- Involvement in sport and physical activity is valued and promoted by the school through a broad range of extra-curricular activities. This is augmented through engagement with interested parents who organise training and competing in sailing and equestrian events. A range of initiatives, such as engagement in the DCU Y-PATH project and the student mentor lunchtime programmes, supports students in developing positive attitudes and

physical activity behaviours. The school's healthy eating policy promotes positive nutritional choices and behaviours and further supports students' well-being.

#### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Subject department planning is of a good quality. The comprehensive subject plan, documents all aspects of the organisation and delivery of the subject in the school.
  - A collaborative approach is taken to the planning process. Records of regular meetings provide evidence of a focused approach to planning for the programmes of work, teaching and learning and provision of equipment and resources.
  - The planned programmes of work are in line with syllabus requirements. Schemes of work developed for the programmes at all levels are thorough and underpinned by clearly specified learning outcomes. To build on this very good practice, the key learning outcomes for each year group should also be identified. This will provide greater coherence between the various strands of the syllabus and provide a greater focus for the assessment process.
  - Good attention is paid to health and safety issues in the subject plan, underpinned by a risk assessment audit.
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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy 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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

# **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 is reassured by the overall positive comments by the inspector and in particular the recognition that lessons observed were of a high quality with clear indications of well-structured, purposeful progression and the effective use of questioning to assess learning and support understanding. In addition, the BOM agrees that planning in the department is of a good quality with a comprehensive subject plan in place. Specified learning outcomes are identified in the schemes of work which is recognised as very good practice. The inspector has also highlighted the schools extensive and exemplary range of extra-curricular activities, our participation in the DCU Y-Path programme and the fact that a healthy eating policy has been implemented in the school. He also acknowledges parental involvement in providing additional activities such as sailing and an equestrian course as well as the positive contribution of our student mentors. Furthermore, he has identified the excellent range of resources including ICT resources employed in the teaching of the subject.

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

All staff members and incoming First Years in 2014/15 will have iPads which will allow the digital recording of work/movement skills in the department. The department has furthermore purchased other suggested monitoring equipment and is now utilising that integral to the gym equipment for monitoring heart rates. Teachers will attempt to incorporate more peer teaching and learning into their subject department planning and classroom practice in line with best practice for AfL. A personal performance portfolio has also now been introduced in the department. Although the Learning outcomes are listed in the schemes, efforts are ongoing to specifically design assessments referencing and assessing these outcomes. These will be included in the subject department plan and provide a greater focus for the assessment process.

School management acknowledge the recognition of exemplary allocation for PE activities in TY and the fact that provision is otherwise satisfactory. It is working to provide PE in 6<sup>th</sup> Year in 2014/15 and recognises that double periods, which have always been the norm, are preferable and in line with department guidelines.