

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Physical Education
REPORT

**Coláiste Éanna,
Ballyroan, Dublin 16
Roll number: 60342R**

Date of inspection: 25 April 2013



AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS

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

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date(s) of inspection	25 April 2013
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 four class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of learning and teaching was very good in the physical education lessons observed.
- Physical education lessons were appropriately structured and paced and were characterised by high levels of engagement and enjoyment, with good attention to developing proficiency in, and understanding of, the focused activities.
- A positive and encouraging approach was taken by teachers to support students' engagement in their lessons.
- Physical Education is a core element of the curriculum, with adequate timetable provision for all students.
- Engagement in sport is highly valued, with very good efforts to support, organise and deliver a diverse extra-curricular sports programme.
- All elements of the organisation and delivery of the programme are documented in a subject plan, with scope to further develop the range of activities and the assessment process.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Management should ensure all lessons are delivered by appropriately qualified physical education teachers.
 - To build on existing good practice, teachers should consider the greater use of independent and collaborative tasks to further develop students' kinaesthetic awareness and movement analysis ability.
 - Future planning should focus on expanding the programmes of work and identifying key learning outcomes and assessment milestones for each year group.
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INTRODUCTION

Coláiste Éanna is a voluntary secondary school for boys with a current enrolment of 573 students. The school provides the Junior Certificate, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the established Leaving Certificate.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Overall, the quality of learning and teaching was very good in the physical education lessons observed. Lessons were characterised by thoughtful preparation, supportive and affirming interactions and a positive productive atmosphere.
- Participation and engagement levels were high and students remained fully focused and on task throughout. Students, who were unable to fully participate in the practical elements of the lesson, were meaningfully included through low intensity activity, assisting in organisational tasks or umpiring.
- An efficient approach was taken to the commencement of lessons. The whiteboard was effectively used to display the intended learning outcomes. Brief video clips, to illustrate the technical execution of the focused skills and their application in the game context, provided students with clear criteria to guide their learning.
- Initial warm-up activities were well structured, involved a good range of functional and fundamental movement patterns and were appropriately paced. In one lesson, a student led parts of the warm-up. To build on this practice, teachers should consider devolving greater responsibility to students to lead groups of their peers in both the warm-up and other elements of lessons. This will challenge students' own movement competence, provide an opportunity to assess their understanding and enhance their confidence. It will also support the development of their oral literacy.
- Tasks set were developmental and progressive. Of particular note was the organisation of these tasks to optimise opportunities for skill acquisition and application. Demonstration was used effectively to illustrate the organisation of tasks, to identify relevant key performance indicators and to provide targets for progression. Questioning for understanding was an integral element of all lessons.
- Students were provided with sufficient opportunities to apply their acquired skills in the game context. Appropriate consideration was given to modifying the rules of volleyball to increase students' ability to play and enjoy the game. Additional conditions, such as those in *Spikeball*, may also be considered to further differentiate for students of varying levels of proficiency.
- The traversing wall and small fitness area provided a good opportunity to challenge students' body management skills and to deepen their knowledge of the relevant components of fitness.
- To build on the progressive practice observed in lessons, teachers should focus on further supporting students to develop their kinaesthetic awareness and movement analysis ability. The greater use of independent and collaborative tasks, such as self and peer-assessment, whenever appropriate, should be considered to support this goal.

- Students approached their lessons with enthusiasm and made good progress. It was evident from observing and speaking with students that they enjoy and value their physical education lessons.
- Some good work has been undertaken in developing the assessment process. Recording of participation and progress is well developed. The establishment of class folders to retain elements of students' work provides a valuable record of student engagement. Reporting to parents is well developed in line with school policy. To build on the existing practice, it is recommended that a number of assessment milestones be identified for each year group, with associated criteria.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Commendably, curricular provision for Physical Education has increased over recent years. All students receive a double period per week, which is adequate to support the delivery of a comprehensive physical education programme. TY students receive a triple period per week, with modules alternating between outdoor activities and Physical Education. Management should review the TY allocation, with a view to providing a discrete period for Physical Education each week and, where possible, to avoid concurrent timetabling of classes from different year groups.
- The physical education programmes are organised and delivered by highly committed and motivated teachers. Teachers deployed to deliver the physical education programmes are appropriately qualified in the subject, except in the case of one class group. It is best practice that all classes are delivered by teachers with appropriate qualifications in Physical Education and it is recommended that the school address this situation. Teachers are committed to their own professional learning, with good engagement in a range of relevant courses and conferences.
- There are excellent facilities to support the delivery of the physical education and extra-curricular sports programmes. The subject department is very well resourced with sufficient equipment, reference texts and access to information and communications technology (ICT) equipment to support teaching and learning.
- There is a high level of student engagement in the diverse extra-curricular sports programme. A strong competitive sports programme is well developed and supported in the school. The addition of an annual sports day, initiatives to improve physical fitness and the involvement of students in physically challenging events, such as the Kilimanjaro Challenge, are particularly noteworthy. Students' participation and achievements are encouraged, valued and celebrated. The attitude to, and application of, a physical activity culture is highly commended. The school should consider applying for Active School Flag status.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Subject department planning is advancing well and a subject plan has been developed that documents all aspects of the organisation and delivery of the subject in the school. A collaborative approach is taken to the planning process, which is informed by teachers' individual and collective reflections.

- Schemes of work have been developed to guide the delivery of each of the activity modules. The subject plan aims to provide a broad range of physical activities. However, there is scope for the programmes to be expanded further to achieve a greater balance between games and other movement and activity strands, particularly at senior cycle. To advance the planning process further, it is recommended that overarching learning outcomes are identified for each year group and that these are aligned with the assessment process. This will provide greater coherence between the various activity strands and enhance the developmental approach to support students' growth and maturation.
- Appropriate attention is paid to health and safety issues in the subject plan, in line with the overall school policy.

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.