An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Physical Education
REPORT

Templeogue College
Templeville Road, Dublin 6W
Roll number: 60562I

Date of inspection: 13 April 2011
REPORT ON THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

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MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning observed varied from unsatisfactory to very good. Concerns were expressed about health and safety and the standard of technical instruction in one lesson.
- Students made good progress when teachers used a variety of well constructed tasks and methods to engage them cognitively and physically.
- Students were enthusiastic and participated fully in the planned tasks.
- Apart from Transition Year (TY), timetabled allocation and arrangements are inadequate to support students’ meaningful engagement in Physical Education.
- There is very good support for students’ participation in extracurricular sport and physical activity.
- Good progress has been made in developing a detailed subject plan and programmes of work for each year group.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Physical education lessons should be delivered by appropriately qualified teachers to ensure a correct level of technical expertise and instruction and highest standards of health and safety.
- Management should work towards providing the subject in accordance with the recommendations of the Department of Education and Skills.
- The programme of work for each year group should be underpinned by key learning outcomes and an incremental approach to developing students’ knowledge and skills.
- Further development of the assessment process should include a number of key milestones, based on the identified learning outcomes for each year group.
INTRODUCTION

Templeogue College is a voluntary secondary school for boys with 673 students. The school provides the Junior Certificate, established Leaving Certificate and a Transition Year (TY) programme which is undertaken by most students. The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix to this report.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Overall the standard of teaching and learning varied from unsatisfactory to very good.
- Teachers were well prepared and organised. Good systems ensured that students changed promptly to participate in their physical education lessons, which helped to optimise the limited time available for learning. Students were always very well behaved and cooperative.
- Initial physical activities were progressive and controlled, ensuring that students were appropriately warmed-up for engagement in subsequent, higher-intensity activities.
- In most lessons, learning outcomes were explicitly set and reinforced, and successfully guided students’ learning. Questioning engaged students and helped them to build on their previous learning.
- Explicit and correct use of activity-specific terminology in one lesson provided students with a very good understanding of information-processing in the execution of basic motor skills and how to create biomechanically efficient patterns of movement. Practical tasks in this lesson also ensured very good progress in improving students’ movement competency.
- Key teaching points were used to good effect in most lessons to provide students with the kinaesthetic cues on which to evaluate their own performance.
- Some of the selected activities in one lesson were inappropriate and the execution of some exercises in this lesson was potentially unsafe and presented an unnecessary risk of injury. Care must be taken to ensure that any potential safety risk is mitigated through the prudent selection of activities, the use of sufficient safety apparatus where necessary and by ensuring that students adhere to and learn from the correct execution of each exercise.
- Single-period lessons, particularly those of thirty-minute duration, limit the use of teaching and learning strategies that promote analysis and evaluation of movement concepts.
- Students’ attendance and participation in their physical education lessons were recorded in some lessons. All teachers must ensure that these records are appropriately maintained. The involvement of students who are unable, or unwilling, to participate in a lesson’s activities should be discussed and further developed by the physical education department.
- A range of additional approaches to assessment should be identified and key assessment milestones should be established for each year group in line with the defined learning outcomes, including retention of a record of students’ completed work.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Physical Education is a core subject on the curriculum, and the recent reinstatement of the subject for sixth-year students is welcomed. However, the time allocation and the arrangement of the timetable for all junior cycle and fifth and sixth-year students should be reconsidered line with the recommendations of the Department of Education and Skills.
The overall time provision and organisation for TY students is appropriate to support their engagement in a range of activities to enhance and support their Physical Education.

- Five teachers are currently deployed to deliver the curricular physical education programmes in the school, four of whom are graduates of the subject. Thus, there is sufficient professional capacity to meet the curricular requirements of the subject in the school. All timetabled lessons in Physical Education should be taken by the qualified physical education teachers.

- Management is fully supportive of teachers’ professional development and most teachers have engaged in relevant professional learning opportunities in the recent past.

- A positive attitude to physical activity and sport is cultivated and supported in the school through the extracurricular programmes, the work of highly committed teachers and the many photographic displays of current students representing the school.

- While the indoor hall is relatively small, the physical education department is adequately resourced and external facilities are very well maintained and provide an excellent environment for a range of physical activities and sports.

- A formative comment on students’ progress in the subject, for year groups where this does not currently take place, should be included on the regular school reports to parents.

**PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Good progress has been made in developing the physical education subject plan and programmes of work. Opportunities to meet regularly are well documented and records are maintained of the proceedings of subject department meetings. The identification of departmental issues in letters to management, and of short, medium and long term goals in the planning documents to address curricular issues and to enhance the physical education and extra-curricular physical activity and sports programmes is good practice.

- The quality of planning for programme organisation is good, with a detailed subject plan drafted and programmes of work developed for all year groups. A relatively broad range of activities is planned for all year groups. However, adventure activities should also be included in the programmes of work, particularly at junior cycle. The decision to withdraw the junior cycle aquatics module due to the prohibitive cost is understandable, but nonetheless regrettable, given that the swimming pool is on the school campus.

- Some of the activity-specific schemes are similar for each year group and fail to identify how students are expected to improve their knowledge and skills over time. The physical education department should identify the key learning outcomes for each year group, with an incremental approach to the development of students’ knowledge and skills and identification of strategies to differentiate for the diversity of student abilities. The planning framework for each activity module should link the intended learning outcomes with the learning experiences, resources and intended modes of assessment.

- Good efforts have been made to develop a comprehensive health and safety statement. Given the findings outlined earlier in this report, the identification of elements of teaching practice requiring particular care and vigilance should be included in the statement and the responsibility of teachers to reduce the risk of injury should be clearly defined.

- A list of resources and equipment to advance delivery of programmes of work, including information and communication technology (ICT), should be identified and purchased.
The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

*Published June 2011*
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 would like to clarify that while the swimming pool mentioned occupies the same campus as the College it is run as an entirely separate entity, on a commercial basis, under the auspices of the Holy Ghost/Spiritan Congregation.

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

The Board of Management of Templeogue College has considered the Subject Inspection of Physical Education Report and is committed to addressing the recommendations that have been made.