

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of Civic, Social and Political  
Education  
REPORT**

**Roscommon Community College  
Lisnamult, County Roscommon  
Roll number: 72290R**

**Date of inspection: 2 May 2012**



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**

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Date of inspection</b>	2 May 2012
<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**

- The standard of teaching was good with some very good practice in evidence.
- A range of methodologies facilitated student active engagement with the lesson material.
- Good quality learning was evident and the high expectations set are reflected in the educational outcomes achieved.
- The CSPE department has access to a wide range of resources, good curricular provision and a variety of co-curricular activities support the delivery of the subject.
- Subject department planning is of a high standard.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- All lessons should begin by explaining clearly to students what the expected learning outcomes are.
  - The CSPE teachers should plan for the implementation of a range of strategies to support the development of students' literacy skills.
  - CSPE teachers should engage with in-service training as it becomes available to further develop capacity and expertise in the subject.
  - Consideration should be given to using the Course-Work Assessment Book (CWAB) as a means of catering more effectively for the needs of some students.
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Roscommon Community College is under the aegis of County Roscommon Vocational Education Committee. The school has an enrolment of 146 students and is one of three post-primary schools in the town of Roscommon. It is a participant in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the Department's action plan for educational inclusion.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- Good quality teaching and learning was observed with some very good practice in evidence.
- The aims of the lesson were introduced at the outset. In some cases these were expressed as simple statements so that the students clearly understood what they were expected to know by the end of the lesson. This good practice should be extended to all lessons and time should be set aside at the end of the lesson to reinforce and evaluate the learning that has taken place.
- A high level of student engagement was observed in lessons. Questioning strategies were used to good effect to develop the lesson, to facilitate discussion and student contributions and to develop higher-order thinking. Pair work or group work featured in all lessons. The seating arrangements contributed to the effective management of these activities. Students participated very well in these tasks and were supported and affirmed as their teacher moved around the room.
- A range of good quality resources including worksheets, handouts and information and communication technology (ICT) resources was employed in lessons. In some cases there was scope for a greater selection of visual stimuli to support the learning activity and to allow for the more comprehensive development of the topic under study.
- In some cases learning from the previous lesson was recalled before new subject material was introduced. This practice is particularly important in CSPE classes given the time lapse between lessons.
- The use of a student folder is good practice as it enables class materials to be retained in an organised manner and these are also readily available for revision purposes as required.
- While homework is regularly set it is recommended that more substantial assignments requiring extended written answers be assigned more frequently. The use of past examination papers with third year classes is recommended so that students have ample opportunity to become familiar with the format of the paper and have practice in answering the various types of examination questions.
- Teachers are cognisant of students with additional educational needs and differentiation was effectively managed in general. In lessons attention was paid to key terminology and in some cases students maintain word lists. It was evident from a review of copybooks that there are marked variations in the standard of students' writing skills. To address this, it is recommended that the CSPE department identify and plan for the implementation of a range of strategies to enhance and improve students' literacy development.
- A very good atmosphere was evident in each lesson and student-teacher interactions were pleasant and supportive. Students' behaviour was exemplary and they engaged very well in lessons.

- The students were confident in expressing their views and good levels of learning were noted. Attainment in the certificate examination is good and high expectations are set for learning.

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

- Class period provision to CSPE is in line with syllabus guidelines. In line with good practice the teachers are deployed to the subject on the basis of interest and in the majority of cases have their class group for another subject.
- A wide range of activities are organised which facilitate students' involvement in citizenship education. The school has been awarded four Green Flags as part of its participation in An Taisce's Green-Schools programme and intercultural awareness is promoted through an exchange programme with a school in Vietnam. Social awareness and links with the local community are also developed through the Young Social Innovators (YSI) programme in TY.
- Due to timetabling constraints there has been considerable change in the teachers deployed to CSPE. Currently there are two teachers of CSPE and these are relatively new to teaching the subject. In order to develop expertise and experience in the subject it is recommended that teachers of CSPE continue to teach the subject for a number of consecutive years. School management is planning for this provision.
- As a means of benefiting from subject-specific professional development the teachers of CSPE should avail of in-service training as it becomes available and should consider becoming affiliated to the Association of Citizenship Teachers (ACT).
- The CSPE department is very well resourced. Resources are appropriately catalogued and are available both in hard copy and electronic format. The school library serves as the base classroom for CSPE lessons. This spacious room is well equipped with ICT and provides a motivational and subject-rich learning environment.

#### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- There is a high level of collaboration among the CSPE teachers and a comprehensive subject plan is in place.
- Programmes of work incorporating a concept-based approach to the teaching of the curriculum are in place. These link relevant resources effectively and a range of active learning methodologies to curriculum content. To further enhance the efficacy of the schemes of work they should set out the key learning outcomes and the skills to be developed in relation to each concept.
- Very good planning is noted where students have the opportunity to undertake two action projects over the three years of the junior cycle. To date students have been using the Report on the Action Project (RAP) proforma booklet. Given the wide range of abilities in the mixed-ability class setting it is recommended that consideration be given to using the Course-Work Assessment Book (CWAB) with some students.
- A good level of individual teacher planning was evident in the structure and pacing of lessons and in the use of some good quality teaching aids.

- There is regular formal assessment of students' progress and a good level of communication is maintained with parents in this regard.

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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 of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.