

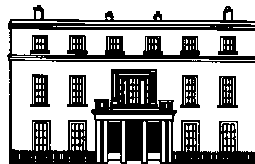
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of Physical Education  
REPORT**

**The High School  
Rathgar, Dublin 6  
Roll number: 60670L**

**Date of inspection: 23 and 24 January 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 PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

---

**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Date of inspection</b>	23 & 24 January 2012
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussions with principal and teachers</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during seven class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- The quality of teaching and learning was good in the lessons observed, with exemplary practice noted in some cases.
- Lessons were well organised, structured and paced.
- The selection of appropriate resources and sequencing of activity tasks facilitated a high level of engagement, enjoyment and learning.
- Exemplary structures, facilities and resources are provided to support the delivery of the physical education, extra-curricular sport and physical activities programme.
- Participation in Physical Education, physical activity and sport is highly valued in the school.
- The physical education department is well co-ordinated and a collaborative and collegial approach is taken to the organisation and delivery of the subject.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- School management should ensure that the games programme offered is in line with curricular objectives and is appropriately labelled on the curriculum.
  - Learning outcomes for each year group should be identified and documented in the subject plan.
  - The further development of a common approach to the assessment process should be progressed.
-

## **INTRODUCTION**

The High School is a fee-paying co-educational school with a current enrolment of 793 students. It provides the Junior Certificate, a compulsory Transition Year programme (TY) and the established Leaving Certificate.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- The quality of teaching and learning was good in the lessons observed, with some exemplary practice noted. Teachers were very well organised and have developed an efficient approach to recording participation and to setting up the activity environment. All of the necessary equipment was made available to optimise students' opportunities for participation, skill acquisition and application.
- Teachers introduced the topic of the lesson at the outset, and in some cases also shared the key learning intentions. This is a useful strategy and should be extended to all lessons as it provides students with a focus and specific expectations for their engagement and learning. The whiteboard was used effectively in a lesson to display the content and to reinforce learning from previous lessons. This good practice helped to contextualise the topic for students and created a sense of continuity in their learning experiences.
- Warm-up practices were appropriately paced and structured in all lessons. Elements of very good practice were observed when teachers afforded students opportunities to lead groups of their peers in some of the mobility and stretching activities. The use of this approach as a means of assessing students' knowledge and competency as well as developing their confidence is commended. Consideration should be given to the extension of peer-assisted learning within other phases and tasks of the lesson, where appropriate.
- Lessons progressed through a series of well structured, purposeful and progressive tasks. Demonstration by both teachers and students was of a high quality. The nature of the developmental tasks ensured that students' learning was incrementally developed, from basic movements or unopposed skill execution to more complex skill application tasks. Each task was directly linked to either the game or activity context and this good practice ensured that students' understanding of the relevance of the task to their performance was greatly enhanced.
- The further development of this approach in games lessons to include games-for-understanding should be considered. Through this approach, teachers should establish small-sided games that encourage students to identify areas for development. This practice leads students to design skill-based tasks and conditioned games to address their identified needs, thereby improving their subsequent performances and understanding of the key concepts and principles.
- A number of task cards were used to support students' learning in one lesson and these provided very good examples for students to aid their responses to the tasks set. Students receiving feedback about the quality of their performance should be given additional opportunities to apply the recommendations, and to re-evaluate their subsequent performances.
- Lessons were characterised by high levels of participation. Students were very co-operative and positive and fully engaged throughout. A positive rapport was evident between students and their teachers.

- Teachers concluded lessons by asking students to recapitulate on the main activities and to consolidate learning. Teachers also indicated the topic of the next lesson, which further reinforced students' sense of continuity in their learning.
- Good records are maintained of students' participation in their physical education lessons. Reporting to parents is well developed in line with school policy. Much good work has been undertaken in developing the assessment process. The implementation of an agreed approach by all teachers should now be advanced. A range of formative and summative approaches to assessment should be identified and a number of key assessment milestones established for each year group in line with defined learning outcomes.

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

- The combined time provision of Physical Education and games for all year groups is broadly in line with the recommendations of the Department of Education and Skills. However, the organisation and delivery of the games programme should be reviewed to ensure that it provides adequate instruction in the curriculum. Management should ensure that students are following appropriately developmental programmes of learning. As games is only one element of a comprehensive physical education programme, and is presently not a recognised stand-alone curricular area, management should ensure that it is appropriately labelled and aligned with the curriculum.
- Substantial investment has been made by the trustees to provide a range of excellent, high quality facilities. These well-presented and maintained facilities support the organisation and delivery of the physical education and extra-curricular programmes.
- The subject is excellently resourced with an expansive range of equipment and resources to support teaching and learning.
- Participation in a range of sports and physical activities are very well provided through the extra-curricular programmes. The positive impact of the range of opportunities for students in sport and physical activity is highly valued by all. Consideration should be given to registering for the Active School Flag. The school is well placed to work towards achieving active school status given the significant impact of sport on the lives of students in the school.

### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- A positive and progressive approach is taken to the co-ordination of the subject department. Teachers work closely together and presented as a cohesive, hard-working and professional subject department. Significant work has been undertaken in developing the programmes of work for each year group and in co-ordinating and organising the extensive curricular games and extra-curricular programmes.
- A subject plan has been developed. To build on the work that has already taken place in preparing this document, it is recommended that a number of key learning outcomes be identified for each year group. These outcomes should identify the knowledge and skills that students are expected to acquire and develop as a result of their participation in their physical education programme.
- A substantial range of resource materials, including schemes of work, has been gathered by the physical education department.

- Health and safety is very well developed and the physical education department has completed an extensive risk assessment audit of all facilities, equipment and activity modules.
- Reflection and review form part of the work of the physical education department. The identification of short-term, medium-term and long-term goals for the development of the subject in the school is very good practice. The further development of the self-evaluation process should be considered to include elements of student review of the programme. The further development of the assessment process will also provide evidence of the effectiveness of the physical education programmes.

---

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.

*Published September 2012.*