

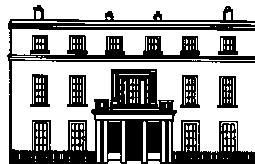
An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Physical Education
REPORT**

**Loreto Secondary School
Grange Road, Kilkenny
Roll number: 61580P**

Date of inspection: 15 November 2011



**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

Date of inspection	14 and 15 November 2011
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussions with principal and teachers• Interaction with students• Examination of students' work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during eight class periods (four lessons)• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- Teaching and learning was of a good standard in the lessons observed.
- Lessons were characterised by high levels of student engagement and enjoyment.
- Learning was effectively supported through a range of progressive and developmental tasks.
- Physical Education is well supported in the school and is a core subject for all students, with adequate time provision and timetable arrangements.
- Very good efforts are made to provide an extensive extra-curricular programme that supports a culture of engagement in physical activity within the school community.
- The quality of planning and preparation for the organisation, implementation and assessment of the programmes of work for each year group is very good.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Opportunities for peer-assisted learning should be considered, whenever appropriate, to further support students' learning.
 - The use of video and information and communications technology (ICT), to augment the feedback process and students' learning, should be considered.
 - Intended learning outcomes should be established for each year group to guide students' learning incrementally.
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INTRODUCTION

Loreto Secondary School, Kilkenny is a voluntary secondary school for girls with a current enrolment of 811 students. The school provides the Junior Certificate, an optional Transition Year programme (TY), the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the established Leaving Certificate.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- There was a good quality of teaching and learning in the physical education lessons observed. A systematic approach is taken to the organisation and delivery of lessons. In all cases lessons were well prepared and planned.
- Good links were established with students' prior learning at the outset, including the rehearsal of previously learned skills. Good practice was observed when the learning outcomes were explicitly shared with students. This practice should be extended to all lessons.
- Following the introduction phase, teachers engaged students in general warm-up activities. Good attention was paid to the use of appropriate anatomical and movement terminology. Questioning was effectively used to support students' understanding, while demonstration was used to illustrate some of the key technical points of selected skills and exercises.
- Most lessons had a good emphasis on skill acquisition and application through focused and progressive tasks. In addition, there was a good focus on developing students' understanding and application of key movement principles, such as cardiac response to exercise intensity, and to contextualising the benefits of the activity to wellbeing or performance in sport.
- Teachers are encouraged to incorporate opportunities for students to lead elements of their lesson, such as the initial warm-up routines. Peer-assisted learning should be discussed by teachers and implemented to enhance students' ability to analyse movement and to improve their movement competency and performance. The use of video, where appropriate, should also be considered to augment students' kinaesthetic feedback and to further develop their understanding, particularly in the areas of functional movement competence and skill execution.
- Classroom management was of a high standard and a positive, respectful and supportive rapport has been established between students and their teachers. Constructive advice was provided to support students on areas for improvement.
- Lessons were characterised by a very high level of participation, with students enthusiastic, co-operative and diligent in their application to the planned tasks.
- Learning was effectively consolidated by teachers through questioning and discussion and through a team quiz, where students demonstrated a good understanding of the focused topics.
- Good records are maintained of students' attendance and participation in their physical education lessons. The implementation of a comprehensive approach to the assessment process in Physical Education is progressing well. The combined approach of monitoring participation and level of engagement, level of attainment, self-assessment and personal profiling provides a broad basis on which to assess students' ability to plan, perform and evaluate movement. The continued development of this approach, including the recording and retention by students of their learning experiences is encouraged.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Physical education enjoys a valued status as a core element of the curriculum, with adequate time provision and timetabling arrangements to support the delivery of a comprehensive physical education programme for all year groups.
- An experienced team of teachers is deployed to deliver the physical education programme. There is very good engagement with ongoing professional development and teachers have a good commitment to their own professional learning.
- The facilities are excellent and very well maintained. The recent development of the fitness facility enhances the range of possible authentic learning experiences for students.
- A very good range of resources and equipment is available to support teaching and learning in all areas of the syllabuses. The planned availability of broadband access in the sports hall and fitness facility will also enhance access to the wealth of electronic resources to support learning and teaching.
- The physical education department, management and teachers have been exceptionally proactive in supporting a broad ranging and well constructed extra-curricular programme. The appointment of sports captains for each of the sports and activities provides valuable opportunities for leadership and also devolves responsibility to students.
- The engagement of the school in pursuing Active School Flag status is particularly noteworthy. A number of innovative activities during the recent Active School Week help to engage students who may not be competitively orientated and who would benefit from the positive lifestyle behaviours promoted through these initiatives. The addition of activities for leisure and recreation and access to the new fitness facility, as well as the school's extensive competitive sports, extends the extra-curricular programme to meet the interests and needs of the wider student cohort. The array of inspirational photographs displayed throughout the sports hall further promotes the positive benefits accruing from the efforts of all involved in the extra-curricular programme.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The quality of subject department planning is of a high standard. The subject is very well co-ordinated and a collegial and collaborative approach is evident in the distribution of responsibilities for the organisation and delivery of the subject.
- A comprehensive subject plan identifies all elements of the organisation and delivery of the subject in the school. The planned programmes of work provide a diverse range of learning experiences for students.
- Detailed schemes of work are well presented, with most documented to a common format and underpinned by clearly identified learning outcomes. This very positive approach ensures consistency and ease of access. The provision of opportunities for students to assume a variety of leadership roles in senior cycle is good practice. To build on this good practice, intended learning outcomes should also be established for each year group. This will provide a number of key milestones to incrementally guide students' learning as they progress through the planned activity modules.
- Good attention is given to acquiring and developing resources to support the delivery of each of the planned activity modules.
- A good level of reflection and self-evaluation was evident during conversations with teachers and from an inspection of subject department documents.

- The development of a health and safety statement and risk audit for the use of the various facilities and items of equipment is good practice.

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.

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