

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

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

Coláiste an Chreagáin
Mountbellew, County Galway
Roll number: 71290M

Date of inspection: 28 September 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 CIVIC, SOCIAL AND
POLITICAL EDUCATION**

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	28 September 2011
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 three class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning was of a good standard in all lessons.
- A good variety of methodologies including differentiation strategies was well deployed to support and engage students in their learning.
- Timetabling arrangements support the delivery of the subject.
- The CSPE department is adequately resourced and both teachers and students have very good access to information and communication technology (ICT) facilities.
- Very good planning for individual lessons was in place, including planning for the use of resources.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- In view of the excellent (ICT) infrastructure available to students and teachers, the increased use of web-based subject resources in the classroom is recommended.
 - It is recommended that a range of strategies are employed to support students' literacy development.
 - Schemes of work should have the schedule of topics aligned with the relevant learning outcomes; assessment modes and beneficial resources to support teaching and learning should also be included.
 - The CSPE department should carry out an inventory of its resources and this should be documented in the subject plan.
-

INTRODUCTION

Coláiste an Chreagáin is a small co-educational school under the aegis of County Galway Vocational Education Committee. The school has a current enrolment of sixty-four students, drawn primarily from a rural catchment area. The evaluation was conducted over one day during which the inspector visited classrooms and observed teaching and learning in three lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Good quality teaching and learning was observed in all lessons.
- The learning objectives were shared with students and lessons were well structured and pitched at a pace appropriate to the abilities of students. The practice of reviewing the key learning outcomes is recommended at the end of all lessons to consolidate the learning achieved.
- Lessons were stimulating and engaging through a good combination of teacher instruction, whole class discussion and the use of a variety of resources to support student learning. Students responded very positively to the visual stimulus materials presented in lessons. In this context, the increased integration of relevant web-based visual and audio resources in the classroom is recommended.
- There was a significant level of student participation in their own learning facilitated by the use of a variety of active learning methodologies. Individual learning tasks were suitable and group work activities were managed well. Questioning strategies, both global and directed provided for a good level of discussion and input from students.
- In one lesson the white board was used to generate a written summary of the key points of the lesson. Students recorded these notes in their copybooks. This is good practice and should be further developed in lessons as a means of reinforcing students' learning.
- Effective systems are in place for students to record their work and file subject materials.
- Teachers were aware of students' abilities and needs and differentiation by questioning, worksheet tasks and support to individual students reflected this. It was reported that students maintain word banks on each of the syllabus concepts. It is recommended that further strategies are developed to support students in improving their literacy skills.
- Student achieve well in certificate examinations. There is ongoing review of students' progress and methodologies have been appropriately employed to further raise student attainment.
- Classroom assessment modes are well utilised to assess learning. Homework is regularly assigned and monitored. The CSPE teachers should agree practices in relation to the frequency and types of homework assigned and the time it should take students to complete it should also be considered.
- A positive and personable student-teacher relationship characterised each lesson.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Time allocation to the subject is in line with syllabus recommendations. In line with best practice, teachers retain their CSPE classes throughout the three years of the junior cycle.

- Teachers are deployed in line with their experience and interest in the subject.
- One of the teachers has her CSPE class group for another subject. This is in line with Circular M13/05 to facilitate optimal class contact with the class group when organising action projects. While the other teacher does not have her CSPE class groups for another subject, this was reported not to be a problem due to alternative arrangements that are put in place for additional contact with the class group when required.
- The teachers have attended some in-service training and plan to avail of other professional development inputs in specific areas of the CSPE programme. Attendance at in-service should be planned for on a rotational basis. The CSPE department should also become affiliated to the Association of Citizenship Teachers (ACT).
- The CSPE department is very well resourced. Teachers have base classrooms equipped with ICT facilities and all students have been provided with laptops.
- A number of co-curricular activities including fundraising events promote the ethos of active citizenship.
- Standard procedures for assessment of students' progress and reporting to parents are in place.
- There are good supports for students with additional educational needs and both teachers of CSPE have post-graduate qualifications in this area. Additional tuition in the subject is available to students in resource lessons.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- School management facilitates formal subject department meetings each term and informal meetings occur to discuss issues and provide mutual support. Minutes of formal meetings are recorded and co-ordination of the department is rotated.
- Individual teachers have developed term-level schemes of work for course delivery. To further improve these schemes the topics taught should be linked to each of the CSPE concepts. The learning outcomes, resource materials and the modes and times of assessment should also be established for all concepts.
- Individual planning and preparation for lessons was of a high standard. Good quality materials were organised in advance and were well integrated to support learning effectively.
- The CSPE department has gathered a good range of subject-specific resources and reference materials. It is recommended that all resources available in the school for teaching and learning in CSPE are listed in the plan and categorised according to concepts. This will support and guide teachers in selecting relevant materials for lessons. Given the school's excellent ICT infrastructure, ideally the development of a shared folder of resources on the school's server should be considered.

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.