

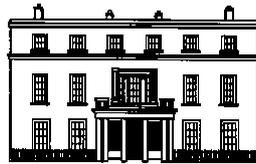
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of Social, Personal and Health  
Education  
REPORT**

**Presentation Secondary School  
Cannon Street, Waterford  
Roll number: 64970U**

**Date of inspection: 08 April 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 SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND  
HEALTH EDUCATION (SPHE)**

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	07 & 08 April 2011
<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> <li>• Observation of teaching and learning in four lessons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examination of students' work</li> <li>• Feedback to senior management and teachers</li> <li>• Administration of questionnaires to forty-five third-year students.</li> <li>• Focused interview with six senior students</li> </ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good, with instances of exemplary practice.
- Lessons were conducted in a supportive and affirming learning environment.
- A detailed and informative SPHE subject plan has been developed.
- SPHE is appropriately provided for all junior cycle students and an excellent personal development programme is provided for Transition Year (TY) students.
- A comprehensive Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme is delivered to all students.
- A whole-school approach to personal development and pastoral care is very well advanced.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The SPHE subject department should revisit and discuss the experiential approach to further support students' learning.
- The ratification of the draft RSE policy should be completed and the school should formalise its procedures for guest speakers.
- Additional approaches to the assessment process should be discussed and implemented.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Presentation Secondary School, Waterford is a voluntary secondary school for girls with 378 students. The school participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative. It provides the widest possible range of curricular programmes to meet the educational needs of its students.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- Teaching and learning in the lessons observed was of a good standard with instances of exemplary practice.
- Very good links were established between students' previous learning and the focused topic, which served to enhance students' understanding of the context and relevance of the lesson. In most lessons, the teacher explicitly highlighted the key learning intentions following an introduction to the topic. This practice had a positive effect on students' levels of engagement and provided a good focus for their learning. The extension of this approach to all lessons is recommended.
- Teachers used questioning to very good effect as a means of encouraging students to contribute to the class, to determine the extent of their knowledge of the topic and their previous experiences, and also to assess and consolidate their learning. Teachers endeavoured to include all students through targeted and differentiated questioning.
- A number of interactive tasks were used effectively in some lessons, including self-reflection, pair work and small-group work. In other lessons students' learning would have benefited from engaging in more discursive tasks earlier in the lesson. Teachers should try to set students on task following a brief introduction phase and reserve the amount of whole-class teaching to the latter stages, when processing students' responses. A review of the experiential learning cycle may help to clarify this approach to teaching and learning.
- A good range of resources was used to support students' learning and these were successful in stimulating interest and discussion around the topic. When used, information and communications technology (ICT) provided an excellent stimulus and assisted in fully immersing all students in the topic. This was particularly effective in a lesson focussing on body image. The extension and greater integration of the use of this medium should be further explored by the SPHE department.
- Classroom management was of a high standard and teachers have established a very positive and affirming rapport with their students. Lessons were conducted in a welcoming and supportive environment.
- Elements of assessment were incorporated into each lesson through the completion of assignments in the students' textbooks, worksheets and through questioning. A system for students to record and retain elements of their work, including home tasks, should be considered by the subject department. While a comment on students' progress is included on the reports home to parents, the assessment process is an area for further development.

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

- SPHE is appropriately timetabled in accordance with Circular Letter M11/03. Appropriate arrangements are in place for the delivery of the senior cycle RSE programme.

- The provision of a weekly double period for personal development for TY students is noteworthy as the modules continue to reinforce and further support students' social and personal well-being. Senior students stated that they highly valued their RSE programme. They were complimentary of both the depth and methods of delivery as being highly effective in ensuring that they were fully informed and equipped to make responsible decisions about their personal relationships.
- A core team of four dedicated teachers with the knowledge, skills and interest is deployed to teach the subject. Management is encouraged to continue to expand the core team and to develop the professional capacity from within the staff to support the delivery of the programme.
- Policies relevant to SPHE, including those on anti-bullying and substance use have been ratified. The draft RSE policy has been well considered and purposely developed to reflect the ethos of the school and the needs of the students. This policy should be ratified as expediently as possible.
- The role of guest speakers and the procedures for their inclusion to complement the SPHE and RSE programmes is in keeping with good practice. The school should now formally document these procedures as outlined in Circular Letter 0023/10.
- Teachers are classroom-based and these rooms were bright and well decorated with posters and student-generated projects related to elements of the SPHE programme. Teachers have very good access to a wide range of resources, including ICT.
- SPHE is an integral component of the pastoral care structures in the school. A well developed whole-school approach is taken to students' personal development and well-being. This is reflected in the many initiatives currently being implemented including the social justice programme, the first-year induction programme, the health and well-being week, the seedlings programme, the work of prefects and the inter-departmental approach to supporting students through curricular and extracurricular programmes.

#### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Good structures are in place to ensure that SPHE teachers have opportunities to discuss and plan for the organisation and delivery of the SPHE and RSE programmes in the school. The revised format for recording the proceedings of recent subject department meetings is exemplary.
- The quality of planning for programme organisation is very good, with a comprehensive and informative subject plan developed.
- The programmes of work are in keeping with the *Guidelines for Teachers*. The planning framework, developed by the SPHE department to support the delivery of each module and topic, ensures that students' learning is supported incrementally as they grow and mature. To build on the very good work undertaken to date, the SPHE department should identify the key learning outcomes for each year group, as outlined in the syllabus, and align these with each of the modules and topics.
- Individual planning for the delivery of the programmes of work was thorough and well organised.
- Teachers have acquired and developed a good range of resources to support the delivery of all elements of the programme. Consideration should be given to developing a shared folder

on the school's server to collate resources for each topic and module, and to provide a platform for teachers to share and support each other in their work.

- Teachers maintain good records of students' attendance and participation in lessons.
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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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation; a response was not received from the board.