

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Guidance
REPORT

Coláiste Chilliain
Cluain Dolcáin, Baile Átha Cliath 22
Roll number: 70100W

Date of inspection: 14 March 2014



AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS

**REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN GUIDANCE**

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	14 March 2014
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 one class period• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and guidance counsellor

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching observed was very good.
- Guidance provision is well-balanced across the cohort of students, across personal, educational and vocational guidance and between classroom guidance and work with individual students.
- The facilities for Guidance are appropriate and suited to work with individual students.
- Relationships among staff and with the senior management team are very positive and facilitate effective communication.
- Guidance documentation is well maintained and structured, and includes a draft whole-school guidance plan.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- The support roles and responsibilities of all staff should be included in the whole-school guidance plan.
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INTRODUCTION

Coláiste Chilllainn, is a co-educational post-primary school providing education through the medium of Irish. The school was established in 1981 and has a current enrolment of 400 students. The school is under the trusteeship of the Dublin & Dún Laoghaire Education & Training Board. In addition to the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes, all students participate in the Transition Year (TY).

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The teaching in the lesson observed was very good and was underpinned by a comprehensive knowledge of the topic in question. The lesson was a continuation of previous lessons regarding the process of application to third-level courses. It was well-planned, being delivered in the computer room, as are all guidance lessons. The digital technology was well-used as a visual resource in the presentation of the material. This is good practice, adding variety to the lesson and enabling immediate access to the internet when appropriate.
- The lesson was conducted in an atmosphere of affirmation and student engagement. There was clear knowledge of students personal and career interests, enabling a personalised approach to students and the tailoring of the content to their needs. In view of the quality of interactions and of the ease with which the teacher moved among students, it is suggested that wirelessly linking a tablet computer to the digital display using simple desktop sharing software, would enable the manipulation of on-screen material without the need to return to the computer. Such a system should be possible following the proposed installation of Wi-Fi technology.
- The questions used were of a higher order and students' responses displayed familiarity with this level of assessment and a clear understanding of the lesson content. Students also responded by seeking clarification appropriately throughout the lesson.
- Students' level of competence in Irish was observed to be high in the course of contacts with them.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- While the current allocation of 11.66 hours represents a small drop from the previous allocation following the withdrawal of the ex-quota allocation for Guidance by the Department of Education and Skills, it is clear that the delivery of the programme by the guidance counsellor entails a commitment well in excess of the allocated hours.
- The guidance programme is well balanced across personal, educational and vocational guidance and between the provision of Guidance to timetabled classes and to individual students. A similar balance is being achieved across the cohort of students. A clear recognition of students' entitlements in this regard is evident in current practice.
- In addition to other teaching duties, the guidance counsellor delivers Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) to first-year classes. This is in keeping with the recommendations of the Department in light of the withdrawal of the ex-quota allocation.
- The school has a pastoral structure of year heads and class teachers that facilitates the identification of students' learning and personal needs. The year heads follow their respective cohorts through their schooling. The guidance counsellor is year head to the

current sixth-year cohort. A meeting between the year heads and the senior management team is convened weekly. The meetings are structured and minuted. The inclusion of the guidance counsellor in these meetings is good practice, facilitating communication and the structuring of responses to students' needs.

- In addition to year heads' meetings, the guidance counsellor and principal meet formally once a week and informally on a continual basis. It is clear that communication at this level is highly effective and is based on very good working relationships, a situation that is reflected among staff in general. It is clear that professional relationships in the school are very positive, as are the relationships between students and teachers and among teachers.
- The facilities for Guidance are good. A well-placed office is provided with the requisite office and digital technology. Another nearby room is available as an occasional "quiet room".
- The quality of guidance provision is underpinned by a clear commitment to continuing professional development (CPD) at the whole-school level, where, for example, recent inputs have been in the areas of drug awareness and counselling. Similarly the guidance counsellor is a member of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) and, in addition to participating in CPD provided through its regular branch meetings, engages with professional counselling support provided in collaboration with the Department.
- The high level of effective communication in the school is coupled with effective links to community-based agencies to which students may be referred, in many cases at minimal cost. The formal system of referrals to the guidance department is also effective and includes referrals made in the course of the weekly pastoral meetings.
- Links between the guidance department and the parents' association Cáirde Chilliain are strong. This has enabled the organisation of a career exhibition tailored to the needs of students and involving a wide range of individuals who have devoted time to the exhibition. It is reported by the guidance department that the success of the endeavour has led to preparations for a similar annual event.
- The school's links with the wider community enable the successful operation of that event and of the work experience programme in TY. It is of note that, in addition to two weeks of work experience, TY students also complete a week of social action with local supportive organisations.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- A whole-school guidance planning team was formed in 2013 with a view to co-ordinating and integrating the various supports available to students throughout the school. The team comprises the principal, the guidance counsellor and two interested staff members. Their work has produced a plan that is, currently, in formation, but, as it stands, is well formed. The plan makes clear reference to school mission. The plan includes the correct definition of Guidance and a clear outline of the roles and responsibilities of the guidance department. To enhance this good practice, it is recommended that staff be consulted at an early stage and that the guidance and support roles and responsibilities of all staff be included in the plan.
- The guidance department record-keeping is of a high standard and is maintained digitally and with due regard to confidentiality.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and guidance counsellor 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.

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