

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

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

**Coláiste Éinde
Threadneedle Road
Salthill, Galway
Roll number: 62981P**

Date of inspection: 7 November 2011



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

REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN CIVIC, SOCIAL &
POLITICAL EDUCATION (CSPE)

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date(s) of inspection	07-11-2011
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 five class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- Good quality teaching and learning in a positive and student-centred learning environment was evident in all lessons.
- There are very good supports in place for students with additional educational needs.
- A range of initiatives is organised in the school which give practical expression to citizenship education.
- The CSPE department has very good access to teaching and learning resources and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Teachers are selected to teach the subject on the basis of interest. There is scope for more suitable timetabling arrangements to be put in place to support the delivery of the subject.
- There was good quality planning and preparation for individual lessons. Agreed programmes of work are in need of further development.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Programmes of work should be further developed and students' literacy development should be a central focus of subject department planning.
 - In line with other subjects, CSPE should be incorporated into the school's formal procedures for assessment of students' progress and for reporting to parents.
 - Where necessary, structures should be put in place so that teachers can have greater access to their CPSE class groups when undertaking action projects.
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INTRODUCTION

Coláiste Éinde is a co-educational post-primary school situated in the west side of Galway city. It participates in the Department's action plan for educational inclusion, Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS). The school has an enrolment of 710 students drawn from a wide variety of social and cultural backgrounds. The Transition Year (TY) programme is included on the school's curriculum.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Good quality teaching and learning was observed in all lessons. Lessons were generally purposefully paced and a range of strategies and stimulus materials were used effectively to facilitate students' engagement in the learning. Other strategies should also be considered so that all students engage fully with classroom activities.
- Lesson structure was appropriate and learning objectives were clear. It is recommended that learning outcomes be reviewed at the end of lessons to evaluate and consolidate the learning achieved.
- The use of individual learning tasks, pair-work activities and questioning strategies created a good balance between teacher and student input. It is recommended that targeted questioning is spread more widely across the classes to ensure the participation of all students.
- Topical material was integrated and very good links were established with the school and the local environment to explain concepts.
- All students complete the 'Report on an Action Project' (RAP) in fulfilment of their requirement for the Junior Certificate examination. It is recommended that consideration be given to using the Course Work Assessment Booklet (CWAB) with some students to cater more effectively for the wide range of students' abilities in the school.
- It is good practice that students undertake two action projects over the course of the junior cycle. Given the significant assessment weighting allocated to the RAP in the certificate examination, it is recommended in all cases that the students write a report on the action project completed in second year. The proforma booklet format should be used for this purpose.
- The relative abilities of students are evident from their written work. Teachers should plan for the implementation of a greater range of strategies to enhance students' literacy development in terms of the standard of writing and the quality and presentation of their work. There was a good focus on subject terminology in lessons and the practice of maintaining word banks for each of the seven core concepts should be used in all lessons.
- There is good variety in the homework set for students. It is recommended that a substantial homework assignment should be set in all lessons. Teachers should give consideration to introducing a folder system so that students can compile important subject resources over the three years of the junior cycle.
- There is very good provision for students with additional educational needs. Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) statements and learning targets are integrated into mainstream lessons and additional support is available to students in designated JCSP classes.

- There were very good interpersonal relationships in all lessons, students were very well behaved and an affirming learning environment was evident.
- Students achieve well in certificate examinations and showed good levels of learning and understanding in lessons.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The school community promotes the ethos of active citizenship as evidenced by a range of school initiatives. These include the achievement of four Green Flag awards, the celebration of International Women's Day and involvement in the Paralympics.
- Time allocation to the subject is in line with syllabus recommendations. A significant number of lessons are timetabled on Monday. This timetabling arrangement should be reviewed to minimise the loss of time due to interruptions in the school calendar and other factors.
- The deployment of staff to CSPE classes is based on teachers' interest in the subject.
- The majority of CSPE teachers also teach languages and consequently do not have their entire respective CPSE class group for another subject. To overcome this drawback and in line with Circular M13/05, arrangements should be put in place to facilitate teachers in arranging flexible contact time with their class groups when organising and completing action projects.
- Continuing professional development is well supported by school management. Teachers who are new to teaching CSPE should attend in-service as it becomes available. The CSPE department should become affiliated to the Association of Citizenship Teachers (ACT).
- A wide range of subject-related resources and ICT is available to teachers.
- In line with assessment practices in the school, CSPE should be included in timetabled examinations and students' progress in the subject should be included on school reports.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Formal meetings are held twice a year and teachers liaise informally as the need arises. The role of co-ordinator should be rotated as a means of building capacity within the CSPE teaching team.
- There is a good level of collaboration among teachers in planning action projects and sharing resources. Common programmes of work based on a concept approach to the syllabus are in place for each year group. As part of the annual review of the subject plan it is recommended that the agreed programmes of work be further developed to indicate the key learning outcomes in relation to the seven core concepts. The specific resource materials to support their delivery should also be included.
- School management carries out an analysis of state examination outcomes in comparison to national norms. It is recommended that this task be undertaken on an annual basis by the CSPE teachers to support them in developing strategic action plans based on identified trends and students' performance. This analysis should then be presented to management.

- Effective planning for individual lessons was observed and good quality resources were organised and integrated to support students' learning.

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