

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Physical Education
REPORT**

**Carrigaline Community School
Carrigaline, County Cork
Roll number: 91388S**

Date of inspection: 8 October 2013



**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

Dates of inspection	7 and 8 October 2013
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and teacher• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during ten class periods• Examination of students' work• Examination of school documents• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and physical education teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- An excellent standard of teaching and learning was observed in all lessons.
- Lessons take place in a positive, friendly atmosphere where high standards of mutual respect between teachers and students are evident.
- Students' level of achievement in Physical Education is very good.
- Excellent strategies are in place for the assessment of students' learning, both at whole-school and individual class level.
- The systems in place for the reporting of students' learning to parents are excellent.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that all students be provided with a minimum of two timetabled lessons in Physical Education per week.
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INTRODUCTION

Carrigaline Community School is a large community school with a total enrolment of 994 students, approximately equally divided between boys and girls. The school offers the Junior Certificate, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) as well as the established Leaving Certificate.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was excellent.
- An excellent rapport was evident between teachers and students. It was clear that students thoroughly enjoyed all of the lessons observed and they co-operated fully with each other and with their teachers.
- Teachers demonstrated high levels of creativity in the tasks set for students and a wide range of appropriate teaching methodologies was used. Most noteworthy among these methodologies were the use of team teaching and opportunities provided for student choice, where appropriate. The excellent practices which were observed in some lessons where students were provided with opportunities to lead activities such as refereeing or taking warm-up activities, and to comment on each other's performances, are commended. Additional use of assessment for learning (AfL) strategies such as use of the rich-task approach is worthy of consideration to build on these good practices.
- A consistently high level of student engagement was evident in all lessons. Where tasks set did not produce the learning experience that had been expected, teachers intervened to modify the task appropriately to ensure that the students' interest and performance levels did not wane.
- A feature of all lessons was the excellent range of questioning strategies which was used by all teachers. This was very effective in eliciting intelligent, thoughtful responses from students. These responses indicated a very good level of student learning and understanding.
- Lessons benefitted from thorough, purposeful planning and had a logical, coherent structure. The sharing of learning objectives at the start of the lesson, together with regular reinforcement of these objectives during the lesson and clear summarising at the end of the lesson, was particularly beneficial in this regard. This also helped to establish continuity between lessons.
- Students' literacy skills were developed through the clear emphasis which was placed on the accurate use of key terms relevant to particular activities, with these terms often written on posters. Numeracy skills were developed through tasks which required students to perform basic mathematical calculations such as calculating resting and maximum heart rate.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Subject provision varies across year groups. First-year students have a double period of Physical Education every fortnight. Second-year students have access to a double period per week and third-year students have only a single period per week. TY students again have a double period per week but fifth-year students who are following the LCVP

currently have no physical education lessons. Fifth-year and sixth-year students have a double period of Physical Education as part of rotating six-week and three-week blocks, respectively. It is recommended that the provision be increased so that all students have access to a minimum of a double period per week. It is likely that such matters will come under consideration as part of the planned review of the school's curriculum as part of the revised junior cycle.

- An excellent range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities is provided in the school to complement the school's physical education programme. The school's designation as a health-promoting school by the Health Services Executive (HSE), links which have been forged with the Irish Wheelchair Association and the extensive range of sports in which the school is involved are worthy of particular mention in this regard. It is also commendable that the physical education department plans to work towards the achievement of the Active Schools Flag. Although the school is well placed to achieve the award, this will require amendments to the school's physical education timetable, as outlined, if the school is to be successful.
- Very good assessment strategies are in place, both at class and whole-school level. Student portfolios have been developed with junior cycle classes and formal reports are sent to parents both at Christmas and in the summer. In order to improve the formative capacity of these reports, it would be beneficial if physical education teachers had the opportunity to provide a free text comment in addition to the repository of set comments that are available.
- A new physical education hall is currently under construction, requiring teachers to temporarily take physical education lessons outdoors or in the school's assembly hall. The manner in which teachers and students have adapted to this temporary arrangement is such that a high quality learning experience continues to be provided at all times. The new hall will significantly augment the school's on-site, outdoor facilities which include two pitches and a hard court area. Locally available facilities such as the local community complex are also occasionally used by the school.
- There are currently five teachers involved in the teaching of Physical Education in the school. These teachers, with the aid of very supportive school management, demonstrate commendable commitment to their own professional development and to the development and growth of Physical Education within the school.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The subject plan is a comprehensive, thorough document providing a detailed outline of the work of a very dedicated subject department. The aim of the subject plan, described as "preparing students for a life of autonomous well-being", is clearly evident in all aspects of Physical Education in the school.
- All lessons were very well prepared and a wide range of lesson resources, including posters, charts, handouts, worksheets, self-assessment and peer-assessment sheets and other materials was used. These materials were a significant aid to students' learning.
- ICT was used effectively, where appropriate, to support learning. In particular, the use of reference video clips on a tablet computer was very beneficial in allowing students to see skills being performed to a high level.

- Excellent records are maintained in the physical education department. These include detailed minutes of subject department meetings together with short-term and long-term action plans for the development of the subject. The position of subject co-ordinator is rotated among the physical education teachers. This is good practice.

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