

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Physical Education
REPORT**

**Coláiste Chraobh Abhann,
Kilcoole, County Wicklow
Roll number: 76076M**

Date of inspection: 24 October 2013



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

REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	23 and 24 October 2013
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 four lessons of double-period duration each• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning was good in the lessons observed.
- Lessons were characterised by good levels of participation and a positive learning atmosphere.
- Physical Education enjoys a valued status on the curriculum, with adequate timetable provision for all students.
- Participation in sport and physical activity is facilitated through the provision of a diverse range of extra-curricular activities and initiatives.
- Subject department planning is well advanced.
- A broad and balanced programme of work is planned for each year group.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Additional opportunities for co-operative learning, a greater focus on developing personal movement competency and strategies to provide developmental feedback should be explored and implemented.
 - A number of rich tasks, linked to specified learning outcomes, should be developed and implemented to further advance the assessment process.
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INTRODUCTION

Coláiste Chraobh Abhann is a co-educational post-primary school, run under the trusteeship of the Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB). It has a current enrolment of 621 students. The school provides the Junior Certificate, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the established Leaving Certificate.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Overall, the quality of learning and teaching in the lessons observed was good. The use of a broader range of pedagogical strategies would further enhance the learning experience of students.
- All lessons had a positive atmosphere and good levels of participation. Students applied themselves fully to the tasks set by their teachers. While some efforts were made to include students who were unable to participate in the practical activities, the continued development of a range of strategies to further include these students should be explored.
- The whiteboard was used effectively at the outset to share the intended learning outcomes for each lesson. This good practice provided students with an overview of the lesson content and a clear focus for their learning.
- Initial warm-up activities varied in their emphasis and pace. In all cases, care should be taken to ensure that the initial tasks are appropriately paced and differentiated to allow students adapt gradually to the required exercise intensity.
- When used, mixed-mobility and dynamic range-of-motion activities provided students with opportunities to rehearse and further develop their locomotion and body management skills. To enhance this practice, feedback should also focus on supporting students to improve their motor control and biomechanics. This will enhance their kinaesthetic awareness and ensure the focus is on their personal movement competency.
- The learning tasks were appropriately constructed and were supported by very good demonstrations and clear instructions. Questioning was used effectively to assess and further develop students' understanding. Very good efforts were made, through small-sided games, to enhance students' ability to apply their skills and to develop their understanding of key principles of play. Good practices to aid literacy and numeracy were observed during some lessons, such as students calculating and graphically presenting heart-rate response to exercise intensity and recovery.
- Most of the lessons observed were focused on developing students' understanding of health-related fitness and physiological responses to exercise. Good efforts were made to establish the relationship between maintaining adequate levels of health-related fitness and positive health and wellbeing. The vast majority of students enjoyed the opportunity to participate in the fitness tests and were keen to improve on their previous performances. A commendable attribute of these lessons was the support and encouragement students offered each other to do their best.
- While students engaged fully in completing the standardised fitness tests, greater care should be taken to ensure that these tests are administered and completed according to the

established protocols. This will enhance the reliability of the results and support more accurate comparisons against subsequent efforts.

- To build on current pedagogical practices, strategies to provide developmental feedback should be further explored and opportunities for co-operative learning should be incorporated into lessons more frequently.
- Teachers consolidated learning effectively at the end of lessons, through questioning and by encouraging students to reflect on their learning experiences.
- Recording of participation and reporting to parents is well developed in line with school policy. Some very good work has been undertaken in developing the assessment process. The design of “can do” statements provides a clear focus for students to gauge the extent of their progress in several activity modules. The use of self-assessment and end-of-module evaluation task sheets is very good practice. To build on this good work, it is recommended that a key assessment milestone, or rich task, be identified for each year group. The establishment of class folders, or personal workbook, to retain elements of students’ work should also be considered.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Physical education enjoys a valued status on the curriculum. The time provision of a double period for all students is adequate to support the delivery of a comprehensive physical education programme. The concurrent timetabling of some classes is appropriate and provides an opportunity to offer a variety of choices to accommodate students’ interests, in so far as possible.
- The physical education programmes are organised and delivered by a team of committed and interested teachers. Deployment of teachers is mostly in line with their qualifications, skills, knowledge and interests. Management should endeavour to ensure all physical education lessons are taught by appropriately qualified teachers, in keeping with best practice.
- The school has very good facilities to support the delivery of the physical education and extra-curricular programmes. These are very well maintained. The subject department is well resourced with sufficient materials, equipment and access to information and communications technology (ICT) to support teaching and learning. The provision of additional equipment, such as heart-rate monitors, pedometers and tablet computers with video-recording capability, should be considered to further support students’ learning.
- Participation in a range of sports and physical activities are very well provided for through the extra-curricular programmes. The positive impact of the range of opportunities for students is commended, particularly those that help to engage the less active such as the 10km challenge. Consideration should be given to registering and applying for the Active School Flag.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- A collaborative and reflective approach is taken to the planning process, which is well co-ordinated. This process has resulted in a comprehensive and well documented subject

plan. The identification of short, medium and long-terms goals for the development of the subject is good practice.

- A wide range of activities has been planned, ensuring all students have access to a broad, balanced physical education programme. Additionally, the range of co-curricular trips and events, such as visits to outdoor education centres or undertaking physical activity challenges to promote fitness, health and wellbeing, are particularly noteworthy.
- Schemes of work, developed for the programmes at all levels, identify the key learning outcomes for each module. To build on this very good work, a small number of overarching learning outcomes should be identified for each year group. These should be expressed in terms of what students should know and be able to do. This will provide greater coherence between the various activity strands, ensure a developmental approach to support students as they grow and mature and provide greater focus for the assessment process.
- A detailed risk assessment audit informs the approach to health and safety.

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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management at Coláiste Chraobh Abhann is very satisfied with the report on the Quality of Learning and Teaching in PE issued by the Department of Education and Skills Inspectorate as a result of a subject inspection held on 23rd and 24th October 2013.

In particular, the Board acknowledges the very positive comments recorded by the Inspector in relation to the quality of teaching and learning of PE, the learning atmosphere in PE classes and the breadth and depth of curricular and extra-curricular activities on offer to students at Coláiste Chraobh Abhann.

Teachers found the inspection process and subsequent report an acknowledgement of their enthusiasm, commitment and dedication to the teaching of PE.

All relevant persons had an opportunity to evaluate and provide feedback on this report to the Chairperson of the Board.

Area 2: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

A thorough review of the recommendations has taken place and a progressive course of action has commenced. The PE Department is fully involved in the development of this plan and will be the key player in its implementation.

The school has reviewed the recommendations for development and will progress and support improvements in the quality of learning and teaching of PE. The teachers will use the recommendations in the report as a focus for improvement both individually and collectively as a Department through lesson planning and subject planning.