

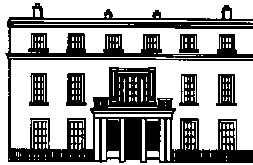
An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

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

**St. Louis High School
Charleville Road, Rathmines, Dublin 6
Roll number: 60890C**

Date of inspection: 6 December 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 SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND
HEALTH EDUCATION (SPHE) AND RELATIONSHIP AND SEXUALITY
EDUCATION (RSE)

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	4 and 6 December 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 six class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from good to very good and overall, was of a high quality.
- Students actively and confidently participated in class and group activities, demonstrating good communication and listening skills and respect for each other.
- There is very good provision for junior cycle SPHE.
- The integration of RSE at senior cycle within a holistic social personal and health education programme is very good practice.
- There is exemplary whole school support for the well-being and welfare of students which incorporates the provision of SPHE and RSE.
- Very good subject planning is being undertaken with some excellent practice being noted.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- To address the continuing professional development (CPD) needs of teachers, a systematic, planned and incremental approach should be adopted.
 - A set of at least three skills based learning outcomes should be identified and prioritised for development for each year of the SPHE programme.
 - An assessment policy for SPHE and senior cycle RSE should be developed and implemented.
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INTRODUCTION

St. Louis High School is a voluntary secondary school for girls, with a current enrolment of 655 students. The school provides a range of programmes including the Junior Certificate, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Teaching and learning ranged from good to very good and was overall, of a high standard. Examples of very good practice were observed in every lesson. Lessons very effectively promoted students' health and well being and enabled them develop their personal and social skills.
- There was a high quality of planning and thorough preparation for lessons, with excellent student-centred individual lesson planning being evident. All lessons were planned in detail with a variety of phases including good opportunities for both independent and collaborative learning by students. The active experiential learning cycle was used very effectively in several lessons. Greater opportunities for student-led activities could be facilitated.
- Learning objectives were shared with the students, were clarified and in most lessons, revisited very effectively to summarise and consolidate learning. Continuity of learning was maintained effectively with links made to learning in previous lessons. These links could also be extended to include linking with prior learning in previous years as appropriate, thereby highlighting the developmental nature of the programme.
- Very good creative use of information and communication technology (ICT) including PowerPoint presentations and video clips was observed throughout to stimulate discussion and promote student engagement. In one lesson, very effective use of the digital interactive white board supported and enhanced student learning.
- Teachers established an excellent rapport with their students which, together with mutual trust and respect contributed to the positive supportive and purposeful classroom atmosphere observed in all lessons. They demonstrated very good classroom management skills especially in the organisation of collaborative pair and group activities. Students were listened to and appropriately affirmed.
- Students actively participated at a high level in class and group discussions and brainstorming. They contributed confidently, and showed very good capacity for effective co-operative learning demonstrating good communication and listening skills and respect for each other.
- A good variety of resources, which included teacher generated handouts and relevant materials from websites, were used very effectively in supporting, guiding and enhancing student learning.
- In some lessons, explicit attention was given to students' literacy development with a focus on key words. In general, there was very good development of students' oral proficiency and effective use of subject specific terminology further enhanced the development of students' vocabulary. Agreed literacy and numeracy strategies should be further integrated into lessons.

- Good effective use of assessment for learning strategies was observed. Effective questioning strategies were used including lower order recall questions and more challenging high-order questions. Strategies to promote critical thinking could be further strengthened in all lessons.
- A consistent approach to home tasks should be adopted and implemented by all teachers. The use of formative written comment on significant pieces of work is recommended. The development and maintenance of learning journals, student evaluation of modules and the development of student portfolios should be progressed. The tracking and recording of the achievement of learning outcomes also needs to be further developed.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- There is very good subject provision for SPHE which is timetabled for one period per week for each year of junior cycle. The delivery of senior cycle RSE is in line with the curricular guidelines for each year of senior cycle including TY. The integration of RSE within a holistic social personal and health education programme for fifth and sixth-year students is very good practice.
- There is exemplary whole school support for the well-being and welfare of students with integrated whole school support systems in place. Additional programmes are provided as needed to meet the identified needs of the students, for example, the 'Friends for Life: anxiety prevention and treatment programme' for TY students.
- The deployment of teachers is very good and a team of motivated dynamic SPHE teachers has been established. School management has prioritised the training of teachers new to teaching the subject. A systematic planned and incremental approach to CPD should be adopted and teachers should also be facilitated to attend refresher courses.
- Key policies supporting SPHE and RSE have been developed through consultation with staff, parents and the board of management. The school's anti-bullying policy is currently being reviewed to bring it in line with the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* and Circular 0045/2013.
- Co-curricular activities including a Healthy Eating week enhances learning achieved in SPHE lessons. Consideration could be given to adopting a health promoting school framework.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- There are very good structures in place for subject planning which include provision for formal meetings of the subject department. Informal meetings are held regularly which facilitates good communication among the subject department.
- Very good subject planning has been well coordinated by a very experienced and committed co-ordinator. Priorities and targets are agreed at the beginning of each year and reviewed at the end of the year which is excellent practice. An end of year evaluation of the programme by the subject department is also undertaken. The use of SMART action planning could be used to progress plans in a systematic manner. The role of coordinator could be usefully clarified as part of the plan.
- Common schemes of work have been agreed for each year. Literacy and numeracy strategies should be further developed, agreed and detailed in the subject plans. It is

recommended that the learning outcomes for each year are reviewed and aligned with the syllabus.

- A set of at least three skills based learning outcomes should be identified and prioritised for development for each year of the SPHE programme. This will facilitate the common assessment of student achievement.
- An assessment policy for SPHE and RSE including a policy addressing home tasks should be developed and its implementation progressed.
- A good range of resources is available which include shared electronic resources. These could be usefully extended to include Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (*GLEN*) resources and materials.

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 of the school 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 of St Louis High School is delighted with the main findings of the SPHE Inspection Report and congratulates the teachers on achieving such high standards. The Board notes the high standard of teaching and learning, the excellence of student-centred lesson planning and the exemplary whole school support for the wellbeing and welfare of students.

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

Since the inspection more teachers have engaged in continuing professional development and this will continue.

The recommendations regarding learning outcomes and assessment will be addressed.