

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Physical Education
REPORT**

**Our Lady's School
Terenure, Dublin 6W
Roll number: 60860Q**

Date of inspection: 23 November 2011



**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

Date of inspection	23 November 2011
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussions 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 and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good in the lessons observed.
- Lessons were well structured and paced and the selection of appropriate resources and sequencing of activity tasks facilitated a high level of engagement, enjoyment and learning.
- The success of the physical education programme is a result of a supportive management, clear structures, thorough organisation and a positive ethos towards participation.
- Professional development is actively pursued and there is a positive attitude towards on-going professional learning.
- A physically active culture amongst students is further enhanced through exemplary structures, involving highly motivated staff, coaches and students, and an extensive extra-curricular sport and activities programme.
- Planning and preparation for the organisation and delivery of a broad, balanced and coherent physical education programme is of a high standard.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Management should continue to optimise the time provision and timetable arrangements for Physical Education in accordance with the recommendations of the Department of Education and Skills.
 - Learning outcomes for each year group should be identified and documented in the subject plan and programmes of work; these should specify the progression of students' learning and competency development.
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INTRODUCTION

Our Lady's School is a voluntary secondary school for girls with a current enrolment of 748 students. The school provides the Junior Certificate, a compulsory Transition Year programme (TY) and the established Leaving Certificate.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- There was a very good quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed.
- Lessons were very well organised. A high level of prior preparation and planning ensured that lessons were appropriately structured and paced, which greatly enhanced students' engagement, enjoyment and learning.
- Students demonstrated a high commitment to their physical education programme and there was full participation in all of the lessons.
- The sharing of the intended learning outcomes with students at the outset provided a clear focus for learning. Warm-up activities were progressively structured and sequenced. To build on the good practice during this phase of the lesson, teachers should integrate elements of body management competency and awareness of functional efficiency, whenever appropriate. The provision of precise kinaesthetic cues will help to provide students with benchmarks for their own performance and that of their peers, and also broaden their use and understanding of key movement terminology. The provision of opportunities for students to lead this phase of the lesson should also be considered.
- A range of effective methodologies were chosen to support students' learning. Demonstrations of techniques in sprinting and qualities that enhance expression in dance were of a good quality. These provided students with clear criteria and key performance indicators on which to base their response to the set tasks. Questioning was used effectively to assess and develop students' understanding of the main points of the lesson. The use of peer-assessment in many of the lessons observed is highly commended as this approach provided students with valuable opportunities to analyse performance using their prior knowledge and understanding. To further develop this approach, the use of task cards or other similar resources, should be considered to provide students with clear criteria on which to inform their feedback.
- Classroom management was of a high standard and a very positive and supportive rapport has been established between students and their teachers.
- The single period lessons were quite restrictive on the range of approaches to support students learning, with these lessons ending just as students were immersing themselves in the activities and tasks.
- Very good records are maintained of students' attendance and participation in their physical education lessons. The development of a comprehensive assessment process in Physical Education is advancing well. Of particular note is the use of a detailed physical education report to parents on the modules covered during the term and the levels of attainment of students under each of the established criteria. The recently introduced folder system is an effective means for students to retain a record of their work.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Physical Education enjoys a valued status as a core element on the curriculum for all students. The time allocation for the subject is adequate. The timetable arrangements, of double periods or treble periods in the case of TY classes, also provide sufficient structure to facilitate students' engagement with the topics and activities. Curriculum constraints notwithstanding, management is encouraged to create a double period lesson to replace two single period lessons, where such arrangements currently exist.
- The team teaching arrangements currently in operation were observed to work very well and greatly enhanced students' learning experiences. Opportunities for professional development are encouraged by management and frequently availed of by teachers. Of particular note is the willingness of the physical education teachers to support each other through sharing and modelling of practice.
- Overall, the facilities are very good and well maintained to provide for a comprehensive physical education programme. The sports hall is restrictive given the size of the school population. The on-going development of the balcony area provides another valuable teaching, learning and training facility.
- The subject is very well resourced, with a large amount of equipment and materials available to support teaching and learning.
- Participation in sport and physical activity are very well provided through the range of extra-curricular activities. The "House System" is an innovative approach to pastoral care and is used to motivate students to engage in regular activities and games that support the achievements of their house team. The devolution of responsibility to students for some of the organisation and running of the inter-house and sports activities, along with the establishment of a student sports council, is very good practice. The positive impact of the range of opportunities for students in sport and physical activity is highly valued by all and is recognised in the annual awards ceremonies. The photographs throughout the school provide clear evidence of the diverse nature of the activities provided and the level of participation and enjoyment of students in these activities.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The quality of planning is of a high standard. Teachers have established a collegial approach to planning and all elements of the organisation and delivery of the subject are excellently presented in a comprehensive and well structured folder.
- The programmes of work for each year group provide a diverse range of learning experiences, with a core emphasis on participation, progression and enjoyment. The nature of activities for TY students is well constructed and contextualised to balance students' experiences in physical activities for leisure and recreation, health and wellness and for personal challenge. To build on this good practice, it is recommended that learning outcomes are established for each year group to guide the overall delivery of the programmes of work.
- The subject department self-evaluation process is developing well, with some examples of module reviews and student surveys included in the planning folders. The compilation of data from which to gauge the effectiveness of the current physical education programme on student participation, attainment and satisfaction with their programmes of work should be considered to further enhance the self-evaluation process.

- The use of the recent capital grant allocated by the Department for Physical Education is under consideration by the physical education team. The purchase of equipment that supports students' understanding and engagement in physical activity, including ICT equipment, should be included in the subject departments' future plans.
- Good attention is paid 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.

Published April 2012

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 and staff of Our Lady's School are extremely pleased with the P.E. Inspection Report.

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

- 1) Management will continue to optimise timetabling arrangements.
- 2) Learning outcomes will be identified.