

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Physical Education

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	New Cross College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Cappagh Finglas Dublin 11
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	68181N

Date of Inspection: 12-01-2018



WHAT IS A SUBJECT INSPECTION?

Subject Inspections report on the quality of work in individual curriculum areas within a school. They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of the subject in the school.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated learning and teaching in Physical Education under the following headings:

1. Teaching, learning and assessment
2. Subject provision and whole-school support
3. Planning and preparation

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

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.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Date(s) of inspection	12-01-2018
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and key staff• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during four class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and relevant staff

School context

New Cross College, an amalgamation of Mater Christi girls' school and Patrician College boys' school, opened in 2014 under the joint patronage of Le Chéile Schools Trust and the Religious Sisters of Charity. The school offers the Junior Certificate School Programme, a compulsory Transition Year, the Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programmes. The school participates in the Delivering Equality in Schools initiative, the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. Physical Education (PE) is a core subject in the school, which has a current enrolment of 205 students.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was very good with many elements of very effective practice observed.
- Students were active participants in all lessons observed; there was scope to develop student leadership opportunities in all lessons.
- Assessment for learning (AfL) practices are very well established as part of the exit routine of junior-cycle lessons; currently no formal practical assessment of PE takes place.
- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support is good.
- The commitment to providing a comprehensive range of extra-curricular activities, both competitive and non-competitive, is to be commended.
- The overall quality of planning and preparation is good; however, not all strands of the junior-cycle curriculum are being experienced by students currently.

Recommendations

- Teachers should, when planning lessons, consider how to develop student leadership opportunities in a progressive manner.
- To build on the very good AfL strategies in use in junior-cycle lessons, the PE department should introduce a formal practical assessment for all students.
- The PE department should review the PE subject plan to incorporate all strands of the junior-cycle curriculum and to further differentiate activities provided at senior cycle.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was very good with many elements of very effective practice observed.
- High-quality questioning, which supported students' learning, was a key feature of all lessons observed. Students were encouraged to make links with other learning, to take responsibility for their own learning and to develop their understanding of why particular skills were needed.
- Individual lessons were well prepared with task cards and other learning aids used as appropriate to add value to the student experience.
- Students participated enthusiastically and worked cooperatively with their teachers in a positive manner. The supportive nature of each lesson was strengthened by the scaffolded approach to learning adopted by the PE department; student success was at the centre of this process. For example, students were encouraged in an LCA lesson to tell the story of their task as a guide to assist them in the write-up of their general education task.
- Literacy was very well attended to in all lessons observed. Key vocabulary was reinforced at regular intervals and technical language was used to aid students' learning. There was scope to develop aspects of numeracy in the lessons observed.
- Students took an active part as participants in all lessons observed. However, there was scope to develop student leadership opportunities in all lessons. When planning lessons, teachers should consider how to develop student leadership opportunities in a progressive manner.
- Differentiation was evident in all lessons. The activities provided an element of choice for each student to achieve success at a level appropriate to their ability. For example, during a junior gymnastics lesson, the range of tasks supported the differing student abilities within the class group and in a senior fitness lesson, the content was structured in a way that supported the fitness goals of all students.
- A well-established exit routine with junior students is a very effective aid to developing autonomous learners within lessons. Students assign themselves a rating based on their own perception of their effort and participation in class. As part of the exit procedure, they must also explain this rating in a conversation with their PE teacher.
- The PE department reported that they are investigating the introduction of a formal practical assessment as part of their assessment process. This formal assessment would be a worthwhile addition to the student experience.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support is good.
- It is commendable that all students have access to a double period of PE each week. TY students have very good provision as they also receive an additional double period each week to facilitate their participation in sport-related activities, for example boxing.
- All teachers assigned to teach PE are appropriately qualified to teach the subject and are deployed in line with their qualifications.
- The facilities available for PE are good and maintained to a high standard. The PE department has access to a full-sized sports hall, soccer pitch and a hard court area. The balcony area in the sports hall is being developed as a fitness area currently. School

management should plan for the continued development of this teaching area as funds allow.

- Extra-curricular provision is very good. Students have access to competitive representative opportunities in soccer and volleyball in the current school year. Ultimate Frisbee, tag rugby and fencing have been provided in previous years as demand dictates. The PE department also supports a range of non-competitive activities such as after-school physical activity clubs, participation in the PE Expo, the first-year trip to Carlingford and the Bear Grylls overnight trip.
- A PE newsletter, which shares details of extra-curricular activities as well as PE-related information, is published monthly and is a positive addition to support and promote the subject area.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall quality of planning and preparation is good.
- A comprehensive subject plan is in place with detailed schemes for each curricular area. There is scope to provide more detail about the literacy and numeracy support to be provided in each curricular area.
- Currently, the dance and aquatics strand are not being provided for at junior-cycle level. The PE department should review its subject plan and investigate how these strands might be incorporated into its plans in the future.
- At present, five blocks of work are planned for each year. The PE department should monitor this plan regularly in order to ensure that all blocks have a sufficient time allocation.
- A review of the senior-cycle PE curriculum should be undertaken to ensure the activities selected are sufficiently different from the activities studied by students at junior cycle.
- Regular department meetings are held and it is positive to note that discussions on teaching and learning issues have formed part of these meetings.

4. CHILD PROTECTION

During the evaluation, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The school principal is aware that revised child protection procedures for primary and post-primary schools came into effect on 11 December 2017 and arrangements are in place to begin the process of implementing these procedures.
2. The name of the designated liaison person for child protection matters was prominently displayed near the main door of the school.
3. The school has a child protection policy in place.
4. All teachers are aware that they are mandated persons and of their responsibilities in that regard.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

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.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

- The New Cross College school board of management is extremely pleased with the overall inspectorate report and in the area of teaching and learning notes it accredited our PE department with its highest quality continuum.
- The board felt that the report reflected positively of school life and highlighted the dedication and commitment of the teachers to their students.

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

- We have taken note of the recommendations from the report and will make every effort to implement them and have included them in plans for school development
- We have already put in a small investment on the recommendation from the report to develop the balcony area of our PE hall as fitness area and hope to complete this over the summer months as finance allows.

THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the of quality the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	Very good applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is outstanding and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	Good applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	Satisfactory applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	Fair applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	Weak applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;