

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Physical Education

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Loreto College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Cavan Co. Cavan
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	61070P

Date of Inspection: 05-02-2019



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

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; a response was not received from the board.

CHILD PROTECTION

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

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.

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

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Date of inspection	05-02-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal, deputy principals and key staff• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during three class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principals and relevant staff

School context

Loreto College is a voluntary Catholic secondary school for girls under the trusteeship of the Loreto Education Trust. The school offers the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was of a very high quality; the level of independence demonstrated by junior cycle students was exemplary.
- Learning intentions were shared at the start of each lesson and skilful questioning was used to assess student learning.
- Subject provision is good; however, students who opt to study LCVP have no access to Physical Education (PE).
- The indoor facilities available for teaching and learning are inadequate for the number of students availing of them at any one time; the outdoor facilities present a number of health and safety hazards.
- The overall quality of planning and preparation is very good; blocks of work should be extended to a minimum of six weeks duration.
- The provision of extra-curricular and whole-school activities that support student learning are a significant strength.

Recommendations

- The use of digital technology as a tool to support assessment would be a worthwhile area for the PE department to investigate.
- To build on the high level of independent learning demonstrated by students, the PE department should explore the co-designing of success criteria with students.
- School management should ensure that all students receive a minimum of a double period of timetabled PE each week for the full school year.
- A review of the PE plan should be undertaken with attention paid to balancing the curricular areas and extending the duration of blocks of work to a minimum of six weeks for each topic to allow for greater depth and assessment opportunities.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in lessons observed was very good; participation rates and activity levels were high in all lessons.
- Students participated with enthusiasm and showed an interest in developing their skills and knowledge in the lessons observed. In the majority of lessons, the activities were predominantly led by the teacher. The PE department should investigate how leadership opportunities can be provided to students and included in all lessons. Timing was an issue in one lesson; all efforts should be made by the PE teachers to maximise the available activity time.
- In a junior gymnastics lesson, it was very good practice that students were provided with opportunities to work in small groups to refine their routines. A very high level of independent responsibility was demonstrated by students who were building on their prior knowledge; students were clearly very comfortable with this level of autonomy.
- Digital media was used to good effect to support student learning. Video capture was used to record movement and some students used this to review and reflect on improving their work. It would be worthwhile for the PE department to consider how they could extend the use of digital technology as a very effective assessment tool.
- Questioning was used frequently and appropriately to support student learning and assess student knowledge. In a junior games lesson, students were presented with a challenge designed to engage them in critical thinking. Students were provided with time to plan their response which allowed for a deeper level of engagement. Commendably, this approach addresses one of the school's identified school self-evaluation priorities.
- Literacy and numeracy were well attended to in all lessons observed. In a junior health related fitness lesson, students learned how to use a tally system and to calculate various heart rates. Students were also supported to develop the technical language relevant to the topic at hand.
- Well-designed handouts were used to provide appropriate direction and support for students. To build on the independent learning environment that the PE department aims to instil in lessons, it would be worthwhile to consider the co-designing of success criteria with students to support their independent learning.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole school support is good.
- Significant improvements in subject provision have taken place in recent years; almost all students are receiving a double period of PE. In the current school year, students from first to fifth year are timetabled for a double period of PE; this is good provision. Sixth-year students currently have two single periods of PE; this is less than ideal provision. In addition, students who select LCVP currently have no access to PE. Senior management should provide all students with a minimum of a double period of PE for the full school year.
- The indoor facilities for teaching and learning in PE are well maintained. However the space available is inadequate, in particular when class groups are grouped together. In addition to limiting the breadth and balance of students' curricular experience, the available space also

limits activity time for students. Despite extensive grounds, outdoor facilities are inadequate due to poor surfacing and drainage.

- Praiseworthy opportunities for students to apply the learning from their PE lessons in a recreational setting are provided through links forged with other local schools through the Cavan All County Physical Education network. Activities such as badminton, Spikeball and a GAA blitz have all featured in recent events.
- Students have access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities including team activities such as basketball, camogie, Gaelic football, tag rugby as well as individual activities such as athletics, golf, horse-riding and swimming. Whole-school initiatives such as Health Promoting Schools and the development of a Slí na Sláinte also extend the learning beyond the PE classroom. The commitment of staff both within and outside the PE department to the provision of extra-curricular opportunities is highly valued by school management and acknowledged by students.
- It is positive to note that PE is included on school reports. Personalised comments reflect on students' work both within and outside the classroom. It would be worthwhile for the PE department to reflect on how learning in PE could be more effectively reported to parents.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall quality of planning and preparation is very good; individual lessons were well structured with age-appropriate, progressive learning activities selected.
- There is a comprehensive subject plan in place that gives an overview of the subject including a detailed safety document and information on extra-curricular activities.
- The PE department has collaborated to produce detailed schemes of work for almost all year groups. Learning outcomes and assessment opportunities have been developed for each curricular area and Wellbeing indicators have been identified within each strand.
- During the next review of the department plan, consideration should be given to the balance of curricular areas across all three Junior Cycle year groups to reduce the dominance of games in third year.
- The inclusion of the student voice at senior cycle level is commendable; student interest was gathered to assist with deciding on the blocks of work for the year. Care should be taken to ensure all blocks of work are extended to a minimum of six weeks duration.
- Formal meetings of the PE department take place approximately three times a year and informal meetings happen more frequently. It is positive to note that discussions on the implementation of the schools SSE strand, within PE lessons, took place during a recent meeting.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principals and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

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;