An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Subject Inspection: Physical Education
Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Clárin College
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Newford, Athenry Co Galway
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	71270G
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	08-05-2023
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	25/09/2023

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 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.

Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and tackle bullying

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Child Protection</td><td>Anti-bullying</td></tr>
<tr><td>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.</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013) and this policy is reviewed annually.
2. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides a report to the board at least once a term on the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template provided in the Procedures) since the previous report to the board.
3. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils/students.</td></tr>
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Subject inspection

Date of inspection	4 and 8 May 2023
Inspection activities undertaken • Review of relevant documents • Discussion with principal and key staff • Interaction with students, including focus groups	• Observation of teaching and learning during five lessons • Examination of students' work • Feedback to principal and teachers

The focus of this subject inspection was on Junior Cycle Physical Education only.

School context

Clarin College is a co-educational voluntary secondary school with a current enrolment of 916. Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB) is the school's patron. At the time of the evaluation the school provided the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year programme (TY), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), and the Leaving Certificate (Established) (LCE). Part of the school's supports are three special classes for students with autism.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good; instances of very good and satisfactory practices were also observed.
- The implementation of the classroom-based assessment experience for students, as part of a school-designed short course, was very good, as reported by students in the focus group.
- Overall whole-school support and provision was very good; all lessons are delivered by qualified Physical Education (PE) teachers who are committed to the promotion of a physically active, inclusive school culture, supported by excellent indoor and outdoor learning spaces.
- The application of differentiation in PE, as part of the school self-evaluation (SSE) action plan, supports the development of a positive learning culture in lessons.
- Senior management and teachers have implemented a very good culture of use of digital learning technologies (DLT) in teaching, learning and assessment in PE, to maintain students' progress and interest in learning.
- The overall quality of planning and preparation was very good with collaborative planning to ensure the learning experience is a holistic and lifelong endeavour, with technical and tactical development, inclusion and physical activity for health to the fore in planning documentation.

Recommendations

- A teacher-led approach, which limited student outcomes and experiences, was observed in a few lessons. Student-led learning should be central to all lessons.
- Reporting on classroom-based assessments was an area for improvement as a few students did not receive a descriptor and feedback on learning for the classroom-based assessments in PE. All students should receive a descriptor and feedback on learning for the classroom based assessments.
- A few unit of learning assessment moments lacked detail in planning documentation. Assessment moments, which clearly link to the intended learning with success criteria, should be designed into each unit of learning.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good; instances of very good and satisfactory practices were also observed.
- Very good teaching and learning was observed when teachers demonstrated competence and proficiency in the skills and knowledge of the Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) and placed students in pre-planned, mixed ability groups.
- Students were set clear assessment tasks, with the success criteria outlined, and the teacher acted as a leader and a facilitator of learning by moving from group to group providing feedback to move the learning forward.
- The instances of satisfactory practice typically consisted of teacher-led, didactic teaching and learning. Student-led learning is central to the Framework, therefore lessons should include student-led tasks.
- The implementation of the classroom-based assessment experience, as part of a school-designed short course, was very good according to students in the focus group. It was a significant strength of the PE experience. Students described engaged experiences over a sustained period, where deep learning occurred.
- Interactions among students and between students and teachers were respectful and positive, and conducive to wellbeing.
- In most lessons, teachers designed and prepared in advance a sequence of learning tasks and activities suitable for the specific learning intentions of the lesson or series of lessons and used real-life, authentic situations, where appropriate.
- Inclusion practices in PE lessons observed were very good. Lessons and extra-curricular physical activities are designed with inclusion as a core principle, which supports the flourishing of students.

2. Subject provision and whole school support

- Overall whole-school support and provision was very good; all lessons are delivered by a qualified Physical Education (PE) teachers. As learning spaces for PE, the PE hall, PE Lab, astro-turf and tennis courts are excellent.
- The loose PE equipment requirements were noted as an area for improvement. Senior management and teachers have a concrete plan for the improvement and maintenance of the PE equipment and learning spaces for PE.
- The senior management support reflective practice and promote a culture of improvement, as observed in the online teacher reflections and as recorded during the Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings.
- Reporting on classroom-based assessments was an area for improvement. A few students did not receive a descriptor and feedback on learning for the classroom-based assessments in PE. All students should receive a descriptor and feedback on learning for the classroom-based assessments.
- The school self-evaluation process encourages differentiation through the use of digital learning technologies (DLT) in teaching, learning and assessment to maintain students' progress and interest in learning. The value of the use of DLTs is recognised and a projector, a trolley of devices, wi-fi connection and screencasting are used regularly in PE.
- There is a very good range of extra-curricular physical activitiy provided in the school. Commendably, more than half of the school staff are involved in a wide range of inclusive extra-curricular physical activities at the school in the mornings, evenings and at the weekends.

3. Planning and preparation

- The overall quality of planning and preparation was very good with collaborative planning to ensure the learning experience is a holistic and lifelong endeavour, with technical and tactical development, inclusion and physical activity for health to the fore in planning documentation.
- As demonstrated in the minutes of meetings, teachers worked very well together to interpret classroom-based assessement information so that it could be used to enhance learning, teaching and assessing.
- A few of the unit of learning assessment moments lacked detail in planning documentation. Assessment moments, which clearly link to the intended learning, with success criteria, should be designed into all units of learning.
- Most individual lessons were very well planned and students were clearly familiar with the lesson routines. These routines ensured that all lessons progressed smoothly and that time available was used efficiently.
- The use of the online digital platform for planning was very good. Very good online collaborative practices were evident among the PE teachers. The PE programme design, the schools' sports day and adapted physical activity programme, were examples of products of this collaboration.
- Notably, Aquatics was planned as a unit of learning for students with additional educational needs. Aquatics was not planned as a unit of learning for mainstream junior cycle PE. All students should have the opportunity to develop their swimming and water safety skills as part of the PE curricula at the school, where facilities are available.

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.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

From the Board of Management's perspective, we are pleased with the findings of the recent school inspection report. It reaffirms our belief in the dedication of our staff and the overall educational quality we aim to provide. We particularly appreciate the recognition of our commitment to creating a physically active, inclusive culture through qualified PE instruction and state-of-the-art facilities. The commendation on the classroom-based assessment experience and our digital learning technologies further validates our efforts in modern pedagogical practices. Furthermore, we acknowledge the emphasis on differentiation as part of our self-evaluation action plan. Lastly, the report's positive feedback on planning and preparation confirms our holistic approach to education, fostering lifelong learning and prioritising physical health. We remain dedicated to continuous improvement and value the insights provided.

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

Following the recent school inspection report, we have reflected upon its recommendations and are committed to implementing actions that address these insights effectively.

Promotion of Student-Led Learning:

1. We acknowledge the observation of a teacher-led approach in some lessons. In response, we have initiated a comprehensive professional development programme tailored for our staff, emphasising the significance and methods of student-led learning.
2. Teachers will be invited to participate in peer observations, which will further ensure consistent adherence to the student-led approach across all lessons.
3. Concurrently, we are introducing a subject department leader system. Herein, experienced teachers will mentor and guide their colleagues to foster a balanced, student-centred classroom environment.

Improving Reporting on Classroom-Based Assessments:

1. Addressing the gaps in reporting classroom-based assessments in PE, our updated assessment policy now mandates that all students receive both a descriptor and constructive feedback for these assessments.
2. Continuous training sessions will ensure that teachers are proficient in delivering timely and constructive feedback.
3. We are also adopting a standardised tracking system, ensuring each student’s progress and feedback are consistently updated and made accessible to them and their guardians.

Enhancing Detail in Units of Learning Assessment Moments:

1. Departments will be invited to develop success criteria and learning outcomes for each assessment mode. To support this, teachers will be provided professional guidance on utilising assistive technologies, including AI, ensuring they can sustainably integrate these elements into their planning.

We are confident that these sustainable measures will not only address the current recommendations but will further enrich the teaching and learning experience at our school. Our unwavering commitment to upholding the highest educational standards is reinforced by these initiatives, and we value the insights provided to help us continually evolve.

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 quality of 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 *very good* 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;