An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Subject Inspection: Physical Education
Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Patrician Secondary School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Newbridge Co Kildare
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	61681V
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	04/03/2024 and 05/03/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	12/06/2024

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(s) 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

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.

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.

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) or Bí Cineálta (2024) and this policy is reviewed annually.
2. The school's current anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and 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	04/03/2024 and 05/03/2024
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 7 lessons • Examination of students' work • Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Patrician Secondary School is a post-primary school in Newbridge, Co. Kildare and operates under the trusteeship of Le Chéile Trust. There were 916 boys enrolled at the time of the inspection. The school offers the Junior Certificate, an optional Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate (Established) (LCE), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed during the evaluation was good with some examples of very good practice noted.
- An excellent student-teacher rapport and very positive inter-personal relationships were a feature of all lessons.
- Whole school support and subject provision for Physical Education (PE) was good.
- Student focus group participants spoke positively of their enjoyable experiences of PE.
- A good standard of planning and preparation was evident for Leaving Certificate Physical Education (LCPE) classes, other aspects of planning and preparation for junior cycle and the Senior Cycle Physical Education (SCPE) Framework required improvement.
- An excellent range of extra-curricular physical activities, many of which complemented learning in PE classes, were available to students in the school.

Recommendations

- In the majority of lessons, there was scope to incorporate digital technology more effectively to ensure students can fully engage with the learning opportunities and achieve the identified outcomes for the lesson or sequence of lessons.
- In order to ensure that the required time for PE is provided for and to support high quality outcomes and experiences, a review of current changing arrangements should be undertaken in addition to addressing the small timetabling deficit in junior cycle provision.
- Provision of recorded formative feedback to students on their written work in LCPE classes should be further developed by teachers and embedded across the department.
- Development of subject planning was required. The subject department should ensure that plans at both junior and senior cycle are based on the learning outcomes identified in the relevant specification.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment was good.
- Respectful and positive teacher-student interactions were a notable feature in all lessons.
- Good use of learning intentions was observed in all lessons. Learning intentions were routinely shared at the start of lessons and were re-visited during and at the end of lessons. This is effective practice. To enhance learning and assessment, all learning intentions should be aligned with the learning outcomes drawn from the relevant specifications.
- In each lesson observed, an average of between ten and fifteen minutes of class time was lost due to the requirement for students to change into and out of their sports gear at the beginning and end of lessons. In order to ensure that the required time for PE is provided for, and to support high quality outcomes and experiences, a review of current changing arrangements should be undertaken and should include the perspectives of teachers, students and parents.
- In the majority of lessons, there was scope to incorporate digital technology more effectively to ensure students can fully engage with the learning opportunities and achieve the identified outcomes for the lesson or sequence of lessons. Together with management, teachers should consider how the school's digital resources can be used to further enhance student engagement and motivation.
- Physical fitness testing was conducted biannually as part of the broader Health Related Activity (HRA) area of learning for all year groups. The use of physical fitness testing provides students with a consistent and personal insight into how their growth, maturation and development may affect their performance across various physical fitness indicators. To enhance the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in this area, the school's online learning platform should be used to record results, encourage reflection, illustrate the correct procedures and establish individual and developmentally appropriate S.M.A.R.T goals.
- As part of the In School Therapy Project, a physical sensory programme had been collaboratively developed with the support of an Occupational Therapist and the Special Educational Needs (SEN) department. This initiative was supported by the PE department. One lesson was observed in the PE lab which effectively promoted self-regulation strategies for a specific group of students.
- Students who engaged in a focus group meeting spoke positively of their experiences in PE lessons. They noted that invasion and net games dominated the activities provided and indicated a desire to engage in more adventure activities and swimming. The subject department should review the current range of activities offered to students and should plan for the delivery of as broad a range of activities as possible.

2. Subject provision and whole school support

- Whole school support and subject provision for PE was good.
- PE was well provided for in the school and was supported and valued by school management.
- The majority of lessons were taught by qualified personnel, with the appropriate qualifications. Due to teaching supply issues, a minority of lessons were taught by staff without the appropriate qualifications as recognised by the Teaching Council. This should be addressed at the earliest opportunity.
- Facilities included a large indoor hall, changing rooms and an equipment storage room for PE. The PE department had access to several grass pitches a short distance away and a tarmac basketball court. Students who engaged in a focus group meeting discussed the need for the tarmac area to be upgraded with new equipment and line markings to support their engagement in lessons.

- The students benefitted from a recently developed PE lab. The lab, a repurposed area at the back of the sports hall, provided a range of gym equipment for students' use. Posters and infographics detailing areas of interest from the PE specifications were on display to stimulate students' interest and curiosity and to encourage them to connect with the topics covered in lessons.
- There was a small timetabling deficit for the Junior Cycle Physical Education Specification (JCPE). Senior management should review timetabled provision for PE and should ensure that appropriate time is allocated for all junior cycle PE classes as outlined in Circular 0028/2023.
- The subject department was well supported by the senior management team in terms of the provision of PE equipment and teaching resources. School management also provided very good support for teachers' continuing professional development (CPD).
- The school introduced LCPE as an optional LCE subject for students in 2020. The subject has been very positively received by the school community. There is high demand for the subject every year at senior cycle.
- LCPE classes had access to digital devices and desktop computers to support them with their performance assessments and physical activity projects. The school's shared electronic drive and online learning platforms were used effectively to support communication, planning and assessment in LCPE and LCA classes.
- An excellent range of extra-curricular physical activities, many of which complemented learning in PE, were available to students. This programme of activities was supported by the PE teachers. Strong links had been developed with numerous local sports clubs and national governing bodies to enhance the range of activities and opportunities available to students. These additional opportunities provided valuable opportunities for students to increase physical activity levels and to avail of the associated health benefits.

3. Planning and preparation

- A good subject plan was in place which covered all the main activities for the delivery of PE in the school. Adjustments to the plan were required to ensure that learning outcomes, as opposed to activity areas, are the focus of planning for schemes of work at junior and senior cycle. The six curriculum models and associated learning outcomes should be the starting point for planning for SCPE.
- Meetings of the PE department are held formally three times per term and minutes of meetings are maintained. The role of subject coordinator is rotated annually. To enhance the impact of these meetings on student outcomes and experiences, it would be beneficial to document actions arising from department meetings and to identify the person(s) responsible and timescale for each action.
- Due to an increase in student numbers, the majority of lessons had two classes from the same year group simultaneously timetabled for PE. During times of inclement weather, classes were required to share the PE hall. There would be merit in teachers reviewing how they plan collaboratively to improve student experiences and outcomes when this occurs and how they can share best practice. Teachers should identify professional learning opportunities to support them in developing effective team-teaching practices.
- Good reporting took place in PE with reports sent home at both Christmas and summer. Commentary in reports focussed on students' participation and involvement in lessons and the physical education department was encouraged to include more formative commentary, focussing on student learning.
- In keeping with the spirit and ethos of the TY programme, a range of interesting and novel activities were provided for students, including participation in Gaisce – The President's Award. This is commendable practice. The activities were very much appreciated by the TY students who took part in the focus group 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.

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

A summary report for the students of Patrician Secondary School about their learning in Physical Education

05/03/2024

What kind of inspection did your school have?

Recently, an inspector called to your school to carry out a subject inspection. The inspector visited some classes and had a talk with the principal and teachers. They also met with a focus group of students who study Physical Education. The inspector wanted to hear what the focus group of students had to say about their learning experience in that subject.

What were the main findings of the inspection?

The inspector saw many things during the inspection. The main findings were:

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was good.
- Very positive student-teacher relationships were a feature of all lessons.
- Student focus group participants spoke positively of their enjoyable experiences of PE.
- The introduction of LCPE as an optional subject was welcomed by all students.

What did the inspector recommend to make teaching and learning better in Physical Education?

- Digital technologies should be used more often to support student learning in PE.
- To maximise students' PE time, a review of current changing arrangements should be undertaken.
- The PE department should review their current plan and aim to include as broad a range of activities as possible.
- The school's online learning platform should be used to structure and record learning when students are doing their Health Related Activity lessons.

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	Examples of descriptive terms
Excellent	**Provision that is excellent** is exemplary in meeting the needs of learners. This provision provides an example for other schools and settings of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Excellent; exemplary; outstanding; exceptionally high standard; with very significant strengths
Very good	**Provision that is very good** is very effective in meeting the needs of learners and is of a very high standard. There is potential to build on existing strengths to achieve an excellent standard.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful
Good	**Provision that is good** is effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to build on existing strengths in order to address the aspects to be developed and achieve a very good standard.	Good; of good quality; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; strengths outweigh the shortcomings; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist
Requires improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard** is not sufficiently effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is good or better.	Fair; less than effective; less than sufficient; evident weaknesses that are impacting on learning; experiencing difficulty; shortcomings outweigh strengths; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard** is not meeting the needs of learners. There is immediate need for significant action to address the areas of concern.	Weak; poor; ineffective; insufficient; unacceptable; experiencing significant difficulties; serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated; requiring significant change, development and improvement to be effective

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 Patrician Secondary School welcomes the Physical Education inspections report and wants to acknowledge the many positive findings including the following:

- The quality of teaching and learning
- The excellent student-teacher rapport, both inside and outside the classroom
- The enjoyable student experiences while engaged in PE.
- The excellent range of extra-curricular physical activities which complements learning in PE classes.
- The extremely successful implementation of LCPE which has been very positively received by the school community.

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

Patrician Secondary School is committed to implementing the recommendations of this report and to ongoing improvement.

A review of the use of digital technologies in PE to support student learning and their experiences is underway. The further development of the use of Google Classroom to track health related information throughout the students' time in our school will be explored.

A review by all stakeholders of the current changing arrangements will be undertaken in the next academic year.

The delivery of formative feedback to students will be further explored and developed in LCPE.

The PE Department is committed to developing JCPE and SCPE plans that are learning outcomes based. This will include the development of adventure activities and life-saving module.