

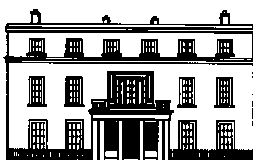
An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Civic, Social and Political Education
REPORT**

**Corran College
Ballymote, County Sligo
Roll number: 72300R**

Date of inspection: 2 October 2013



**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 CIVIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL
EDUCATION**

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	2 October 2013
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and teacher(s)• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during two class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teacher(s)

MAIN FINDINGS

- The overall quality of teaching was good, however, there was scope to improve students' learning in a number of instances.
- While some good quality resources were used to support teaching and learning, methodologies to further advance students' active engagement in their learning are in need of development.
- Classrooms are teacher-based and there is very good access to a range of ICT facilities and subject resources.
- A wide range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities in the school promote active citizenship.
- Effective procedures are in place for formal assessment of students' progress and reporting to parents.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Lessons should begin with explicit learning outcomes to guide the sequencing and pacing of the planned content and should be collaboratively reviewed at the end to evaluate the learning achieved by students.
- There should be a greater focus on the management of learning activities in order to optimise the participation levels and learning outcomes for students across the range of abilities.
- To support the development of skills across the syllabus homework should be more regularly assigned and varied.
- Schemes of work for the delivery of the programme should be further developed.

INTRODUCTION

Corran College is a co-educational school under the trusteeship of Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board. The school participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative. Corran College serves the town and rural hinterland of Ballymote and has a current mainstream enrolment of 103 students.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching was good, however scope did exist to improve learning outcomes at points during the lessons.
- Classroom management was good and a positive and affirming atmosphere was evident in all lessons. The classroom was enhanced with the display of some subject materials and this should be extended to include posters on the seven syllabus concepts and further samples of students' work. It is suggested that students are given a role in the development of the learning environment as part of their CSPE assessment activities.
- Where the learning outcomes were detailed at the outset, the lesson had a good structure, was well sequenced and paced to ensure adequate discussion and explanation of the various elements of the topic under study. This good practice should be extended to all lessons to provide a clear focus for teaching and learning. Learning outcomes should also be used as a framework against which student learning could be evaluated at the conclusion of the lesson.
- Good quality worksheet activities were prepared in advance to provide students with meaningful learning tasks. These were most productive in instances where the task was clearly explained and where students were given sufficient time to complete the exercise prior to its correction.
- Student engagement and participation in lessons was achieved through a range of methodologies including co-operative learning strategies and individual learning tasks. In order to maximise student learning and participation during group work it is recommended that roles are assigned to individual students and that feedback from groups is recorded on the board and noted by students as a summary of the key learning points.
- Some good quality questioning was observed to promote higher order thinking and to advance the topics under study. However in some instances questioning techniques tended to be global. A more consistent use of targeted and differentiated questions is recommended across the ability range as a means of assessing individual progress and engaging students who do not volunteer answers. It is also important that sufficient time is given to students to formulate a response to the question posed.
- Good attention was paid to subject specific vocabulary in the lessons observed and technical terms were well explained. It was reported that students maintain glossaries of key terminology in relation to each concept.
- Good links were made with the students' experiences to explain concepts. While topical events were referenced these should be further explored to reinforce the relevance of the subject to everyday life and current affairs.
- An examination of students' copybooks indicated that there is scope to increase the level of homework assigned to students. It is recommended that an appropriate level of homework be regularly set to consolidate the learning that has taken place in class. There should also be variety in the homework tasks set so that the broad range of skills identified in the syllabus can be developed.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- There is good curricular provision for the subject in the school. Timetabling is appropriate and in most instances the CSPE teacher has the same class for another subject. In line with Circular M13/05 this provision should be extended as far as possible to all year groups.
- Deployment provides for continuity of teacher from year to year in the programme. Teacher interest is also taken into consideration when assigning CSPE classes.
- Whole-school professional development inputs are regularly facilitated by management to support teaching and learning. While it is acknowledged that some induction training in the subject has been availed of, attendance at further CSPE in-service is advised. The planned attendance at upcoming training in addition to becoming affiliated to the Association of Citizenship Teachers (ACT) will allow the department to keep up to date with subject developments and new resources.
- The school community promotes the concept of active citizenship through a range of activities including the student council, the Green-Schools Programme, visiting speakers and visits to places of civic interest.
- Good arrangements for school-based assessment are in place including appropriate provision for students with additional educational needs. Parents are well informed of students' progress through school reports, e-portal and annual parent-teacher meetings held for each year group.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- A subject plan and outline schemes of work for the delivery of the seven programme concepts have been drawn up. Programme planning for CSPE needs to be further developed to provide for more detailed and comprehensive schemes of work to guide teaching and learning. It is recommended that short-term schemes of work be developed to include the key learning outcomes for each concept. The methodologies, resources and assessment modes to support the attainment of these outcomes should also be included as well as a review section to record students' progress across the syllabus. The exemplar for a module of work on the concept of Law in the CSPE Guidelines for Teachers will provide useful guidelines to support this planning.
- Action projects are well planned as part of the teaching programme. In line with best practice students are involved in the choice of topics, and complete two action projects over the three years of the programme. Given the diversity of learning needs within the mixed-ability classes it is recommended the consideration be given to using the coursework assessment booklet (CWAB) as a more appropriate reporting template for some students.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject teacher(s) at the conclusion of the evaluation. 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.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

We, the Board of Management, accept the content of the CSPE Subject Inspection Report to be factual, accurate and consistent. The report is supportive of teaching and learning and allows us to plan a number of actions to address the main recommendations of the 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.

Since the issue of the draft inspection report the CSPE teacher and the wider staff have agreed to display the learning objectives at the start of a lesson and review same with learners at the end of the lesson to see if they have been achieved.

The school has volunteered to become a pilot school for TL21 in County Sligo and have started some action research on “student motivation”. Some of the key action steps include promotion of “active learning” and the creation of a more “positive learning environment” which relates to the recommendations. The CSPE teacher is part of a group of five teachers who are piloting in the project. Also, the entire staff has attended a workshop with Paul Ginnis on December 13th on “Active Learning Methodologies” in preparation for the new Junior Certificate. Mary Rooney, NEPS, delivered a 2 hour session to all staff on IEPs, differentiated teaching and positive behaviour management.

The CSPE teacher has rewritten her scheme of work, joined the ACT, attended the CSPE Conference in Galway in October 2013 and is assigning homework regularly, particularly in the area of local, national and international news.

The practice of assigning another subject to the CSPE teacher has been noted for future timetabling.