

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills**

Subject Inspection in Music

REPORT

School name	Gonzaga College
School address	Sandford Road Ranelagh Dublin 6
Roll number	60530S

Date of Inspection: 02-12-2016



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 Music under the following headings:

1. Learning, teaching 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.

Subject Inspection

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	01 and 02 December 2017
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal, deputy principal and music teachers• 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 music teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Gonzaga College operates under the patronage of the Society of Jesus and has a current enrolment of 551 boys. The school provides the Junior Certificate, Transition Year (TY) and the Leaving Certificate programmes. Music is an optional component within the compulsory TY programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning observed was good with some very good practices evident in many lessons.
- There were some good examples of effective integration of the three disciplines of music when rhythmical performances occurred during listening and composing activities.
- All lessons were characterised by positive, respectful learning environments.
- Assessment of students' work is good but students' practice regarding the storage of materials provided to them is poor.
- Whole-school provision and support for Music is very good.
- Planning and preparation for lessons is very good but records of music department meetings do not effectively reflect the quality of professional engagement that is taking place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is scope to integrate more student practical activities during listening and composing components of lessons.
- The music department should establish higher expectations of students regarding their storage of music materials and monitor this work more regularly.
- Records of music department meetings should be improved so that they reflect more effectively the high quality conversations around teaching and learning that occur regularly.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning observed in all lessons was good with very good practices evident in many lessons.
- All lessons were well structured and contained clear learning intentions. There was an appropriate balance between teacher instruction and student engagement in many lessons.
- Good attention was paid to the development of students' knowledge, music literacy, composing and listening skills.
- There was some effective integration of the three disciplines of music, listening, composing and performing such as when students were required to clap the rhythms contained in their compositions. As there is a wide range of instrumental capacity among students, there is scope to make more effective use of their practical skills during listening and composing activities.
- Highly effective differentiated questioning strategies, used by all teachers, catered exceptionally well for the range of students' abilities within lessons.
- It is good that teachers deployed a variety of teaching strategies such as pair work and assigning written tasks, which catered well for the learning needs of many students. However, there was scope to challenge the more able student within the strategies that were deployed. Therefore, teachers should modify teaching approaches where necessary so that all students are suitably challenged.
- The quality of student engagement in lessons was generally good and in one lesson was excellent. In this lesson, students were provided with many opportunities to ask questions, collaborate with peers, interrogate learning and explore different approaches to activities. Consequently, there was a very strong sense of student ownership of their own learning.
- Students' behaviour was exemplary and lessons were characterised by positive, mutually respectful learning environments. In some cases, the teachers' enthusiasm for the subject contributed to an atmosphere of learning that was vibrant and stimulating.
- The school places a strong value on the holistic development of students as well as on their academic success. Occasionally in music lessons, the requirement of examinations became the rationale for undertaking a particular activity. It is important that there is always a balance between enjoyment of learning and the requirements of examinations.
- Assessment of students' work is good and regular correction of compositions and listening activities is undertaken by the music department. It is very good that constructive comments to support improvement are provided to students.
- Students' are provided with high quality worksheets and handouts to support their learning. However, in many cases, storage and management of such materials by students was poor. There is a need for the music department to establish higher expectations regarding the appropriate storage and maintenance of all such materials.
- Learning is assessed in a variety of ways such as questioning, the completion of worksheets and homework assignments. The sharing of assessment criteria with students prior to the completion of written and practical assignments was very good practice as they understood more clearly what was expected of them.

- It is commendable that teachers assess practical performances of each other's students during the year. This has led to a sharing of assessment criteria for practical activities. This excellent strategy should now be applied to students' listening and composing tasks.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Whole-school provision and support for Music is very good. The music department is well resourced in terms of equipment and materials.
- Music is mandatory for all first-year students and optional for the remainder of the junior cycle. Choir is provided to first-year students to complement their programme of study. Music is also optional in senior cycle and timetabling for Music is in line with syllabus recommendations.
- Good systems that are in place to support students in making subject choices include talks to students and parents in first year and TY, and the provision of a useful information booklet.
- The music department provides a vast array of co-curricular and extra-curricular music activities. These include chamber group, classical guitar ensemble, orchestra, traditional music group, staff choir and senior choir. The level of student participation is very high and is a credit to the commitment of the music department and all those involved.
- As part of the school's assessment policy, data arising from certificate examinations is analysed and used as a benchmark to support improvement. Measures have been put in place to identify any students who are at risk of underachieving. Achievement in certificate examinations is excellent.
- Resources for Music are very good and senior management facilitates all reasonable budgetary requests that support teaching and learning.
- Senior management is very supportive of teachers' attendance at in-service courses. Some teachers have attended courses provided by the Professional Development Support for Teachers or by the Post-Primary Music Teachers' Association. Such courses provide useful opportunities for teachers to establish valuable links with other professionals and keep up-to-date with current educational developments.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Planning and preparation for lessons was very good.
- Senior management has provided a template to support subject department planning. Good use has been made of this template by the music department. However, as outlined earlier in this report, there is a need to plan more effectively for the differentiated needs of students.
- Records of meetings are being maintained by the music department but they do not adequately reflect the quality of professional conversations that have occurred to date. These records should be improved as they will be a more useful resource for teachers.
- Very good advance preparation was undertaken by each teacher in terms of resources and other materials. Customised worksheets and handouts have been created and were effectively incorporated into lessons.
- Planning for the active engagement of students in lessons was evident in all lessons.
- All teachers maintain records of students' attendance and achievement in assessments

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and music teachers 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

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management is reassured by the positive comments of the inspector and in particular that the teaching observed ranged from good to very good. The inspector has also recognised the wide variety of co-curricular activity undertaken in the College and the positive and respectful learning environments.

We also acknowledge the recognition that a comprehensive subject plan is now in place, identifying long term outcomes, underpinned by schemes of work. The advancing of a collaborative subject department planning culture has also been recognised. The inspector has also highlighted the school's excellent facilities and provision for music. Furthermore, the inspector has recognised highly effective differentiated questioning strategies, used by all teachers, catering exceptionally well for the range of students' abilities within lessons. This reflects recent work undertaken at whole school level on AfL.

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

The music department will work to integrate more student practical activities during listening and composing components of lessons and recognises the importance of this for student experience in the subject.

A previous SSE project looked at the storing of student worksheets and the presentation of work. All junior cycle students store their work in subject related folders and this will be revisited to improve practice in this area.

Records of music department meetings now include details of the high quality conversations around teaching and learning that occur regularly.

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 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;