

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection in Graphics, Technical Graphics &
Design and Communication Graphics**

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	St Paul's Secondary School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Monasterevin Co Kildare
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	61702D

Date of Inspection: 11-03-2020



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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 Graphics, Technical Graphics & Design and Communication Graphics 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

Dates of inspection	10-11 March 2020
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and key staff• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during three lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

St Paul's Secondary School is a co-educational post-primary school with a current enrolment of 503 students. The school operates under the patronage of the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, and participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. The school offers the junior cycle, junior certificate schools programme, an optional Transition Year programme, the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment observed during the evaluation was good or very good.
- Students demonstrated very good drafting, graphical problem solving and procedural knowledge during lessons, however opportunities for co-operative student learning were limited.
- Teacher formative assessment strategies include good quality formative feedback on students' drawings and oral feedback to students during lessons; with success criteria identified for advancement.
- Digital learning technology was well integrated into lessons and made significant contributions to both teaching and learning.
- The Graphics department receives very good whole-school support and provision from school management.
- Planning and preparation for individual lessons was very good; planning for first-year Graphics is under developed.

Recommendations

- Teachers should increase the range and frequency of co-operative learning strategies during lessons to meet students' needs.
- Success criteria co-constructed with students should be employed to strengthen self, peer and teacher assessment for learning.
- The subject department should develop units of learning for first-year Graphics based on learning outcomes and include how learning will be facilitated and assessed.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching and learning observed during the evaluation was good or very good. Best practice was noted where the teacher used concrete examples, referenced prior knowledge and assisted students to create meaningful connections between their experiences and worked examples.
- Interactions among students and between teachers and students were respectful and affirming in all lessons observed.
- Teachers explicitly shared the learning intention with students at the outset of lessons. In all of lessons teachers referenced the learning intention throughout the lessons to refocus, direct and access learning. To develop this further it is recommended that teachers should co-construct success criteria with students to strengthen assessment for learning strategies and promote students' ownership of their learning.
- Students worked independent of each other during lessons. In order to support an improved student learning experience co-operative learning activities that facilitate deeper discussions, sharing of ideas where students co-create understanding should be explored to include a broader range of teaching methodologies.
- Lessons were methodically designed to provide clear and incremental advancement of the relevant concepts and procedures. Very good practice was observed when content encompassed specific applications to graphical problem solving.
- Teacher-led demonstrations of modelling new learning to the whole class were effective. Following this, students were given numerous opportunities to apply learning and draw solutions to prepared problems. Methods to increase student involvement during demonstrations should be developed, such as students modelling best practice or procedural knowledge to their peers.
- Digital learning technologies were embedded and deployed very successfully in all lessons to support understanding through highly quality presentations and graphical communication. For example, good use was made of the visualizer to display the procedural knowledge and methods required to solve problems.
- Overall, the quality of assessment was good. Teachers provide good quality detailed developmental formative feedback on students' work. Opportunities for students to apply learning from such feedback was evident from a review of student folders. The provision of oral feedback during all lessons was of a significant strength, enabling students to improve and modify their learning.
- The use of resources and physical models combined with explicit links to known areas of understanding successfully supported new learning. This interconnected approach deepened student learning and engagement with the topics, and exemplifies very good practice.
- The standard of freehand sketching on students' drawings at senior cycle was very good. The preferment of freehand sketching to graphically communicate the different sections of a cone was evident during one lesson. The skills for creating freehand sketches were well supported through demonstration, opportunities to practice and a novel method of using tracing paper. Greater consideration should be given to the use of colour and shade during such activities.

- Homework is assigned and monitored on a regular basis, it is mainly research or freehand sketching based. Homework that consolidates and extends students understanding of the topics and concepts from lessons including measure drawings should also be assigned.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The Graphics department receives very good whole-school support and provision from school management. Time allocation for the subjects is in line with good practice. The distribution of lessons across the week and balance between single and double lessons is good.
- The Graphics specialist room is digitally equipped and well-resourced to provide students with a good quality learning environment with good quality student drawings on display.
- The school provides first-year students with option sampling. The content of the first-year taster programme has been reviewed recently to align with the new Graphics specification. Design and Communication Graphics (DCG) subject selection is facilitated by an open night, whole-school guidance and a module in TY.
- All TY students complete a ten week module in DCG. The module introduces students to the basics of solid modelling, sketching and design. An increased focus on design intent during this module and in particular when solid modelling could develop students appreciation and critiques of designs.
- Formal assessment procedures and reporting of student progress is consistent with whole-school policy. The use of student journals for the recording of work was good. A section of the journal encourages students' to review their outcomes in assessments and set targets for future learning.
- The school supports teachers' continuous professional development, and very good records of engagement are maintained in the subject planning file.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The level of short-term planning and preparation for each lesson observed was very comprehensive including; worksheets, partially completed drawings that focused on specific areas of difficulty, physical models and digital presentations.
- A subject plan including schemes of work was available. The first-year Graphics plan requires further development to reflect the specification, teachers should develop units of learning for first-year based on learning outcomes and include how learning will be facilitated and assessed.
- Planning is informed by detailed analysis of year-on-year student performance comparisons in certificate exams with national norms and school based tests. Commendably teachers conduct annual surveys with all their class groups with the aim of improving learner outcomes.
- The subject plan features identification of students with special educational needs. The inclusion of supporting strategies specific to the Graphics subjects is good practice.
- Whole-school strategies for numeracy and literacy were evident during lessons. In order to aid the review and development of these strategies, elements should be expanded and further integrated into the subject plan.

- The subject department have created a web-based resource platform that integrates videos and notes in one location and is accessible to all students who study DCG. Enabling the ease of student access to useful resources is commendable.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject teacher 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 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 <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;