

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Music

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Coláiste Naomh Mhuire
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Convent of Mercy Sallins Road Naas
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	61730I

Date of Inspection: 03-10-2019



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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 Music 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.

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	02-10-19 and 03-10-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal, deputy principals and music teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during 5 lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principals and music teachers

School context

Coláiste Naomh Mhuire, Convent of Mercy is a post-primary school for girls with a current enrolment of 1041 students. The school provides the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching observed was very good overall but some satisfactory practices were evident.
- The quality of students' learning was very good in the lessons observed and students were competently able to demonstrate knowledge and skills in a range of activities.
- A hallmark of the music department is the high level of attention and detail given to the development of students' aural skills.
- Assessment practices and achievement in certificate examinations are very good.
- Subject provision and support for Music is very good.
- Curriculum planning in junior cycle is highly effective but plans for senior cycle do not fully reflect the breadth and array of learning experiences being provided to students.

Recommendations

- The music department should ensure that the exemplary practices that were observed in many lessons are discussed and shared at planning meetings.
- There is a need to further develop the senior cycle curriculum plans to ensure that they reflect the highly effective practices and learning experiences that were evident.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- Five lessons were observed during the course of the evaluation. The quality of teaching in these lessons was very good overall but some satisfactory practices were evident.
- Overall, lessons were well planned and were in line with the planned programme of work for the year. In most lessons, learning intentions were clear and communicated to students. Particularly good practice was seen when success criteria was also shared with students which ensured that they were clear in terms of what was required for optimal achievement.
- Teachers have spent considerable time creating high quality resources that were integrated into lessons at appropriate stages.
- A very good teacher-student rapport was evident in all lessons. Students were challenged appropriately and were provided with ample opportunities to reflect on and improve their responses. The student experience was particularly good when an inquiry-based approach to learning was adopted. Students solved music problems individually and collaboratively, independent of the teacher through a series of carefully selected learning activities.
- In one lesson, excellent practice was observed when students' knowledge and experience of composition were enhanced and reinforced through the deployment of a wide variety of highly effective teaching strategies which also led to the development of other music skills. These strategies included the development of sight reading, aural skills and the seamless integration of musical terminology. Peer assessment was particularly good as students evaluated compositions in pairs, created a check list of good practice which was subsequently shared with the whole class group.
- In many lessons, the three components of music were effectively integrated and ensured that students were active through the carefully designed tasks and reflective opportunities that were provided during lessons.
- In a small number of lessons, very good cross-curricular links were made when students used English vocabulary that was skilfully made relevant to the music context.
- Satisfactory practice was evident when there was an insufficient variety of content incorporated into the lesson and when learning intentions were not entirely clear. In another lesson, students engaged with composition as a technical exercise for an inappropriate period of time. Notwithstanding the good quality of learning that was evident in all lessons, the music department would benefit from discussing and sharing the good practices that were observed during the course of the evaluation.
- Where choral activities were observed, overall good attention was paid to improving posture, breathing and dynamics. The quality of choral performances were good and it is commendable that students are being challenged to sing in two part and three part harmony.
- A particular strength of the music department is the musical and creative approaches that are being taken to the teaching and learning of music. Of note is the high level of attention being given to the development of students' aural skills and students were competent in this regard.
- Assessment practices in the music department are very good and teachers are monitoring students' work regularly. Attainment in certificate examinations is very good.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Subject provision and whole-school support for Music is very good.
- Music is very well resourced and a designated room has been made available for the teaching of the subject. The school plans to provide additional digital facilities to the music department and this is good.
- Timetable provision is very good and is in line with syllabus recommendations. The school has moved to one hour lessons. Choir is a core component of the curriculum for all first-year students. This is very good as it provides them with a valuable learning experience and enhances the practical and aural skills of those students who are studying Music.
- Students are well supported when selecting their subjects. Parents of incoming first and fifth-year students are provided with information evenings and an information booklet is supplied. If necessary, parents can seek additional one-to-one meetings with the Guidance counsellor and senior management. Students are afforded ample opportunities to change their chosen subject option if necessary.
- Senior management promotes high quality outcomes for students in Music. The music department is expected to analyse certificate examination results and develop a strategic development plan as part of the schools' self-evaluation processes. In addition, one member of the music department is attending an instructional leadership course and has been afforded opportunities to share learning both with the music department and the staff in general.
- The music department comprises three qualified music teachers. There is strong commitment to continuing professional development and teachers have availed of many training opportunities. All are members of the Post-Primary Music Teachers' Association (PPMTA) and most have attended conferences hosted by the PPMTA. Two teachers have acted as examiners for the State Examinations Commission.
- The music department displays a high level of commitment and dedication to the development of the subject in the school. Students are afforded the opportunity to participate in a variety of co-curricular and extracurricular activities. These include the annual school musical and the whole-school choir.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The quality of planning and preparation for lessons by the music department is very good. A wide and varied programme is provided to students in junior and senior cycle.
- A comprehensive plan has been developed. Planning in junior cycle is good and takes into account the revised framework for junior cycle and the requirements and rationale of the junior cycle music specification. The music department is reflective and is adapting the templates provided by the Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) to meet the needs of students.
- In senior cycle, curriculum plans do not fully reflect the breadth and array of musical experiences being provided to students and this should be addressed. In addition, it would be useful for the music department to record the selections of music being used in all year groups. Teachers have set targets arising from the analysis of certificate examination results.
- Planning practices are inclusive of students with special educational needs.
- Formal time has been made available for the music department to meet. Teachers are planning collaboratively within the teaching team when developing music curriculum plans. A shared digital platform is available which is being used effectively by the music department for sharing resources.

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

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.

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;