

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

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

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Ardscoil Rís
Seoladh na scoile / School address	North Circular Road Limerick County Limerick
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	64201T

Date of Inspection: 04-03-2019



An Roinn Oideachais
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 Design and Communication Graphics and Technical 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 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.

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

Date of inspection	4 March 2019
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 four class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Ardcoil Rís is an all-boys voluntary secondary school in Limerick city operating under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST). At the time of the inspection, it had an enrolment of 732 students. The school currently provides the Junior Cycle programme, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), Leaving Certificate and an optional Transition Year (TY) programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and of learning was very good, with some areas for improvement noted; the work carried out as part of the *Learning Schools Project* has had a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
- In all lessons observed, the interactions between students and teachers were very respectful and teachers set high expectations for their students.
- The quality of assessment was good overall, and ranged from very good in some lessons to satisfactory in others.
- The integration of parametric modelling software into the Technical Graphics (TG) programme is very effective in helping to advance students' understanding of difficult concepts.
- Whole-school support for TG and Design and Communication Graphics (DCG) is very good and two well-equipped rooms are available to the department, one of which is a traditional TG room and the other is a Materials Technology (Wood) (MTW) room; safe operating areas are not marked around the machines in the MTW room.
- The quality of planning and preparation is very good; the department works in a high-quality way demonstrating a collegial and mutually supportive approach.

Recommendations

- The very good practice observed in relation to assessment should be extended to all lessons.
- Demarcation of safe operating areas around machines in the MTW room should be carried out without delay.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching was very good, with aspects of excellent practice and some scope for improvement identified in the area of assessment of some lessons.
- The quality of student learning was directly related to the scope provided by the lessons' learning intentions. In the lesson where the learning intention, student activity and modes of assessment were aligned and pitched appropriately, student learning was of a high quality. In some lessons, there was scope to enhance this alignment.
- The work carried out as part of the *Learning Schools Project* had a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed.
- The interactions between students and teachers were very respectful and teachers set high expectations for their students.
- A range of teaching strategies was observed in lessons. These included clear instruction, demonstrations, as well as opportunities for independent and collaborative student activities.
- The quality of assessment was good overall, and ranged from very good in some lessons to satisfactory in others. Where highly effective assessment strategies were observed they included the use of challenging questions distributed amongst a wide cohort of students which served to support the differentiation of learning. In addition, a traffic-light tag system was observed which provided students with the opportunity to self-assess, and there was use of response boards and good oral developmental feedback. In some lessons, the noting of evaluative comments on students' work helped to enrich their learning. Providing students with meaningful written formative feedback in such a way should be extended to all lessons.
- Resources used in lessons included the whiteboard, textbook and some teacher-developed supplementary materials. Digital technology was used in all lessons and was most effective when used as a tool to support learning. The integration of parametric modelling software into the TG programme is effective in helping advance students' understanding of difficult concepts. Visualisers should be further utilised to view exemplars of students' work and develop modelling of practice and peer assessment.
- Good attention was paid to the development of subject-specific terminology in the majority of lessons observed. The pre-teaching and displaying of key words as part of the introduction to lessons were significant supports for students. Oral literacy was well attended in most lessons; for example, students were provided with opportunities to give feedback to small groups of their peers.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Whole-school support for TG and DCG is of a very high quality. Timetabling for the subjects is very good. There is an appropriate spread of contact time throughout the week, along with a sufficient number of double periods in all year groups to facilitate design and project work.

- To support students' subject choices, the school operates a year-long subject sampling programme for all optional subjects. This programme enables students to experience TG prior to choosing the subject as part of their Junior Cycle programme and to make their subject choices based upon their experiences, skills and aptitudes. Student uptake of TG and DCG is very good.
- The school is in the process of conducting a curriculum review; this will provide an opportunity to reflect on the subjects and programmes offered in the school. Commendably, the school self-evaluation (SSE) process is utilised to support this.
- The provision of a DCG module in the TY programme supports students in their decision-making with regard to the selection of DCG for Leaving Certificate. Students may choose DCG for Leaving Certificate without having studied TG. Such a student-centred approach to subject selection is commended.
- Two well-equipped and well-maintained rooms are available to the department, one is a traditional TG room and the other is a MTW room. MTW is offered as a rotational module in TY. While safety signage and personal protective equipment were present in the MTW room, the demarcation of safe operating areas around machines should be carried out.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Individual teacher planning and preparation, and subject-group planning are very good. The department works in a high-quality way and demonstrates a collegial and mutually supportive approach.
- An innovative TG and DCG department development plan, which is informed by *Looking at our school 2016: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools*, has been developed and this is used to identify priorities and record progress. This approach to planning is commended.
- Comprehensive programmes of work have been developed for each year group. These programmes provide detail regarding learning outcomes, resources, teaching methodologies and modes of assessment. It is now timely to start planning for the new junior cycle Graphics specification which will commence in September 2019. The first-year scheme should co-ordinate the use of the strands and elements to create units of learning in a coherent and student-centred manner.
- Cross-curricular links have been identified and developed with the Art department. There is opportunity to further develop this approach in tandem with the science and mathematics department with a view to promoting the school-level impact of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) partnerships on teaching, learning and assessment.
- Appropriately, data on examination attainment informs the development of actions for improvement in relation to teaching and learning. Practices relating to record keeping and reporting to parents are good. Students' attendance, examination results and progress in class are communicated to parents at parent-teacher meetings, in formal reports throughout the year and through the school journal.
- Teachers value and engage in professional development and collaboration. Records of teachers' professional development are included in the TG and DCG plan.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

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 was very pleased to see that the Inspection Report found very good practice in each of the three areas – Teaching, Learning and Assessment; Subject Provision and Whole School Support; Planning and Preparation. The Board was delighted to see teachers' good practice affirmed. The Board was also very happy to see the school's ongoing engagement with the Learning Schools Project had a very positive impact on teaching and learning. The Board has been very supportive of the Learning Schools Project and continues to do so again this year.

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 Board of Management wish to confirm that the demarcation of safe operating areas around machines in the MTW room has been carried out and is now in place.

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 of 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;