

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection in Materials Technology (Wood) and
Construction Studies**

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Sancta Maria College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Louisburgh County Mayo
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	64660F

Date of Inspection: 26-03-2019



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agus Scileanna**
Department of
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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 Materials Technology (Wood) and Construction Studies 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	26-03-2019
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 three double-class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Sancta Maria College is a co-educational post-primary school operating under the trusteeship of Catholic Education, an Irish Schools' Trust (CEIST). The programmes offered are the Junior Certificate, an optional Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the Leaving Certificate. The current enrolment of second-level students is 450 and there are also 12 Post Leaving Certificate students.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and of learning ranged from very good to satisfactory in the lessons observed; improvement is needed in some lessons to ensure a more appropriate balance between the instructional and activity phases of the lessons.
- The quality of assessment was satisfactory overall; the questioning strategies employed in some lessons require improvement and there is a need to provide all students with more written formative feedback on their work.
- Student behaviour was excellent at all times and a very respectful relationship between the teachers and students was evident.
- Team teaching is a new development and was observed to be working very well to support student learning.
- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support for the subjects is very good and the newly built Materials Technology (Wood) (MTW) laboratory is an excellent resource; a risk assessment of the new laboratory has not been carried out as yet, and safe operating areas (SOAs) have not been marked around each machine.
- The quality of planning and preparation overall is satisfactory; currently, the theory and practical elements of the (MTW) and Construction Studies (CS) syllabus are taught independently which is not optimal practice.

Recommendations

- In all lessons, learning tasks should be designed to encourage students to engage and participate actively in learning and to ensure a more appropriate balance between teacher instruction and student activity.
- The level and quality of written developmental feedback provided to students on their work should be improved, particularly with regard to the identification of spelling errors and the quality of freehand sketching.
- The MTW and CS department, in collaboration with senior management, should carry out an annual health and safety risk assessment of the MTW room; SOAs should also be marked around each machine.

- The programmes of work should be further developed to provide greater detail on teaching methodologies, resources and assessment; an integrated approach whereby the theoretical and practical elements of the syllabus are taught concurrently is recommended.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching ranged from very good to satisfactory. Very effective teaching was demonstrated in lessons that were well planned and had clear differentiated learning intentions, focused teacher input, and opportunities for students to engage with the content through well-structured individual, pair and group work activities.
- The quality of learning ranged from very good to satisfactory. Learning was optimised where teachers were aware of students' individual learning needs and adapted teaching and learning practices to help students overcome challenges.
- Assessment was satisfactory overall. Improvement is required in relation to the quality of questioning and in the provision of written formative feedback on students' work. One very effective assessment strategy using the 'two stars and a wish' approach was employed to ascertain student learning; this provided the teacher with very good feedback on the quality of learning in the lesson. Such opportunities should be sought in all lessons.
- Student behaviour was excellent at all times and a very respectful relationship was evident between the teachers and students.
- Subject-specific language and keywords were used consistently in the lessons. Identifying keywords was the main literacy focus observed. Best practice was found where keywords were displayed on the board and referred to during the lesson. To aid learner retention, they should also be recorded by the students as part of note making.
- Teachers circulated effectively during some lessons and provided very effective support to students. In high-quality lessons, the focus of the conversations was on challenging students to explain their work. This approach should be used more frequently to ensure a student-centred learning experience that enables students achieve their potential.
- The theory and practical elements of the MTW and CS syllabus are taught separately. In the practical lesson observed, theoretical elements were referenced but students did not take any notes or make sketches and these opportunities were missed to reinforce student learning. Similarly in theory lessons, practical elements such as experimental work or model making should be introduced to support learning and cater for all learning styles. An integrated approach whereby the theoretical and practical elements of the syllabus are taught concurrently is recommended and homework should be utilised to a greater extent to support this integrated approach.
- During practical demonstrations, teachers were very well prepared and taught key skills to students in a logical and sequential manner. Peer demonstration was used effectively to check understanding, enhance student participation and model best health and safety practices.
- Team teaching is a new development in the school and was observed to be working very well in a first-year lesson. In the context of mixed-ability settings and the organisation of students with additional needs, the extension and development of in-class support are strongly encouraged. This approach also provides opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively and share new ideas and teaching methods.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of subject provision and whole school support for the subjects is very good and the time allocated to MTW and CS is in keeping with syllabus requirements.
- First-year students take a six-week subject sampling module which helps inform their subject choices.
- The newly built MTW laboratory is an excellent resource and a significant amount of the teachers' personal time has been spent to get the room up to this high standard. This is to be commended. This dedication and commitment to the subjects are also something which school management acknowledged during the evaluation.
- There is good in-class access to digital technology equipment to support teaching, learning and assessment and parametric modelling software was utilised effectively in one lesson. There were other lessons, however, where the use of digital technologies would have enhanced student learning and it is recommended teachers exploit these opportunities when they arise.
- Senior management has facilitated teachers' continuing professional development and identified the need to enhance teaching methodologies at a whole-school level. A long-term strategy is in place to support this which shows effective leadership of teaching and learning.
- While safety signage and personal protective equipment were present in the MTW room, the demarcation of SOAs around machines should be implemented immediately. An annual risk assessment of the room should also be carried out.
- Teachers give generously of their time to facilitate a wide range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities to promote MTW and CS and to enhance students' learning. Recent success in the *ESB National Safety* competition and participation in *the National Architects in Schools* initiative are examples of this commitment.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The quality of planning and preparation overall is satisfactory.
- Formal meetings are facilitated by management each term and very good minutes are recorded, kept on file and shared with senior management.
- A programme of work has been developed for each year group and provides information regarding the topics to be covered and the associated timeframes. These programmes of work should be further developed to provide greater detail on teaching methodologies, resources and assessment; and an integrated approach is recommended whereby the theoretical and practical elements of the syllabus are taught concurrently.
- It is now timely to start planning for the new junior cycle Wood Technology 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.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy 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 welcomes this very positive Subject Inspection Report in Materials Technology (Wood) and Construction Studies.

We welcome the acknowledgement given to:

- the quality of programme provision and whole school support for the subjects.
- the excellent resources in our newly built MTW laboratory including access to digital technology equipment.
- the teachers' personal time given and the dedication and commitment to the subjects.
- the excellent student behaviour at all times and the very respectful relationship between the teachers and students at Sancta Maria College.
- the facilitation of teachers' continuing professional development and long-term strategies in place to support enhanced teaching methodologies at a whole-school level.

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

At Sancta Maria College we embrace the school improvement process and are committed to Improvement wherever possible.

- Through the SSE process the school has prioritised reflection, feedback, collaborative practice and assessment as areas for further development and core teams have been established to promote and develop practice.
- The school is happy to continue to encourage and develop active teaching methodologies in all classes allowing for the theoretical and practical elements of the syllabus to be taught concurrently.
- The final machines are currently being installed in the newly built MTW laboratory. Work will be completed this month and SOAs will be clearly marked around all machines and the annual health and safety risk assessment of the MTW room will be then completed.

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;