

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

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

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Scoil Muire Agus Pádraig
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Swinford Co Mayo
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	646900

**Date of Inspection: 24-10-2016**



**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 Materials Technology (Wood) & Construction Studies under the following headings:

1. Teaching and learning
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

<b>Date of inspection</b>	24-10-2016
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and key staff</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during 4 class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Muire agus Pádraig is a co-educational voluntary secondary school, under the trusteeship of Catholic Education an Irish Schools Trust (CEIST). It is the sole provider of second-level education in the locality and has a current enrolment of 338 students. A broad curriculum is provided including Transition Year (TY). The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the Department's action plan for educational inclusion.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching ranged from good to very good.
- The quality of learning ranged from good to very good.
- All lessons were underpinned by excellent student behaviour and very good teacher-student relations.
- Teachers used very good questioning and explanation strategies and when an investigative approach was taken to lessons, this were effective; there is scope to further develop the learning experience for students.
- Material Technology (Wood) (MTW) and Construction Studies (CS) provision is very well supported by school management.
- Planning and Preparation for the subjects is good with some scope for development in the yearly schemes for the subjects.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- All lessons should be underpinned by explicit learning intentions to guide teaching and learning strategies and student assessment and further use of active and collaborative strategies should be incorporated to enhance student learning.
- While due care and attention is given to the active management of health and safety, the demarcation of safe operating areas (SOAs) around machines should be carried out immediately.

- The schemes of work should be further developed to provide greater detail on teaching methodologies, resources and assessment; and be linked with learning intentions for each unit of learning.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- The quality of teaching was good or very good in all lessons observed.
- The quality of students' learning was good or very good in all lessons observed.
- While the aim of each lesson was clear, all lessons should be underpinned by explicit learning intentions to guide teaching and learning strategies and student assessment.
- All lessons were underpinned by excellent student behaviour and very good teacher-student relations. Lessons were also characterised by good pace and structure.
- Teachers used and emphasised the terminology associated with MTW and CS during lessons. This practice enhanced both teaching and learning, enabling students to assimilate subject-specific terminology while working on their own tasks.
- Literacy and numeracy strategies were observed in lessons throughout the inspection. Difficult words were explained and students were enabled to spell and pronounce these words correctly. In a number of instances students were asked to read aloud in line with the whole-school literacy initiative.
- Very good questioning and explanations of processes were integrated effectively into lessons to engage students in the learning activity, to check understanding and to support students in the development of higher-order thinking skills.
- Practical activities featured in all lessons. These were very effective when an investigative approach was taken to such activities. The use of active and collaborative strategies should be extended to add to students' learning experience.
- During practical demonstrations, teachers were very well prepared and taught key skills to students in a logical and sequential manner. Opportunities should be sought to extend the use of peer demonstration, especially when revising material covered in previous lessons.
- Both the chalkboard and information and communications technology were well used to present theoretical lessons and to support the development of knowledge and understanding.

### **2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- Subject provision and whole school support was very good.
- The subjects are allocated sufficient time for to meet syllabus requirements. A combination of single-period and double-period lessons facilitates completion of students' project design work and provides regular contact with the subjects.

- First-year students choose their optional subjects prior to entering the school. An open day provides students with the opportunity to experience the optional subjects and a separate information evening provides guidance to parents. Upon entering fifth year, students are given an open choice and choose their preferred subjects from a list of all available options. Option bands are then formed based upon these preferences.
- The dedicated MTW room available for the teaching and learning of the subjects is well equipped, neat and tidy. Tool storage is well organised and posters display key terminology and processes.
- The teachers modelled best health and safety practices at all times and ensured that students did likewise through the close monitoring of all activities. However, the demarcation of SOAs around machines should be carried out urgently. The rationale for these SOAs should be explained to students. It is also suggested that the number of instructional signboards to display the procedures and precautions to be followed for the safe use of individual machines should be increased.
- The school's policy for health and safety is regularly reviewed in line with current guidelines and legislation. A copy of this document, including risk assessments, should be filed in the department plan and it is important to ensure that they are updated annually.

### **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Departmental planning and preparation for the subjects is good.
- The planning and preparation of all lessons observed was very good. Suitable teaching and learning resources were prepared in advance and activities were planned to supplement instruction.
- The two teachers in the MTW and CS department work well together and meet frequently informally to complement the formal meeting they undertake each term. Minutes of these meetings are maintained and shared with management.
- Assessment practice in the subject department makes use of a range of assessment modes and is thorough and appropriate. Formal assessment of students' progress in CS and MTW is consistent with whole-school practice.
- Student achievement at all levels and uptake of higher level in certificate examinations is good. Subject departments compare their analysis of the outcomes of certificate examinations to national norms and areas for improvement are identified.
- The schemes of work should be further developed to provide greater detail on teaching methodologies, resources and assessment; and be linked with learning intentions for each unit of learning
- Teachers continuing professional development is encouraged and facilitated by management. It would be worth recording CPD details in the department plan.

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. 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 the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> applies where the quality of provision is adequate. Overall, learners have access to a basic level of provision. 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated wholeschool 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;