

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Music

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Árdscoil Na mBráithre
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Kickham Street Clonmel Co Tipperary
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	65320J

Date of Inspection: 02-03-2020



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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 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.

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

IMIS data for reference	SURE	Comment
Child Protection Outcomes	Fully compliant with the checks undertaken at the time of the inspection visit	

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	02-03-2020
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 3 lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Árdscoil na mBráithre is a voluntary secondary school for boys that was established by the Christian Brothers in Clonmel in 1889. The school is now under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST), and has a current enrolment of 699 students. It offers the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment was very good overall, with scope to develop assessment practices further.
- The quality of subject provision and whole school support is very good with Music having a high profile in the school, available to all students, and very well supported by senior management.
- The music department is very well-resourced and equipped with an extensive range of musical instruments and information and communication technology (ICT).
- While subject department planning is very good, planning for assessment warrants attention.

Recommendations

- Current assessment for learning strategies and practices should be built on to include more opportunities for peer assessment and self-assessment; this should be reflected both in planning documentation and classroom practice to ensure a cohesive approach.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- There was a very good quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed, with scope to develop assessment practices further.
- The lessons observed were very well-prepared and structured, were pitched and paced appropriately, and included teaching that was supportive of all students.
- In the main, there was a very good level of student engagement, and students' contributions to class discussions were valued, with praise used effectively to acknowledge their efforts.
- Information was presented with a good degree of clarity and skilful teacher explanation. Very good questioning, which ascertained the level of student retention in terms of the more cognitive areas of musical understanding, was also observed.
- Effective teaching was characterised by teachers engaging and motivating the wide range of abilities of the students through well-structured and varied activities. Good learning was seen through listening and analysis, skill development, trial and error, and progressive refinement in all activities.
- Throughout the lessons, student knowledge and experience were used to support learning wherever possible, and this was broadened and expanded through detailed questioning, explanation, linking to prior learning, and encouragement from the teachers.
- The fact that there was a musical focus at all times and that the students were engaged in practical music-making activities were notable features of the evaluation. The resources available, including information and communication technology (ICT), are used to good effect and add to the quality of learning. Some lessons included purposeful peer-to-peer interaction and a high degree of collaborative learning, which is very positive.
- Strategies linking aspects of the curriculum were utilised to very good effect especially through appropriate practical elements. The teachers skilfully elicited information from the students and forged links with their own experience in order to reinforce the concepts introduced. This linking of activities and active participation by the students is commendable and does much to ensure a broad musical development rather than a narrow focus on examination material.
- While some assessment of student progress was evident, there is scope to develop assessment practices to support student learning. It would be worthwhile to include some self-assessment and peer assessment strategies to enable students to reflect on their own learning.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of subject provision and whole school support is very good with management being extremely supportive in this regard. Access to the subject is very good and all students study Music as part of the TY programme.
- The music department is very well-resourced and equipped with an extensive range of musical instruments and ICT.
- It is noteworthy that all students experience a wide range of music activity due to the extensive number of extra-curricular and co-curricular opportunities available to them. The annual TY show and collaboration with local schools further strengthens this experience.

- Management supports and encourages teachers to regularly engage with continuing professional development (CPD) in order to develop their own practice and keep up to date with current methodologies. Membership of the Post-Primary Music Teachers Association also helps in this regard.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Subject planning documentation viewed during the evaluation showed evidence of effective planning by the teachers. Considerable thought has been given to short-term individual planning as evidenced by the careful prior preparation and organisation of the materials necessary for each lesson.
- The fact that planning for junior cycle Music has successfully straddled the two courses at present is positive, particularly as the planning for the new specification has strong links with learning outcomes and reflection.
- To develop subject department planning further, it would be worthwhile to include a focus on particular aspects of formative assessment appropriate to Music and how these would transact in the classroom setting. Development of strategies encompassing peer-assessment and self-assessment is thus recommended.

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