

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

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

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Ennistymon Vocational School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Ennistymon Co Clare
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	70840Q

Date of Inspection: 07-03-2017



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 Design and Communication Graphics & Technical Graphics under the following headings:

1. Learning, teaching 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.

Subject Inspection

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Date of inspection	07-03-2017
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 six class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Ennistymon Vocational School is a co-educational school under the auspices of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board with a current enrolment of 210 students. The programmes offered are the Junior Certificate, the Junior Certificate School Programme, an optional Transition Year, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the established Leaving Certificate. The school participates in DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools), the Department of Education and Skills action plan for educational inclusion.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- Overall the quality of teaching and of learning in Technical Graphics (TG) and Design and Communication Graphics (DCG) ranged from good to very good.
- Feedback on students' work is given predominantly in oral form, with evidence of some written teacher feedback to support improvement being provided on students' drawings.
- Classroom atmosphere was good in all lessons observed and this was achieved through positive classroom discipline and respectful interactions between teachers and students.
- Subject provision and whole school support for TG and DCG is very good.
- While the planning and preparation of all lessons observed was very good, the subject plan requires additional detail to ensure it is fit for its intended purpose.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- All students' portfolios should be checked and formative feedback should be written on students' drawings on a more regular basis.
- Further development of the subject plan should link specific topics listed in the programme of work with the teaching methods used in their delivery. Similar links should be made with teaching resources to be used, with modes of assessment and with planned learning outcomes.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching and of learning in the lessons observed ranged from good to very good.
- The learning intentions were shared explicitly in two of the lessons observed. To build on this good practice, the learning intentions should be discussed and displayed during all lessons to assist in keeping the work of the lesson focused, to assess progress and to aid the review and assessment of students' learning as part of lesson closure.
- Questioning was used extensively in the lessons observed. It provided the teacher with the opportunity to gauge students' learning, to probe their responses and to reinforce recently-learned subject matter. A blend of higher-order and lower-order questions was used to ensure that students of differing competencies were challenged at a level that was appropriate to their development.
- Effective teaching strategies were used in all of the lessons observed. A good example of a discovery-learning approach was observed in one lesson. In the lesson students were presented with a problem which had multiple solutions and worked collaboratively to find these solutions. This approach is to be highly commended and opportunities to utilise this strategy more frequently should be sought.
- Use of information and communications technology was observed to be a strength. There was innovative use of the visualiser during some lessons. However, it was difficult to see the detail presented on it from the back of the classroom. It is recommended to work towards upgrading the visualiser to ensure all students benefit from its use.
- Feedback on students' work is given by teachers in oral form and there was some evidence of written formative feedback on some drawings in portfolios. It is recommended that all students' portfolios be checked and that formative feedback be written on students' drawings on a more regular basis.
- Classroom atmosphere was good in all lessons observed. This was achieved through positive classroom discipline and respectful interactions between teachers and students. Student behaviour and attention were commendable throughout the evaluation.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Subject provision and whole school support for TG and DCG is very good.
- Timetabling arrangements for the subjects are very good. Sufficient time is allocated to facilitate completion of the syllabuses. The even distribution of lessons across the week maintains students' contact with the subjects.
- All first year students participate in a full-year sampling programme of TG. On entry into second year, students rank their subject preferences. Option blocks are then created based on those preferences. This system represents best practice and the fifth year option blocks are created in the same way.
- Formal assessment is well developed and follows school policy. A second parent-teacher meeting is held following the 'mock' examinations to discuss students' progress and this is reported to be very beneficial for students.

- An analysis is completed each year of student performance in the certificate examinations compared to national norms. The use of aggregated data from a number of years of certificate examination results may also provide useful data. To take account of the small number of students studying DCG, basing the analysis on the number of students instead of using percentages is likely to provide a more accurate reflection of progress.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- 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.
- Minutes of subject department planning meetings indicate that discussions relating to subject planning are predominantly organisational in nature. It is recommended that all subject meetings incorporate discussion of teaching and learning, identifying areas for development and sharing ideas that can bring about improvement.
- The subject plan requires additional detail to ensure it is fit for its intended purpose. Further development of the schemes of work should link specific topics listed in the programme of work with the teaching methods used in their delivery. Similar links should be made with modes of assessment, teaching resources to be used, and with planned learning outcomes. The plan should be reviewed annually in the context of the teachers' ongoing professional experience.
- The subject department should work towards integrating *SolidWorks* into the TG syllabus to further develop students' visualisation skills and spatial awareness.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the 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
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;