

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

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

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Ardscoil Phadraig
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Granard Co Longford
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	71710I

**Date of Inspection: 04-03-2019**



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**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 Technical Graphics & Design and Communication 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.

## **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

<b>Date of inspection</b>	04 March 2019
<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 four class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### School context

Ardcoil Phádraig is a co-educational school under the aegis of Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board, with a current enrolment of 282 students. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. The school's curricular programmes include the Junior Cycle, Junior Certificate Schools Programme, an optional Transition Year (TY), the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from good to very good during the evaluation, with scope for improving lesson structure identified.
- Competent demonstrations accompanied with the effective integration of resources were key elements of the observed lessons.
- The quality of assessment was good: developmental formative commentary on student work was noted in some instances.
- The allocation, monitoring and affirmation of student portfolios and homework varied within the graphics department.
- Whole-school support for graphics subjects is good.
- High quality individual and collaborative planning and preparation was evident, which was informed by teachers' engagement in reflective practices.

#### Recommendations

- The very good teaching strategies employed where students were learning for understanding should be further developed and embedded into all lessons.
- Teachers should be consistent in the allocation, monitoring and affirmation of students portfolios and homework, and provide written formative feedback to a greater extent.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching and learning during the evaluation ranged from good to very good.
- Lesson activities were appropriately challenging and built on prior student knowledge. Peer demonstration featured prominently during one lesson where freehand shading was the subject matter, this is good practice. However there was scope to improve the pace and flow of activities during this lesson.
- Competent teacher demonstrations accompanied with the successful integration of physical models, visual aids and CAD software were key elements in the lessons observed. Teachers' practice of modelling the incremental development of solutions to transformation geometry problems on the chalkboard proved very effective. Students' understanding and application of these principles was evident from their technical constructions to the given problem.
- Teachers effectively circulated the classroom during lessons, actively monitoring student progress and interacting to scaffold learning as appropriate. This created valuable opportunities to provide immediate ongoing oral formative feedback to students with specific insight into how they can improve.
- Teachers' use of oral questioning was of a high quality. Various questioning strategies were employed, including prompting, re-direction and the judicious use of wait-time when posing higher-order questions. Very good practice was noted in a third-year lesson where targeting and sequencing of differentiated questions engaged and challenged students. Responses were developed and explored further in instances when subject matter increased in complexity.
- Almost all lessons were well structured, with a good balance between teacher exposition and student activity. Teachers' instructions were clear with great care taken to ensure that new concepts were explained thoroughly and checked for clarity using questions and observation.
- Student-teacher interactions were mutually respectful; during student led activities teachers encouraged participation. A positive atmosphere was evident with student engagement and exemplary behaviour. Teachers displayed high expectations and positively affirmed student responses.
- Teachers' use and promotion of subject specific terminology during lessons was reflected in students' drawings, annotations, discussions and keyword posters. This approach to developing students' technical vocabulary is commendable.
- Folders containing students' work were readily accessible in the classrooms. Teacher oversight, correction and formative commentary was evident in some instances. This good practice should be extended to provide all students with comments on areas where they could improve, to affirm their efforts and inform future learning.
- The majority of students demonstrated good progress in their learning during the lessons. Success criteria should be developed with students in order to improve drafting quality, accuracy, presentation and problem solving skills. Good classroom routines were in place and students co-ordinated various tasks proficiently.

- Homework assignment was inconsistent within the subject department. It is recommended that homework be assigned regularly to consolidate students' understanding, and could be in the form of work sheets, visualisation problems or sketching solutions to detailed measured drawings.

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

- Subject provision and whole-school support is good with some areas for improvement identified.
- Timetabled provision is in line with syllabus requirements. However, there is scope to enhance the scheduling of lessons with the introduction of a double class period in third-year, and ensuring that the same class group are not scheduled for graphics during the final period of the school day more than once per week.
- Technical Graphics (TG) and Design and Communication Graphics (DCG) are popular subjects in Ardscoil Phádraig with over half the student cohort choosing to study these subjects.
- TG is an optional subject and prospective students choose pre-entry to first-year, the school supports selection by providing an information evening and taster day for all optional subjects. DCG is offered as an optional subject at senior cycle. Students' optional subject preference rankings are used to create the option subject bands.
- The school provides two well-resourced specialist rooms. The digitally enabled graphics classrooms are supportive learning environments with the necessary equipment for drafting, model making and parametric modelling. High quality student work is on display in the classroom and the corridor. Subject specific posters and various technical and geometric models, teaching aids and prototyping equipment are also available to support student learning.
- Graphics in TY is offered as a module in Architecture. The module has evolved and collaborates with other subject departments and external agencies. Students analyse a site, develop a design proposal within specified conditions and prototype their designs using a range of media. High quality prototypes of student work are on display. This commendable practice develops students' graphicacy skills and provides students with an introduction to DCG.
- The school supports teachers' engagement with continuing professional development and records are maintained.

## **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Individual and collaborative planning and preparation for the graphics subjects was of a high standard, a subject plan including detailed schemes of work was available. The level of short-term planning and preparation for each lesson observed was very comprehensive including; worksheets, partially completed drawings that focused on specific areas of difficulty, physical models and digital presentations.
- Records of formal subject department meetings contain evidence of discussions on operational matters and are shared with school management. It is recommended to include a teaching, learning and assessment section on the agenda as a standing item to facilitate deeper professional discussion in these areas.

- Planning is informed by very detailed department analysis of year-on-year student performance comparisons in certificate exams with national norms and school based tests. This reflective practice is commendable.

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 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.

## 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 of 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. 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 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;

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**



## **Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board of Management welcomes the Technical Graphics and Design and Communication Graphics subject inspection report on behalf of the whole school community. The Board of Management gratefully acknowledges the contribution of the staff and students to the success of the subject inspection.

We note that the subject timetable provision is in line with syllabus requirements and will further enhance this by scheduling double class periods for third years.

## **Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.**

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