

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

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

REPORT

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| Ainm na scoile / School name | Heywood Community School |
| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Ballinakill Portlaoise Co. Laois |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number | 91427C |

Date of Inspection: 12-02-2020



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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 Graphics, 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.

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

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

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| Dates of inspection | 11-12 February 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 five lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff |

School context

Heywood Community School is a co-educational school operating under the trusteeship of Salesian Fathers and Laois-Offaly Education and Training Board. The school has a current enrolment of 738 students and offers the following curricular programmes, the Junior Cycle, Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning observed during the evaluation was of a very high standard.
- Students in all lessons were actively engaged in developing their knowledge and technical skills in a structured and planned manner, completion of tasks and portfolio work demonstrated their clear understanding of key geometric principles and constructions.
- The provision of good quality formative feedback on students' drawings was evident, however, students are not always given opportunities to implement the advice given by teachers.
- Digital learning technology was used successfully to model best drafting practice during lessons and was aided by the incorporation of physical three dimensional resources which have been developed and shared among the subject teachers.
- The Graphics department receives very good whole-school support and provision.
- High quality collaborative planning was evident from the documentation reviewed, individual planning and preparation for lessons observed was very good; strategic planning is under developed.

Recommendations

- Graphics teachers should collaboratively develop strategies that encourage students to implement formative feedback advice received on their work.
- The subject department should introduce portfolio and project based assessment components to complement current assessments practices.
- The subject department should develop a more rigorous strategic plan and identify clear measurable targets for the ongoing improvement of the graphics subjects.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching and learning observed during the evaluation was of a very high standard.
- Lesson content was treated thoroughly and provided students with sufficient challenge and support. An appropriate balance of guided skill development and time for concept testing and problem solving was achieved in all lessons.
- Learning was structured to actively engage students in developing their knowledge and skills. Learning was outlined at the start of all lessons with the discussion and in some cases recording of learning intentions. Examples of what good learning should look like was developed with students in most instances.
- Teacher-led demonstrations were executed with clarity and precision. The visualizer was used to model best practice in procedures and techniques. In a few lessons students demonstrated learning to their peers using the visualizer to display the gradual construction of a solution, this practice should be expanded where possible.
- Physical solid resources were used very effectively by students when creating three-dimensional sketches. Students' tactile engagement with the solids was a significant strength during lessons and supported their spatial reasoning, visualisation awareness while gradually introducing students to the rudiments of measured orthographic projection. This is very good practice.
- Teachers questioning was used very effectively to review prior learning and check for understanding. Differentiated questions were posed appropriately and supported student responses through pausing, hinting and redirection.
- Teachers engaged students in sketching and annotating their drawings in an attempt to help reinforce understanding of constructions, concepts and solution techniques used. The incorporation of such student-led activity is commendable as it develops students' freehand sketching and promotes the concept of graphical problem solving among students.
- Plenaries conducted during the conclusion of lessons established how effective student learning was when measured against the earlier stated learning intentions. Teachers capitalised on the visible nature of student learning by quickly reviewing drawings during lessons. Teachers should ideally inform students of progression developments and improvements required for subsequent lessons during this stage of the lesson.
- Students worked independently and collaboratively in the completion of tasks that centred on solving specific problems or communicating geometric concepts. A review of classwork and portfolios demonstrated very good levels of student understanding.
- Students' learning is supported by the provision of constructive feedback on their drawings and tests. However, a review of portfolios work showed that students are not always given opportunities to implement the advice given by teachers. Graphics teachers should collaboratively devise strategies to encourage students to follow through more effectively on the formative feedback received on their work.
- Very good classroom management was evident during lessons. Students engaged diligently with activities and responded to questions using technical subject specific vocabulary with confidence. Interactions between students and teachers was courteous and affirming. A

positive learning environment based on mutual respect was observed throughout the evaluation.

- Reporting of student learning is currently based on summative terminal assessments in most instances. To further embed assessment for learning practices and in recognition of the graphics specification in junior cycle and the senior cycle syllabus, the subject department should introduce portfolio and project based assessment components to complement the current assessment procedures.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The Graphics department receives very good whole-school support and timetabling provision. The subject department comprises of four teachers, one of which is the subject co-ordinator. Teachers are assigned class groups for the duration of their cycle of study, which is good practice.
- The Graphics specialist rooms are well equipped and provide students and teachers with a high-quality learning environment. Student drawings, design work and whole-school numeracy initiative resources are displayed in both rooms; thus having the effect of affirming student endeavour and maintaining high standards. It is commendable that subject department aim that all students will have a sample of their work displayed during the course of their study.
- The school provides first-year students with option sampling during the first term. The content and duration of the Graphics taster programme is currently under review by the subject department. Senior cycle option subject selection is facilitated by an open night and whole-school guidance.
- All TY students complete an eight week module in graphics. Teachers in collaboration with senior leaders should review technology education provision in TY with the view to amalgamating subject areas and creating a Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) module, with the focus of improving the students learning experience within STEM.
- The school supports teachers' continuous professional development, and records of engagement are maintained in the subject planning file.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- High quality collaborative planning documentation identifies the learning outcomes, teaching methodologies, subject matter and assessment modes for each year group.
- Individual planning and preparation for lessons observed was very good. The preparation, deployment and sharing of physical three dimensional resources is commendable practice.
- At subject department level, the quality of reflective practice is very good. The ongoing development of such practice was evident on students' work and resources for use during lessons.
- The subject department has identified areas for development in the subject plan. In order to achieve these objectives a more rigorous subject improvement action plan is required. Clear and measurable targets should be discussed during department meetings with progress monitored accordingly.

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 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 |
|---------------------|---|---|
| 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; |