

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection in Technical Graphics (TG) and Design &
Communication Graphics (DCG)**

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Cashel Community School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Dualla Road, Cashel, Co Tipperary.
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	91497A

Date of Inspection: 12-12-2019



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 and Design & 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 of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

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

Date of inspection	12-12-2019
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

Cashel Community School is a co-educational school operating under the combined trusteeship of the Christian Brothers, the Presentation Sisters and Tipperary Education and Training Board (ETB). The curriculum offered to the students is as follows: Junior Certificate, Transition Year (TY), the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- Teaching and learning in the graphics lessons observed was of a high standard.
- Students experienced a positive and multi-faceted approach to the teaching and learning of graphics subjects.
- Subject provision and whole school support for graphics subjects is very good.
- Planning and preparation for graphics subjects is of a high standard, with scope for development identified in the DCG TY plan.
- Planning for the new Junior Cycle Graphics specification is advancing well, with scope for development identified through the further integration of assessment into the department's planned units of learning.

Recommendations

- The subject department's DCG programme and plan should be reviewed to reflect the principles of the TY programme.
- Junior Cycle Graphics units of learning should be reviewed in order to identify closer links between the identified learning outcomes, the teaching and learning strategies, and more significantly, ongoing assessments.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- Teaching and learning in the graphics lessons observed was very good overall.
- All lessons had clear learning intentions. Sometimes, these learning intentions were explicitly outlined at the beginning of lessons. In all instances, there were very good levels of clarity regarding teachers' expectations.
- Lesson content was pitched at appropriate levels for class groups. In first-year lessons, teachers facilitated a multi-faceted approach to students' learning. This approach was characterised by the use of interesting and novel strategies that included the creation and manipulation of parametric models and the use of augmented reality to support students' visualisation of three-dimensional objects.
- Teachers' demonstration techniques were very effective. Animations were also used effectively to support students' sequential problem-solving and graphical construction skills.
- Students received good levels of formative feedback throughout the lessons observed. At junior cycle, some teachers utilised a 'traffic light' system to gauge student understanding and this approach worked well. Individual students were given affirmation for work completed and areas to support further development were also identified.
- Structured self-assessment tasks were incorporated successfully into a sixth-year lesson. This approach helped students to identify personalised success criteria and will ultimately help them to inform their own learning through the ongoing negotiation of success criteria for DCG assignments.
- Differentiated approaches were clearly observed in a junior cycle lesson. Extension activities were prepared to support more able learners. Additional differentiated methods should be explored where appropriate. Opportunities to promote problem-solving were identified in some lessons. Where possible and appropriate, this good practice should be further developed as part of the department's engagement with differentiated methods.
- Students experienced a wide variety of strategies aimed at supporting and furthering their learning. Information and communication technologies (ICT) were utilised extensively and productively. Collaborative learning opportunities were successfully incorporated into lessons. These approaches supported and facilitated greater levels of student engagement than some of the individual tasks assigned.
- In one lesson, first-year students were given the opportunity to engage with basic parametric modelling techniques. This lesson included a task that required the students to generate a parametric model of a cone by revolving a triangular profile around a central axis. This enabled students to visualise the creation of a three-dimensional model from a two-dimensional shape. This key learning intention should be revisited in greater depth throughout the students' experience of JC Graphics, thereby building upon their learning and understanding in a measured and incremental manner.
- Student learning was of a good standard. Students' drawings were generally neat, accurate and completed in a timely manner. Students demonstrated good knowledge and were capable of applying this knowledge when challenged. This application of knowledge was apparent when students were asked to find the centre of a circle, generate a solid model from a plane figure and determine the apex of a roof in a two-point perspective drawing.
- Students' uptake of higher level and their attainment at higher level is very good overall.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Subject provision and whole school support for graphics subjects is very good.
- Graphics subjects are very well provided for on the school's curriculum. All students have the opportunity to sample Graphics in first year. This is generally provided through the allocation of four periods per week for half of the school year.
- DCG is provided as an optional module in TY. In order to maximise student exposure to DCG at senior cycle, the subject department should continue to review the current model of provision utilised in TY. This review should be carried out in close consultation with senior management.
- Uptake of graphics is very good at junior cycle. At senior cycle, the uptake of DCG should be closely monitored to ensure that the ongoing viability of the subject is not threatened due to lower numbers of students choosing DCG in fifth year.
- Teaching and learning facilities used for graphics subject are good. The subject department should prioritise the identification of potential digital resources that could be beneficial for students' experiences and outcomes in Graphics.
- There are five teachers in the subject department. Attendance at relevant continuing professional development courses is facilitated and encouraged by school management. In addition to this, one member of the subject department is currently engaged on a part-time basis with the Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) support service. These engagements help to support the development of subject department planning.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Planning and preparation for graphics subjects is of a high standard.
- A comprehensive subject plan has been compiled and is maintained by the subject co-ordinator. Regular meetings of the department are held and records of the decisions and actions taken are included in the plan.
- The subject department has developed a number of units of learning for first-year Graphics. These units are in line with the process espoused by the JCT and the approach taken should be continued. To further improve these units, closer links should be made between the identified learning outcomes, the teaching and learning strategies, and more significantly, ongoing assessments.
- Technical Graphics and DCG subject plans are largely content based. Subject plans outline medium and long-term plans of work, lists of assessment practices utilised by the department and resources and teaching aids used to support learning.
- The current DCG TY plan requires development. The plan should be re-developed to include greater diversity particularly relating to students' experiences of the module. It is important to ensure that students' experiences are both educationally worthwhile and offer them an insight into Leaving Certificate DCG. This review should be prioritised, particularly in light of the recent reduction in uptake of DCG by fifth year students.
- Teachers' preparation in advance of lessons was comprehensive and supported students' learning effectively. Teaching aids, models and other supporting materials impacted positively on learners' experiences generally and supported specific aspects of the curriculum. This level of preparedness is commended.

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 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;