

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Technical Graphics and Design
and Communication Graphics
REPORT**

**Desmond College
Newcastle West, County Limerick
Roll number: 71790J**

Date of inspection: 6th May 2016



**AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS**

**REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN TECHNICAL GRAPHICS AND
DESIGN AND COMMUNICATION GRAPHICS**

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

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| Date of inspection | 6 th May 2016 |
| Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and teachers• Interaction with students | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during four class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers |

MAIN FINDINGS

- A consistent level of good quality teaching and learning was observed during the evaluation.
- Teachers utilised very good presentation techniques and modelled good practice effectively.
- In all instances, students were motivated and actively engaged in the tasks assigned to them.
- In recent years, slightly less than half of the junior cycle cohort have chosen ordinary level Technical Graphics in Junior Certificate examinations.
- Assessment practices and procedures are underdeveloped for graphics subjects.
- Design and Communication Graphics (DCG) is not provided in the school's Transition Year (TY) programme.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- The subject department should devise and implement a robust assessment system that will support student learning with a view to raising the proportion of students choosing higher level at junior cycle.
 - Senior management and the subject department should explore the possibility of including a graphics module within the school's Transition Year (TY) curriculum.
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INTRODUCTION

Desmond College is a co-educational school that is managed under the auspices of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (ETB). The school has a current enrolment of 418 students. At junior cycle, students are offered the Junior Certificate and the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP). Senior cycle students may choose to take part in the school's optional TY programme prior to enrolling in the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), the established Leaving Certificate or the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- A consistent level of good quality teaching and learning was observed during the evaluation.
- In all instances, learning objectives were shared with students at the beginning of lessons. In some cases, learning was assessed periodically and learning outcomes were revisited. This good practice should be extended throughout the subject department with particular attention given to identifying any shortfalls in student learning in order to positively impact future teaching.
- Students were given some good opportunities to solve problems and to develop their understanding by applying skills to previously unseen tasks. This approach fostered creativity and encouraged students to identify alternative solutions where possible.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) was utilised effectively. In one instance, senior cycle students were provided with a three-dimensional representation of an assigned task. This enabled students to view the task from all perspectives thereby improving their ability to visualise and interpret two-dimensional drawings.
- A collaborative task was incorporated effectively into a junior cycle lesson effectively. This revision exercise focused on transformation geometry but also incorporated aspects of peer assessment. This resulted in a very good level of discussion and dialogue that encouraged students to identify areas for improvement and to provide the associated formative feedback to their peers.
- Teachers used questioning to ascertain the level of learning achieved during lessons. Generally, questioning was global in nature and this often resulted in chorus answering from students. Greater consideration should be given to the suitability of questioning strategies with greater use of direct questioning, wait time, redirection and prompting, where appropriate.
- Students' motivation was high and a positive work ethic was observed in all lessons. The quality of learning was appropriate and students' competence and proficiency in the lessons observed indicated a good level of overall ability. Student drawings were generally neat and students exhibited a satisfactory level of draughting in all settings observed.
- In recent years, slightly less than half of the junior cycle cohort have chosen ordinary level Technical Graphics (TG) in the Junior Certificate examinations. The subject department should work towards addressing this issue and focus upon increasing the proportion of students successfully sitting the higher level examination at junior cycle.
- Students' classwork is reviewed and teachers administered good quality oral formative feedback during lessons. While students' portfolio work is monitored by teachers, there is

a need to develop a robust system of formative feedback that will help students to identify their areas for development and enable teachers to scaffold the requisite improvement. This system should also help to identify students whose quality of work is fluctuating thereby helping teachers to address these issues in a timelier manner.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Uptake of graphics subjects is good at both junior and senior cycle. School management has shown commitment to graphics by providing two TG class groups in the current third-year group. While resource intensive, this has facilitated and enabled a number of students' to have optional subject choice.
- Currently, first-year students take part in a six-week subject sampling programme. A similar system does not exist at senior cycle. School management and the subject department should work towards developing a modular TY programme in DCG that would further support senior cycle students in making their optional subject choices prior to entering fifth year. This module should be devised in cognisance of the skill and knowledge base of students who may or may not have studied TG at junior cycle. Possible areas of study that may be incorporated into an effective TY module could include freehand sketching and parametric modelling.
- Overall, TG and DCG are well resourced and supported by school management. There are currently two classrooms utilised for TG and DCG in the school. One room is fully ICT enabled for DCG purposes and has an appropriate number of personal computers to support the teaching, learning and assessment requirements of the parametric modelling aspect of the syllabus.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Good quality collaboratively developed plans, including yearly curricular plans, were made available during the evaluation. These plans include information pertaining to support for students with additional educational needs and various assessment for learning initiatives and strategies encountered through whole-school continuing professional development engagements. The subject department should prioritise and implement these planned initiatives, particularly those that outline methods that promote high quality formative feedback.
- Records of planning meetings are maintained, as is good practice. These records demonstrate that the majority of planning time is dedicated to organisational and administrative issues such as procurement of materials and the repair and maintenance of workshop machinery. The graphics teachers should ensure that teaching and learning in TG and DCG is prioritised at all future planning meetings.
- Teachers individual planning and preparation for the lessons observed was very good.

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.

Published June 2016