

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

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

**De La Salle College
Newtown, Waterford
Roll number: 649500**

Date of inspection: 4 December 2013



**A N R O I N N | D E P A R T M E N T O F
O I D E A C H A I S | E D U C A T I O N
A G U S S C I L E A N N A | A N D S K I L L S**

REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN TECHNICAL GRAPHICS
(TG) AND DESIGN AND COMMUNICATION GRAPHICS (DCG)

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	4 December 2013
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussions with principal and teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during nine class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and subject teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from good to very good.
- Good quality assessment was an integral component in the lessons observed.
- The presentation techniques employed by teachers were varied and effective with some development needed in the area of demonstration media.
- Students were actively and meaningfully engaged in structured learning tasks and activities in all of the lessons observed.
- Qualified teachers are appropriately deployed to teach graphics subjects, however there are limited opportunities for rotation among the subject department to teach at senior cycle.
- The quality of subject planning for the teaching of graphics subjects is good, particularly in relation to the resources and teaching aids which have been developed and shared among the subject teachers.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- The subject department should consider introducing a portfolio assessment component to complement the terminal assessment procedures already in place at junior cycle.
 - Senior management and the subject department should explore collaboratively the possibilities for facilitating greater opportunities for teachers to teach DCG in order to maintain and maximise teachers' professional capacity.
 - The subject department should work towards combining their extensive subject plans into one document that can be used in a more practical way to frame the delivery of all the graphics subjects in the school.
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INTRODUCTION

De La Salle College is an all boys voluntary secondary school with a current enrolment of 1,215 students. Graphics subjects are offered in the school's Junior Certificate, optional Transition Year (TY) and established Leaving Certificate programmes.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching ranged from good to very good. All lessons observed were characterised by effective teaching and high levels of student learning, skill development and engagement.
- All lessons had a very clear learning intention. These intentions were communicated with students at the beginning of most lessons. Teachers assessed students' achievement throughout lessons and gave very good oral formative feedback that contributed to their learning.
- Lessons were structured effectively. All concepts were introduced, developed, applied and reviewed. Content was introduced at appropriate stages in students' development and this succeeded in both reinforcing and challenging students' learning in many instances.
- Very good practice was observed in a few lessons where students were encouraged to work together in pairs. When this was structured appropriately through clearly defining students' roles and the required outcomes, the activities increased students' levels of accountability and promoted meaningful collaboration. All methods to further increase student accountability for their learning should be explored and adopted where appropriate.
- Teachers utilised very good quality presentation techniques in all lessons. Blackboard drawings were clear and accurate and good quality electronic data was displayed to assist students' concept attainment. Additional demonstration media should be explored in order to maximise students' visualisation and to promote modelling of good draughting practices.
- Questioning was a key assessment strategy used in all lessons observed. In most instances, recall type questions were used to ascertain levels of understanding. In a few lessons, higher-order questions were posed and these challenged students and engaged them at a higher cognitive level. This form of questioning should be expanded where appropriate.
- Teachers monitor and correct students' drawings regularly. Students received good levels of written feedback and clear indications on how to improve. To further embed assessment for learning in the assessment practices at junior cycle, the subject department should consider introducing a portfolio assessment component to complement the terminal assessment procedures already in place
- Good levels of student autonomy, independent challenges and opportunities to problem solve were apparent in a number of lessons. These good practices should continue to be extended across the subject department, for example, through increased focus on sketching, rough work and short concept focused tasks.
- Students in all lessons were active and engaged in their learning activities. Tasks were short and focussed and appropriate to the ability levels of students. In some instances, differentiated worksheets were provided and these helped students' progress at a rate appropriate to their abilities. The incorporation of partially completed worksheets should

be considered by the subject department particularly, for revision exercises and when focusing on specific concepts in single lesson periods.

- In most lessons, subject specific terminology was highlighted and reinforced. As part of subject planning, the graphics department should identify a common approach to developing students' literacy abilities particularly, in relation to subject specific terminology.
- Student behaviour was exemplary in all lessons observed. A positive rapport was evident in the interactions between students and teachers and this resulted in the creation of a mutually respectful environment conducive to teaching and learning.
- In general, student learning was very good and draughting skills were appropriate to the students' age and abilities. Uptake of higher level is good in certificate examinations and students' attainment at both levels is good overall.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Graphics subjects are popular among the students of De La Salle College. There are ten class groups in the school's junior cycle and five class groups in the school's senior cycle programmes. The time allocated to these groups is appropriate, consisting of four periods per week at junior cycle and five periods per week at senior cycle.
- Class periods are scheduled appropriately and are composed of both double and single periods as is common practice.
- The deployment of teachers to graphics subjects is in line with their qualifications. During the course of the evaluation, some teachers expressed an interest to teach DCG at senior cycle in order to maintain their professional capacity. This should be explored and facilitated in a measured and collaborative manner.
- There are three specialist graphics rooms in the school. One of these rooms is designed to cater for DCG and is well equipped with the appropriate information and communication technology (ICT) hardware and parametric modelling software. The remaining two graphics rooms are generally allocated to TG. All graphics rooms have appropriate levels of integrated ICT for demonstration purposes.
- Optional subject bands are devised based upon students' preferences. This provides all students with the opportunity to study TG at junior cycle. At senior cycle, optional bands are devised in a similar manner and all students, irrespective of their experience of graphics at junior cycle may choose to study DCG.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- School management facilitates collaborative subject planning. A subject co-ordinator has been appointed and this role is rotated among the members of the subject department regularly.
- Planning meetings have resulted in the development of subject plans for both TG and DCG. These plans outline the key content areas to be taught in each year of the curricular programme. Good work has been done in recent years to develop these plans. To embed meaningful planning, the subject department should work towards amalgamating the plans for TG and DCG and creating a working document that identifies appropriate

methodologies and assessments with hyperlinks to the subject department's extensive electronic resources and teaching aids.

- Good levels of collaboration and sharing of resources was evident during the evaluation. A shared electronic network is utilised very effectively to facilitate the sharing of the subject department's extensive amount of high quality teaching aids and resources
- Teachers' individual planning and preparation for lessons was very good in all instances. Resources and appropriate teaching aids were prepared in advance and incorporated into lessons to improve students' learning experiences.

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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Technology Department of De La Salle College would like to thank the Inspectorate for the Report received following the inspection of DCG and Tech. Graphics. It welcomes the positive findings of teaching and learning, the high level of preparation and planning and the positive learning atmosphere generated in the classes observed. We appreciate the Report's acknowledgement of the quality of subject planning for the teaching of graphics subjects, particularly in relation to the use of resources and teaching aids which have been developed and shared among the subject teachers.

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

De La Salle College technology department has actively reviewed the recommendations with the view to implementing the following:

- Portfolio work to be introduced as part of student assessment.
- Continued development of a subject plan in the form of one electronic working document.

Many positive practices have been identified in the Report and were detailed at the time of the Inspection. The content of this report will be used to further develop the good practices in place for the benefit of the pupils at De La Salle College.