

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of Music  
REPORT**

**Gaelcholáiste Reachrann  
Domhnach Míde, Baile Átha Cliath 13  
Roll number: 76085N**

**Date of inspection: 18 April 2012**



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 MUSIC**

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	17 and 18 April 2012
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during five class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- The quality of teaching and learning in Music is very good in this school.
- All lessons were appropriately paced, purposeful and sequential.
- Students' work is assessed but there are areas for development in this regard.
- Music-making activities featured in all lessons including the performance of rhythms.
- The uptake of music is very good.
- Planning and preparation for all lessons was very good but the level of collaborative planning is limited.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- There is a need to ensure that students' work is marked regularly and that the application of assessment criteria is consistent across the music department.
  - It is important to allow students to clap rhythm patterns independently of the teacher.
  - Given the level of complementary skills and expertise that exist in the department, there is scope to increase the level of collaborative planning.
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Gaelcholáiste Reachrann shares a campus with Grange Community College. The school caters for 304 male and female students. Education is provided through the medium of Irish. The school offers the Junior Certificate (JC), Transition Year (TY) and Leaving Certificate (LC) programmes.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- The quality of teaching and learning in Music is very good in this school. Learning objectives were shared with students at the outset.
- In one instance, different components of the syllabus were integrated into lessons, thus providing a stimulating learning environment for students. In other lessons, students practised for their impending certificate performance assessment which, given the time of year, was appropriate.
- All lessons were appropriately paced, purposeful and sequential. A range of methodologies was used but there is scope to integrate pair work and group work for some composing activities.
- Students' skills development was a key feature of all lessons. For example, students' practical and composing skills were well developed during one lesson. In addition, opportunities were taken to integrate performing with composing to very good effect.
- Music literacy and numeracy development was well integrated into each lesson. This worked very well when teachers circulated the room providing support to individual students.
- Very good links were established with prior learning at the outset of lessons. This approach supported continuity, the integration of new material and seamless lesson development. Strategies deployed consolidated learning and students' preparedness for examinations.
- Classroom management was very good overall and classroom organisation generally facilitated learning. However, in one lesson, a small minority of students who were not required to participate in the class-based practical activity were assigned written work. These students were not monitored during the lesson and over time, became disengaged from their work. In a lesson such as this, it is important to monitor all students as they work to ensure that all tasks are completed within the allocated time.
- All students were well supported in their learning through effective differentiation strategies. Teachers had high expectations of students, commensurate with their abilities and learning styles.
- Music-making activities featured in all lessons and these included the performance of rhythm patterns. However, in order to determine the students' ability to clap accurately, opportunities should be given to them to perform independently of the teacher.
- Learning was enhanced through the excellent teacher-student rapport, very good atmosphere, high expectations and affirmation of students' efforts evident in all lessons. Students were facilitated to be active in their learning and this, together with the very positive classroom atmosphere, supported high levels of student participation and motivation.

- Very good efforts have been made to create a vibrant learning atmosphere. Posters containing illustrations of varied music concepts across the different strands of Music are on display. However, the extent of these varied between both classrooms. This should be addressed.
- Assessment of students' work was ongoing during lessons and students' work is being assessed. However, there are some areas for development in this regard: there is scope for both teachers to mark students' work more frequently; teacher profiles of students' work should include homework; both teachers should swap over samples of students' written work and assess it in addition to practical activities to ensure that marking procedures are consistent across the music department.
- Teachers are also providing students with many handouts and worksheets to support their learning and this is very good. However, it is important that students be taught to store all such materials carefully which, in turn, should be regularly monitored by teachers.

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

- The uptake of Music both in junior cycle and in senior cycle is very good. The inclusion of Music as a compulsory component of the TY programme is also very good as it enhances skills development and supports students in making an informed decision when choosing Music for the LC programme.
- Timetabled provision for Music is in line with syllabus recommendations.
- Music technology is available as an option for the practical component of certificate examinations.
- Two music rooms are available for the teaching of Music and this is very good. One teacher has been allocated a pre-fabricated building. As funding becomes available, the acquisition of a keyboard will enhance the resources in this room.
- The music department is staffed by two fully qualified music teachers. Relevant continuing professional development (CPD) courses, further study and membership of a professional subject association are supported by senior management and the board of management. Attendance at conferences hosted by the Post-Primary Music Teachers' Association (PPMTA) is encouraged for both teachers.
- Students are afforded the opportunity to participate in a range of music-related co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and the commitment of music teachers in this regard is commended.
- Modes of assessment include formal examinations, continuous assessment and some monitoring of homework. A parent-teacher meeting is held annually for each year group and reports are sent to parents during the year.

### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Formal time is allocated to the Music department to meet but no records have been kept of any such meetings. It is important that detailed minutes which reflect the range of topics being discussed are kept.

- Individual planning for lessons is very good. However, given the level of expertise and the complementary skills that exist within the music department, there is scope to increase the level of collaborative planning. In so doing, this will provide valuable opportunities to share ideas and good practices.
- Subject planning should be developed by setting long-term targets for the development of the music department, and schemes of work should indicate how the three components of Music are being integrated.
- The planned programme for TY is very good and contains a broad range of activities for students.

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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 on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.