

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of Music  
REPORT Gaelcholáiste Chill Dara  
Kildare  
Roll number: 68072I**

**Date of inspection: 16 October 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 MUSIC**

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	15 and 16 October 2013
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and teacher</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning in one single and two double class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teacher</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- The quality of teaching and learning was good with some instances of very good practice.
- The teaching strategies deployed did not always facilitate an appropriate level of student input.
- Practical music-making activities were a feature in some lessons as students were provided with some opportunities to display their performing skills.
- Meticulous attention was paid to the development of students' music literacy skills in the medium of Irish.
- Management is supportive with regard to provision and uptake trends are very good.
- Students' learning was assessed appropriately in some lessons when adequate time was provided to them to respond to questions.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The music department should ensure that every opportunity is provided to students to actively participate in their own learning by expanding on the current variety of teaching and learning methodologies.
  - Assessment strategies could be further enhanced by ensuring that students are afforded adequate time to respond to questions during lessons and by increasing the level of monitoring of their written work.
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Gael-Choláiste Chill Dara is a voluntary co-educational secondary school operating under the trusteeship of Foras Pátrúnachta na Scoileanna Lán Ghaeilge Teo. The school was founded in 2003 and comprises 231 students. Transition Year is compulsory in the school and Music is mandatory within this programme.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- The quality of teaching observed was good with some instances of very good practice. For instance, the three components of Music, listening, composing and performing were effectively integrated into some lessons.
- While the aim of lessons was clear, the learning intention was not shared with students. It is important that students are aware of what is expected of them in terms of knowledge and skills development.
- Teaching methodologies included the provision of information, group performance, independent research work and the integration of information and communication technology (ICT). The range of strategies employed in lessons could be increased to include pair and group work.
- During one lesson, a traditional lecture style approach was adopted which meant that students were passive for an extended period of time. While this approach may be appropriate for a portion of a lesson, care should be taken to ensure that there is a better balance between teacher and student input.
- The development of music literacy was effectively integrated into lessons and meticulous attention was paid to the development of the technical language of Music through the medium of Irish.
- In one lesson, good efforts were made to extend students' skills as autonomous learners during an information and communications (ICT) exercise.
- Good efforts were made to create a learning environment that was visually stimulating for students as posters containing illustrations across a range of topics were on display.
- Occasionally, students' learning was assessed in lessons through the use of questions. However, in some cases, inadequate time was afforded to students to respond. It is essential that students are given every opportunity to respond to questions and where necessary, challenged to improve the quality of their answers. Such a strategy is in keeping with good assessment for learning strategies.
- Students' written work is being assessed but there is scope to enhance this provision. In addition, peer and self-assessment are two further modes of assessment that could be utilised.

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

- Management is very supportive of Music in the school regarding resources and timetabling allocation. At the time of the evaluation, music lessons were delivered in a small pre-fabricated building as the school was undergoing extensive renovations. The school has indicated that a larger room will be made available to the music department upon completion of the building work.

- Timetabling provision is appropriate for all year groups and is in line with syllabus guidelines. However, due to the enrolment numbers, fifth-year students are set with sixth-year students for many subjects. This can be challenging for the music department especially when there is a different syllabus in each year group.
- First-year students are provided with a short sampling programme and this helps to ensure that students make informed choices regarding their subject options.
- The music department is staffed by one fully qualified teacher. Attendance at conferences hosted by the Post-Primary Music Teachers' Association (PPMTA) has been very good here. In addition, a great deal of professional development has been undertaken in the area of ICT
- Students are afforded the opportunity to participate in a wide range of practical music-making activities. These include a school-based competition entitled 'Gael factor', and various concerts and events throughout the year. The commitment of the teacher in the provision of all such activities is commended.

#### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Management facilitates planning through the provision of formal planning time throughout the year. Commendably, the music teacher has met with music teachers from neighbouring schools to discuss matters of mutual interest. It would be useful to maintain some record of these discussions as part of the subject plan.
- In all lessons, materials and equipment were prepared in advance and ready for inclusion in lessons.
- Much time and effort has been spent in creating music resources in the medium of Irish. This is very good.

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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject teacher 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**

We are very happy with the recommendations that are in this report. We liked the process and the music teacher learnt a lot of useful things from this inspection. We think that the music department is functioning at a very satisfactory level and appropriate acknowledgement and praise was given to the department in this report.

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

An action plan is being implemented by the music department with additional emphasis placed on the following aspects of teaching.

- 1 Questioning in line with assessment for learning strategies
- 2 Increasing the input of students in lessons
- 3 Strengthening the learning through performance as a methodology
- 4 Developing strategies, for example group work, self-evaluation and peer evaluation.

