An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Music
REPORT

Coláiste Pobail Osraí
Ormond Road, Kilkenny
Roll number: 70641K

Date of inspection: 11 October 2013
REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN MUSIC

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

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<th>Dates of inspection</th>
<th>10 and 11 October 2013</th>
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<td><strong>Inspection activities undertaken</strong></td>
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<td>• Review of relevant documents</td>
<td>• Observation of teaching and learning during one double and two single class periods</td>
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<td>• Discussion with principal and teacher</td>
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MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was very good with some excellent practices in place.
- Meticulous attention was paid to the development of students’ practical, aural and composing skills.
- Students’ progress and competence is monitored and assessed effectively by a range of assessment modes.
- The music room is thoroughly organised and vibrant, with many posters containing illustrations of varied music topics on display.
- There is a strong commitment to continuing professional development in the music department.
- Planning for Music is very good and the subject department plan is clearly a working document which has been adapted where necessary.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Students should be expected to recall the learning of previous lessons.
- A wider range of assessment strategies such as targeted questioning, peer and self-assessment could be implemented.
INTRODUCTION

Coláiste Pobail Osraí became a separate Gaelscoláiste maintained by Kilkenny Vocational Education Committee (VEC) in 2007. It is a co-educational school in which Irish is the first language and medium of instruction for all subjects except English. The school has a current enrolment of 179 students. Music is an optional subject on the curriculum for all year groups with the exception of first year and Transition Year (TY).

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was very good with some excellent practices in place.
- All lessons were very well structured, appropriately paced with a very good balance between teacher and student input. The learning outcomes were communicated very clearly at the outset, and revisited at the end of lessons. These are very good strategies. However, it is important that students are required to recall the learning of previous lessons.
- The teaching strategies employed ensured that students were actively engaged in the lessons. Creative teaching methodologies were used, such as musical bingo, which contributed to the high levels of student motivation in lessons.
- Practical music-making activities were included in all lessons and commendably, the three components of Music, listening, composing and performing, were integrated into the learning experience. For instance, in a listening lesson, students sang to reinforce their knowledge regarding various theoretical concepts.
- The ‘Sound before Symbol’ approach to the teaching of Music was effectively adopted in all classes visited.
- Meticulous attention was paid to the development of students’ practical, aural and composing skills.
- Differentiated strategies were used, thus catering for the different learning styles of students.
- The development of music literacy and numeracy was well integrated into each lesson. Students were challenged to make use of technical language when providing responses to questions. In many instances, the questions used were thought-provoking and designed to encourage students to develop their independent analytical skills.
- However, questions were generally directed to the whole class group. It is important to target questions directly at named students in addition to the general class group so that as many students as possible are involved in the learning process.
- Students’ progress and competence is monitored and assessed effectively by a range of assessment modes including oral questioning, homework assignments, and continuous monitoring of students’ written and practical work. In line with good practice, students are provided with constructive comments to aid improvement. Peer and self-assessment strategies could also be implemented.
- Learning was at the core of all lessons observed and the quality displayed by the students was very good.
• A warm classroom atmosphere was evident in all classes visited. Students were encouraged and affirmed for their efforts.

• The music room is meticulously organised and vibrant, with many posters containing illustrations of varied music topics on display.

**SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

• Management is very supportive with regard to provision for the subject. Access and uptake are very good and appropriate provision is made in all curricular programmes.

• Timetabling for Music is in line with syllabus guidelines. The school operates a shared timetable with St Kieran’s College for some optional subjects. When necessary, students have the option of studying Music in St Kieran’s College if subject bands in Pobail Scoil Osrai are unsuitable.

• A large and spacious room is available for all music lessons.

• It is good practice that music technology is taught beyond the practical requirements for certificate examinations.

• Management supports and encourages the teacher to engage with any initiatives that arise relating to continuing professional development in music education. The teacher has availed of many opportunities, including attendance at annual conferences hosted by the Post-Primary Music Teachers’ Association (PPMTA) as well as local meetings. The music teacher plans to obtain a higher diploma in the area of special educational needs. This commitment to continuing professional development is highly commended.

• Students are afforded the opportunity to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These include participation in the school choir, traditional Irish music group, trips and local music festivals where the school has enjoyed considerable success. Strong links have been established with the local community as students have performed at various events in the city.

**PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

• The music department comprises one fully qualified teacher.

• Comprehensive planning documents which contained much information were presented during the evaluation. Skills development, the progression of learning and the integration of the three disciplines of Music are core features of the planning documentation. Evidence was provided that these plans are working documents and have been adapted where necessary.

• High quality planning and preparation was observed throughout the course of the evaluation. Much time and effort has been spent by the teacher in developing a wide range of resources and materials in Irish to support students’ learning.

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 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.

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