

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Music
REPORT

Our Lady of Mercy College
Beaumont, Dublin 9
Roll number: 60870T

Date of inspection: 10 November 2011



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**

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	10 November 2011
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 five class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- In all lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning was very good.
- Practical music-making activities were integrated into all lessons visited.
- Very good questioning strategies were deployed in all lessons inspected.
- Assessment of students' work varied but was very good in some lessons observed. However, records of students' progress in homework and class-work activities were limited.
- Choir is a core component of the music programme for all year groups in this school and this provision is highly commended.
- It is evident that music teachers are working very well together and collaborate on all curricular and extra-curricular activities.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is a need for the music department to agree a format regarding the documentation of students' progress in both homework and class-work assignments so that there is a more tangible profile on each student.
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INTRODUCTION

Our Lady of Mercy College, Beaumont caters for 333 girls. The school offers Music as an optional subject within the Junior Certificate and the Leaving Certificate programmes. It is also a mandatory component of the Transition Year (TY) programme.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was very good. In every case, lessons were purposeful, logical, sequential and suitably paced.
- Where appropriate, good links were made to previous lessons.
- Both teachers have a high level of awareness of their students' needs and are differentiating appropriately.
- A wide variety of methodologies was used in all lessons observed and, as appropriate, this included the integration of the three components of Music: listening, composing and performing. To enhance learning when students are being introduced to a new piece of Music, there should be some focus to ensure that they are all engaging with the listening activity.
- Practical music-making activities were integrated in the lessons visited.
- It is evident that students are being thoroughly taught regarding posture, stance and breathing in choir. Meticulous attention has also been paid to the development of good pitching as well as rhythmical and aural awareness.
- Questioning strategies deployed were varied. There was a very good balance between questions which required a defined answer and those which required students to think analytically at a higher cognitive level.
- In all classrooms visited, the quality of learning was very good and students rose very well to all challenges posed by teachers. It is evident that learning is placed at the core of all activities.
- Students are consistently encouraged to develop their musical vocabulary and literacy skills.
- Commendably, opportunities were provided to students to work independently from the teacher. This was evident where students performed the recorder or clapped a range of rhythm patterns.
- Classroom management, regarding discipline, was very good.
- In all lessons inspected, teachers had established a mutually respectful rapport with their students who were engaged and motivated in all activities.
- Good efforts have been made to acquire or create posters containing illustrations of various music concepts. However, there is scope to increase these materials in order to further enhance the learning environment.
- Assessment of students' work varied in the lessons observed. Very good practice was seen where students' work was being marked regularly and annotated appropriately.

- Profiling students' progress in class-work and homework activities is an area for development. There is a need for the music department to agree targets in this regard so that there is a more tangible profile on each student.
- Music teachers should now exchange samples of student work to ensure that there is consistency of marking across the department.
- Information regarding achievement in certificate examinations is available and analysed each year by the school. It is good to note that this information is being used to guide teaching and learning in the department.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Timetabling of Music is in line with syllabus recommendations.
- The systems in place for students to select their optional subjects are appropriate.
- Choir is a core component of the music programme for all year groups in this school and this provision is highly commended.
- There is a very healthy uptake of Music in all year groups.
- The resources and facilities for music are very good. Music technology is available as an option for the practical component of certificate examinations.
- The music department now comprises two fully qualified teachers: one teacher has taught in the school for a considerable length of time while the second teacher joined the music department in 2010. This increase in staffing is an indication of the high profile which Music has in this school.
- The school is very supportive of teachers engaging in continuing professional development (CPD) and the level of engagement by both teachers in this regard is good. Both have attended courses offered by the Post-Primary Music Teachers' Association (PPMTA).
- Commendably, students are afforded the opportunity to participate in a range of music activities. Included in this are the following: piano, guitar and vocal training lessons; participation in the annual musical production; school-based talent competitions; participation in county-based choir competitions.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Management is supportive of collaborative planning and schedules formal meeting times for all subject departments, including Music.
- It is evident that this music department is working very well and collaborates on both curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- The quality of planning for lessons is very good.
- A subject department plan has been developed which includes a broad outline of programme content, which is time-bound, for each year group. Over a prolonged period,

this plan could be developed further by documenting methodologies being used by individual teachers in the delivery of topics.

- In addition, consideration needs to be given to how music teachers will cater for the literacy and numeracy needs of students. This should form part of whole-school planning so that the plan reflects some practices that are already happening in lessons.

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.