An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Design and Communication Graphics
REPORT

Presentation College
Putland Road, Bray
County Wicklow
Roll number: 61800D

Date of inspection: 8 December 2011
REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN DESIGN AND COMMUNICATION GRAPHICS

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

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<td>• Discussion with principal and teacher</td>
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MAIN FINDINGS

• Overall teaching and learning was good with improvements required in the modelling and display of constructions and the incorporation of assessment into the teaching and learning of the subject.

• All lessons had a clear learning intention and were sequenced and paced appropriately.

• A significant level of oral feedback was administered to students during all of the lessons observed.

• Within the context of the school’s provision of graphics subjects, the overall level of student learning is satisfactory.

• The graphics education provision in Presentation College is limited and consists of a compulsory Design and Communication Graphics (DCG) module in Transition Year (TY) and optional DCG in fifth and sixth year.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

• The subject department should ensure that the level of display and presentation is exemplary in order to provide students with a model of best practice.

• Assessment for learning practices should be incorporated into all lessons.

• Senior management should undertake a technology subjects audit in order to determine the viability of Technical Graphics (TG) and to ensure that students’ preferences are central to the ongoing development of the school’s curriculum.
INTRODUCTION
Presentation College offers Design and Communication Graphics (DCG) as a compulsory component of its optional Transition Year (TY) programme and as an optional subject in its Leaving Certificate programme. The school has a current enrolment of 616 students and has recently relocated to a new building adjacent to the school’s original site. The school does not offer Technical Graphics (TG) as part of its junior cycle curriculum.

TEACHING AND LEARNING
• All lessons observed were structured appropriately and adhered to curricular plans. This ensured that lesson content reinforced prior learning and developed students’ knowledge in an incremental manner.

• The primary methodology employed to facilitate learning was teacher demonstration. These demonstrations were given to individuals throughout lessons and to the entire group when required. Group demonstrations were carried out with the assistance of the classroom visualiser and occasionally through the incorporation of sketching. Constructions displayed for teaching purposes should be improved in order to achieve a consistently high standard. This could easily be achieved by maximising the display space available and modelling construction practices using appropriate software or board drawing techniques.

• Students were given a good level of independence in relation to completing their leaving certificate assignments. Good explanations and clear directions were given to students particularly in the area of creating photo-realistic images of their computer-generated models. These demonstrations were carried out using the data projector and allowed students to view the required procedures before attempting to apply their knowledge.

• Students experimented with various materials and backgrounds enabling them to develop their skills independently. Student outputs were of a suitably high standard and showed a good level of progression from their initial assignment ideas.

• Student learning was at a level appropriate to their experience of the subject. Students in fifth and sixth year who take part in the school’s TY programme benefit considerably from their participation in the programme and it was reported that having completed the module they find the syllabus more accessible. Considering their exposure to the subject, students’ draughting skills are good.

• Students received considerable levels of oral formative feedback throughout the lessons observed. In order to maximise the benefits of assessment and to include it as an integral component of all lessons, the subject department should incorporate elements of self-assessment and peer assessment into lessons. In doing so, students would be encouraged to take ownership of their learning and critique their work in a developmental manner. These practices would help to improve students’ overall engagement in the learning process.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT
• DCG is provided for all TY students and offered to all students in fifth year. Currently junior cycle students cannot study Technical Graphics (TG). In order to provide students with a more varied junior cycle curriculum and to help develop students’ visualisation and presentation skills, senior management should seriously examine the potential
The introduction of TG to the school’s junior certificate programme as part of a technology subjects audit. While uptake of DCG is good, there is significant potential for the development of technology subjects on the school’s curriculum. DCG is currently the only technology subject that is provided for senior cycle students even though Materials Technology (Wood) is a popular choice among junior cycle students. The proposed technology subjects audit should ensure that students’ preferences are central to the future development of the curriculum.

- The scheduling of DCG lessons is appropriate. Lessons are delivered in both single and double periods and the time allocated to the subject is in line with common practice.
- The facilities and resources provided for the subject are considerable. These resources are well maintained and utilised effectively. Information and communication technology (ICT) resources are readily available in the classroom thereby enabling visual displays to be incorporated into lessons easily.
- Currently there are two teachers deployed to teach DCG, one of whom takes the vast majority of class groups. As part of the technology provision audit the future deployment of staff within the subject area should be reviewed to ensure that capacity is developed.

**PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- A subject co-ordinator is assigned to DCG. Planning meetings are facilitated by senior management on a cyclical basis allowing members of subject departments to attend meetings of their second-subject groups.
- Curricular plans have been developed for DCG. These plans clearly outline desired learning outcomes for students and are structured within key timeframes.
- The TY plan places a significant emphasis on basic key skill development. As no students have prior experience of the subject this is essential and provides students who take part in TY with a level of expertise in the subject. If students had the opportunity to study TG a more innovative TY programme could be developed. However due to the school’s current curricular limitations basic skill development currently takes precedence over providing students with a more varied and collaborative learning experience.
- Planning and preparation for the lessons observed was satisfactory and the incorporation of information and communication technology resources enhanced students’ learning.

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

Board accepts validity of suggestion to introduce TG in Junior Cycle

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

Introduction in Junior Cycle has been discussed with parents of incoming 1st Years. May not be possible to introduce for September 2012 but is on the agenda for 2013.