

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Music
REPORT**

**Coláiste Bríde
Clondalkin, Dublin 22
Roll number: 60122D**

Date of inspection: 28 January 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

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	25 and 28 January 2013
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 four single and one double class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed ranged from quite good to very good, with many exemplary practices noted.
- In some instances, students were requested to summarise the learning from the lesson and this strategy should be more widely used.
- Learning was at the core of all lessons observed and differentiated strategies were utilised.
- Provision for music is optimal and the uptake is very good.
- There is a very strong commitment by the teachers to personal continuing professional development (CPD).
- Planning and preparation for lessons was generally of a very high standard.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- In double periods, attention needs to be given to ensuring that an appropriate quantity of content is delivered so that all learning opportunities are fully optimised.
- There is scope for music teachers to swap students' work and moderate assessment practices in written and practical components.
- The music plan should be further developed so that it reflects all of the very good practices that are being used in lessons.

INTRODUCTION

Coláiste Bríde is a girls' voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of the Catholic Education in Irish Schools Trust (CEIST). Enrolment in the current school year is 939. In addition to the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes, the school offers the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), the Transition Year programme (TY), the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching ranged from quite good to very good, with many exemplary practices noted.
- Good efforts were made to share the purpose of the lesson with students and to highlight links with new topics and students' existing experiences and knowledge.
- In some instances, students were requested to summarise the learning from the lesson. This is good practice and one which should be employed by all teachers.
- In all lessons, there was a definite emphasis on the development of students' skills, including composing and performing.
- The development of music literacy and numeracy were well integrated into each lesson. For instance, in one lesson, attention was paid to students' oral literacy when, having engaged in group work, they were required to present their findings to the class group and to explain the rationale for their responses.
- The three components of Music, listening, composing and performing, were successfully integrated into many lessons. The wider use of this strategy is recommended.
- Methodologies frequently involved students in activity-based learning. Examples included the use of keyboards, music technology and recorder to reinforce theoretical concepts.
- Overall, the level of content delivered was appropriate to the time allocation. This should be adopted in all lessons.
- Opportunities were provided to students to work independently of the teacher in some lessons. For instance, good practice was observed when a student led the class in a performing activity. This allowed the teacher to circulate the room and provide additional support where necessary.
- Learning was at the core of all lessons observed. Strategies used by teachers to evaluate students' learning included peer assessment and the use of 'Show Me' boards.
- The classroom atmosphere was enhanced through the excellent student-teacher rapport and the high expectations which teachers set. Students' contributions were strongly encouraged and affirmed in all lessons.
- The music room is vibrant and very well organised with many posters containing illustrations of varied music topics on display.
- Formative assessment strategies were well employed in all lessons. Exemplary practice was observed when marking criteria was shared and discussed with the students to support their learning.

- The music department has paid meticulous attention to the development and implementation of laudable assessment practices. This was evident from an examination of students' written materials. Good practice was observed when comments indicating strategies for improvement were provided. Recent experience in the school highlighted the importance of teachers employed for short periods of time, to be aware of and to implement consistently the assessment policy of the music department.
- Commendably, some teachers expect students to store all materials in folders. However, it is important that this work is monitored from time to time as part of the assessment practices of the department. There is scope for music teachers to swap students' work and moderate assessment practices in both written and practical components.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The uptake of Music is very good.
- Timetable provision for Music is in line with syllabus recommendations.
- Commendably, two music classes have been created in TY to cater for the differing levels: these consist of a rotating modular class group and a year-long music class group. The provision of a timetabled period for choir is also noteworthy.
- Resources for Music are excellent. It is good to note that the use of music technology is very well advanced in this school.
- The music department is staffed by three, fully qualified music teachers. It is very apparent that these teachers are working well together.
- Attendance at relevant CPD courses is strongly supported by senior management. There has been a high level of attendance at courses provided by the Post-Primary Music Teachers' Association (PPMTA) and the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). Other courses attended include a Samba Workshop in Athlone Education Centre and a Choir Conducting Course in University College Cork. This commitment to professional development is highly commended.
- Students are provided with the opportunity to participate in a range of extracurricular and co-curricular activities. The commitment and dedication of the music teachers in this regard is acknowledged.
- Modes of assessment include formal examinations and regular class assessments. Reports are issued to parents during the year and annual parent-teacher meetings are held for each year group.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Planning and preparation for lessons was generally of a very high standard. This helped to ensure quality in the delivery of lessons and in supporting students in their work. The teachers have invested much time in the creation of materials which are designed to cater for students' needs. These are electronically stored and accessible to the music department.
- A subject plan was presented and this contained a large quantity of information. It is good to note that every year, all subject departments, including music, are required by the

board to develop an action plan containing targets for the subject. Each department reviews progress at the end of the year and submits a report to the board.

- Programmes of work have been developed for all year groups but, in some cases, there is scope to readjust these schemes.
- In addition, the following is recommended: topics should be linked to learning outcomes, methodologies, resources and assessment; the current allocation of time to the development of keyboard skills in first year needs to be reviewed; the manner in which the different components of Music are integrated should also be reflected in the plan and include Irish Music. This will ensure that the plan reflects all of the very good practices observed in lessons.
- Planning in TY is very good. Two distinct programmes of music have been created and these have been tailored to suit the abilities of the students in each group.

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, 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.

The Board of Management of Coláiste Bríde wishes to take this opportunity to thank the Inspector for the report issued and the professional conduct of the inspection.

The Board also wishes to praise the excellent work of the teachers in teaching and learning within the Music Department and for further inspiring students on a daily basis to add to the positive atmosphere in the school and play a very visible role at all school functions.

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

Methodologies:

These will be included in schemes of work for 2013/2014, alongside learning outcomes. A list of specific music methodologies relating to all music topics will be compiled by all teachers.

Class Content and Time Allocation re Double Periods:

The recommendation has already been taken on board by all teachers of music and discussed at the Music Department meeting.

Assessment

The performance of the concert, which takes place before the practical music exam, will be included as a means of practical assessment

Teachers have already begun to share and swap students' work as a means of assessment. Students have shown favour to this.

To be included in Curriculum Action Plan 2013-14.

Monitoring of Students Work

Folders of 5th and 6th year students are now inspected every Friday and more emphasis will be placed on this in 2013-2014.

Schemes

The First Year scheme has already been adjusted for the current academic year. All schemes will be reviewed in 2013-2014.