

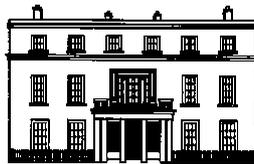
An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Technical Graphics and Design
and Communication Graphics
REPORT**

**Newtown School
Waterford
Roll number: 65010R**

Date of inspection: 23 February 2012



**AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS**

REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN TECHNICAL GRAPHICS
(TG) AND DESIGN AND COMMUNICATION GRAPHICS (DCG)

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	23 February 2012
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and teacher• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during three class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teacher

MAIN FINDINGS

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the graphics lessons observed was very good.
- When utilised, collaborative learning activities created vibrant and dynamic lessons.
- Good levels of formative assessment were observed with an emphasis placed upon encouraging aspects of self-directed revision with some groups.
- Students achieve very well at their chosen level in certificate examinations with almost all senior cycle students choosing higher level.
- Currently no graphics module is offered to TY students.
- Planning is progressing very well with some areas for development in medium to long-term strategic planning for the subject.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- To further enhance students' engagement in their learning, the subject department should consider extending the use of directed questioning, wait-time and possibly the integration of collaborative practices such as think-pair-share into teaching and learning activities.
- Every effort should be made to include a graphics module in the school's TY programme.
- To improve the very good level of planning already in place, medium to long-term goals should be identified by the subject department. A strategic approach should then be taken to achieving these goals using a SMART planning model.

INTRODUCTION

Newtown School is a fee-paying co-educational voluntary secondary school guided by a Quaker ethos that accommodates both day and boarding students. The school has a current enrolment of 301. The school offers TG as an optional subject in its Junior Certificate programme and DCG as an optional subject in its Leaving Certificate programme. Currently the school does not offer DCG in its compulsory Transition Year (TY) programme.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed in graphics lessons was very good.
- All lessons were well structured with lesson content developed using a sequential approach. This enabled the teacher to incorporate appropriate learning activities into each lesson in a planned and effective manner.
- Each lesson observed had a very clear desired learning outcome for students. In some instances the inclusion of a short recapitulation of the key points or concepts during a focused summary would have been beneficial.
- Teacher demonstrations were very clear and utilised information and communication technology (ICT) effectively. Demonstrations carried out at the classroom board enhanced students' understanding of the subject matter and allowed them to model best practice. To improve students' draughting and problem-solving skills, further emphasis should be placed upon indexing points in multi-view drawings and the adoption of appropriate rendering techniques that would add to the visual impact of their work.
- Where collaborative practices were utilised, lessons were dynamic and participative. This was particularly identifiable in one lesson where a thematic, design-based approach was adopted to develop students' knowledge, understanding and practical skills. This innovative approach is commended.
- Questioning was primarily global in nature. To enhance the benefits of questioning, further consideration should be given to increasing the level of directed questioning, the use of appropriate wait-time to enable students to formulate answers and possibly the integration of collaborative practices such as think-pair-share into question and answer activities.
- Good levels of formative feedback were administered to students. This feedback took the form of both oral and written developmental guidance. In addition to this good practice, students were encouraged to make additional explanatory and critical notes on drawings in order to aid their revision of the topic. These assessment for learning practices are commended and should be further developed where appropriate.
- Student behaviour was exemplary and interactions between teacher and students were both courteous and respectful.
- The graphics room is very well equipped. ICT is integrated effectively enabling electronic resources to be incorporated into the students' learning experiences easily.
- Students' portfolio and class work is well monitored and maintained. The quality of draughting is appropriate to the students' levels and abilities and demonstrates the importance placed upon presentation by the subject department.

- Uptake of higher level is very good. This is particularly the case at senior cycle where almost all students choose higher level. Attainment at both higher and ordinary level is good with students achieving a broad range of positive results at both levels.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Graphics subjects are available as optional components in the school's Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes.
- Currently, graphics is not offered as part of the school's compulsory TY programme. Until recently the subject department had a successful link with a local architectural company. Unfortunately this link no longer exists. To address this deficit every effort should now be made to include some element of DCG in the school's TY programme as it would help students to make better informed optional subject choices when entering fifth year. This would also provide all students with the opportunity to sample a worthwhile and educationally valuable graphics and design module.
- The time allocated to both TG and DCG is adequate and the scheduling of these class periods is appropriate.
- Uptake of graphics subjects is good and the proportion of boys and girls choosing the subjects is positive. In order to maintain this trend and to ensure that first-year students in particular choose their optional subjects based upon their knowledge, skills and aptitudes, the subject department should work collaboratively with senior management in devising additional interventions aimed at further informing incoming first-year students.
- The graphics department receives a good level of support from senior management. This support manifests itself in the provision of subject-specific resources and also in the facilitation and encouragement of ongoing professional development. The subject department has attended all of the continuing professional development courses delivered by the Technology Subjects Support Service and additional whole-school seminars on subject planning and inclusive education.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Graphics subject planning is well developed in Newtown School.
 - Detailed curricular plans have been devised and these plans are based upon developing specific learning outcomes for students.
 - Resources that can be integrated to specific lessons are identified and filed according to topic enabling ease of access and utilisation.
 - All lessons were very well planned and the resources that were prepared in advance added to the students' learning experiences.
 - To improve the very good level of planning already in place, medium to long-term goals should be identified by the subject department. A strategic approach should then be taken to achieving these goals using a SMART planning model. Possible areas for development could include reintroducing DCG to TY and improving the manner in which first-year students and their parents are informed about optional subjects prior to entry.
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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.

Published March 2013.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The school welcomes this report which highlights the very good standard of teaching and learning that takes place in the Graphics Department

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

Following the recommendations the school has introduced a Design module into Transition Year. This module involves;

- Design research and investigation
- Communication of design and computer graphics
- Freehand sketching
- Technical drawing
- Manufacture / Modelling of artefacts

This module is a collaborative approach to learning between the Graphics department and the Materials Tech/ Construction studies department.