

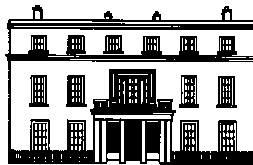
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

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

**St Declan's Community College  
Kilmacthomas, County Waterford  
Roll number: 72230W**

**Date of inspection: 13 May 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 TECHNICAL GRAPHICS AND**  
**DESIGN AND COMMUNICATION GRAPHICS**

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Date of inspection</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> May 2011
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during three class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- Students and teachers have access to high quality specialist rooms that are well equipped and maintained.
- The subject department is committed to developing the subjects in the school and the members of the department have engaged collaboratively and individually in appropriate professional development courses.
- Subject planning has developed to an appropriate level; however, there is scope for development in the planning of the Transition Year Design and Communication Graphics module and in the identification of assessment criteria for learning outcomes.
- Lessons observed were well planned, structured and delivered to facilitate good levels of student learning.
- Formative assessment of students' work was a core activity of the teaching and learning process.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Senior management should ensure that all class groups receive appropriate time allocations.
  - Senior management and the subject department should consider providing Design and Communications Graphics (DCG) for all Transition Year (TY) students.
  - The TY DCG module should be reviewed in order to ensure that it is taught and studied in an interesting and innovative manner.
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## **INTRODUCTION**

St Declan's Community College offers Technical Graphics (TG) and DCG as optional subjects in the school's Junior Certificate, TY and Leaving Certificate programmes. The school serves students from its locality and surrounding hinterland and has a current enrolment of 683. The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix to this report.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- A high quality work ethic permeated all lessons observed during the evaluation. Students were given considerable responsibility and took ownership of their learning in many respects.
- The primary methodology employed was teacher demonstration. Students reinforced their learning through the completion of focused activities and questions. Teachers used their time effectively enabling them to give advice and guidance to all students.
- Teachers utilised both global and directed questioning. Questioning was most effective when directed at individuals and used to elicit specific information regarding procedures, concepts and the problems posed by more difficult questions.
- Formative assessment was apparent in all lessons observed. Developmental feedback was administered primarily to individuals during student activities. In doing so students were made acutely aware of their areas for development and of their individual strengths. This very good practice is commended.
- Topics were progressed at a pace that was appropriate to students' familiarity with the concept at hand. Revision tasks were progressed promptly while new subject matter was delivered at a more deliberate pace that allowed students to gain a more comprehensive understanding of new subject matter.
- Teachers utilised sketching to good effect. By displaying partial solutions on the classroom board teachers helped students to identify specific areas of difficulty and to address more challenging aspects of the syllabuses, particularly those that required students to solve problems and to develop design-based solutions.
- Teachers maintained high expectations of student achievement. Detailed assessment records are maintained allowing students, teachers and parents to gauge development and to identify areas for improvement. This data-driven model of student evaluation is effective.
- Students were very well behaved in all lessons observed. Teacher-student relationships were positive and built upon mutual respect.
- Students exhibited interest and curiosity in the subject matter. They were keen to discuss their work and were proud of their achievements. The students' willingness to discuss graphics and design demonstrated their competence in articulating their understanding of the subject area.
- Overall student learning and skill development were of a high standard. Students' drawings, problem-solving, draughting and research skills demonstrated this good level of learning.

- Uptake of higher level and attainment in certificate examinations is good at both levels.

#### **SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- The school offers TG and DCG as optional subjects to all students.
- The allocation of class periods is in most instances appropriate. An additional period is recommended in both second year and TY.
- First-year students are given the opportunity to choose two optional subjects from a possible six. Option bands are then devised based upon students' preferences as is good practice. In order to help parents and students make fully informed decisions an open evening is held in the school. As there is a considerable level of choice for students, consideration should also be given to providing students with the opportunity to take part in a short subject sampling programme.
- In order to maximise student awareness of the new syllabus, senior management in consultation with the programme co-ordinator and subject department should consider providing DCG for all TY students on a rotational basis.
- The school's specialist facilities are very well resourced and maintained to a high level. Significant efforts have been put into their development and both management and staff are commended in this regard.
- School management has supported and facilitated the subject department's participation in continuing professional development courses provided by the Technology Subjects Support Service.

#### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The role of the subject co-ordinator is clearly outlined and has resulted in good progress being made in subject planning. To develop capacity within the subject department, consideration should be given to rotating this position among all members of the teaching team.
- To lead subject planning within the department, the co-ordinator should ensure that a pedagogical component is included on each planning meeting's agenda. This could include discussions regarding topic development, student assessment criteria and presentation techniques. In time this should result in the development of reflective practices such as peer observation and mentoring.
- Subject plans have been developed for TG and DCG. These plans could be merged to form a coherent plan for the teaching and learning of graphics subjects in the school. This would reduce repetition and provide a good basis for the further development of the plan with the focus placed upon identifying assessment criteria for identified learning outcomes.
- The current plan for the graphics module in TY requires review. This should be informed by the principles of TY. Active teaching and learning methods should be central to the module plan. The further development of TY students' graphical presentation and design skills should be carried out in a collaborative manner where appropriate.
- Teachers have developed some very good individual planning systems. In one instance this plan provided students with an overarching framework allowing them to progress

independently, at a pace appropriate to their level while remaining focused on the topics outlined by the teacher.

- Teachers were very well prepared for lessons. Appropriate teaching aids and information and communication technology resources were integrated into lessons effectively.

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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and the subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

*Published November 2011*

# **Appendix**

## **School response to the report**

### **Submitted by the Board of Management**

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

1. 2<sup>nd</sup> Year & 4<sup>th</sup> Year now have appropriate time allocations.
2. The T.Y D.C.G module will be reviewed during this academic year.