

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Music
REPORT**

Wesley College, Ballinteer

Dublin 16

Roll number: 61010U

Date of inspection: 12 November 2015



**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	11 and 12 November
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal, deputy principal, vice principal and teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during three single and three double periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal, vice principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was very good.
- Components of Music were integrated successfully in lessons and students performed either individually or as a class to reinforce particular compositional or analytical features.
- A good range of teaching and learning methodologies was used in lessons but there is scope for further development in this regard.
- Differentiated teaching occurred in some lessons either when students completed appropriate worksheets or when teachers posed questions which challenged the more able student.
- Whole-school support for Music is very good and provision for first year and Transition Year (TY) students is particularly noteworthy.
- The music department comprises a core team of three teachers; two permanent whole-time (PWT) and one teacher employed directly by the school.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- The music department should expand on the good range of methodologies already in use by collectively developing the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and by a greater use of collaborative learning strategies.
- Greater use should be made of differentiated teaching and learning strategies in lessons.
- Optimal deployment has not been made of the PWT teaching hours and this needs to be addressed.

INTRODUCTION

Wesley College, is a co-educational, fee-charging school with a current enrolment of 912 students. It provides the Junior Certificate programme, the Leaving Certificate programme and a mandatory (TY) programme. Music is available to all students in all programmes.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was very good.
- In many instances, the aims of the lessons, stated in terms of the topics to be taught, were shared with students. However, where appropriate, lessons should commence with a clear statement of the learning intentions expressed in terms of the knowledge and skills that will be developed.
- All lessons contained links with previous learning, were structured well and had a clear purpose.
- Components of Music were integrated successfully in lessons and students performed either individually or as a class to reinforce particular compositional or analytical features.
- In most cases, autonomy was given to students to lead particular activities while teachers effectively facilitated the learning and provided short, clear inputs as necessary. Allowing students to take ownership of the learning environment as was observed in most lessons is very good practice.
- A good range of teaching and learning methodologies was deployed and, in one instance, included the use of concrete materials to consolidate learning.
- ICT was used in some lessons as a mechanism for playing music, with the exception of one music technology lesson. There is scope to increase and vary the use of ICT in music lessons. The music department is urged to use the expertise that currently exists within it to plan towards the increased integration and varied use of ICT into lessons where appropriate.
- Differentiated teaching occurred in some lessons either when students completed appropriate worksheets or when teachers posed questions which challenged the more able student. Greater use should be made of differentiated teaching and learning strategies in lessons to cater for the range of learning needs of students.
- Students worked independently on tasks and engaged well with them. The music department should increase the use of collaborative strategies such as pair and group work as a mechanism for further engaging students.
- Much time and effort has been spent by the music department on devising worksheets and handouts for students. These were effectively used at appropriate stages of lessons.
- A variety of questions was used, and meticulous attention was paid in most lessons to the consolidation of learning throughout the lesson. Questions were particularly effective when students were challenged to improve their answers.
- The development of students' literacy and numeracy skills featured in all lessons and students used music terminology readily when responding to oral or written questions.

- The quality of learning demonstrated by students was very good. A variety of effective assessment strategies was used in lessons including the use of 'Show me Boards'. In general, students' written work is assessed regularly and formative feedback is provided.
- Overall, classroom management was very good. However, in one instance, excessive attention was given to a minority of students which resulted in other students disengaging during part of the lesson. In such cases, care should be taken to ensure that all students are involved in all stages of lessons.
- All lessons were characterised by a warm atmosphere with very good interpersonal relationships evident between the teacher and students.
- Students' attainment in the certificate examinations is very good.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Whole-school support for Music is very good in terms of resources and facilities which include three music rooms and a music technology laboratory. However, there is a need to provide higher-quality speakers in two of the music rooms and to ensure that they are mounted on either side of the white board for optimal acoustical effect.
- Timetabling arrangements are in line with syllabus recommendations. Provision for first-year students and TY students is particularly noteworthy. A mandatory music module is provided to first-year students until Christmas. In addition, first-year students may also study Junior Certificate Music. It is very good that these two courses of study complement each other.
- In TY, three different music modules, including a music technology course, are available to students. This provision ensures that the varied needs of students are being met.
- The music department comprises a core team of three teachers; two permanent whole-time (PWT) and one teacher employed directly by the school. Optimal deployment has not been made of the PWT teaching hours and this needs to be addressed.
- In addition to the core team, two other teachers provide extra support. A number of part-time teachers provide instrumental and vocal lessons and this is very good
- Some of the teachers have availed of the valuable opportunity to meet other professionals and share ideas at events such as those organised by the Post-Primary Music Teachers' Association and the Professional Development Service for Teachers.
- A wide array of additional activities is available to students including: a traditional Irish group, a chamber choir and orchestra, and junior and senior choral groups. The time and effort that music teachers give to these activities is commendable. The school also allocates a portion of the teachers' timetables to these activities and this information should be recorded on their timetables in the interest of transparency and accountability.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Formal planning time is made available for all subject departments to meet. The music department also devotes time to planning at informal meetings.

- Minutes of meetings illustrate that the music department commendably has reviewed and adapted the music plan over time. Discussions have also taken place regarding assessment, and teaching and learning strategies.
- The music plan contains much information such as termly and monthly programmes of work for all year groups. The plan also contains a developmental section showing the long-term and medium-term vision for the department. It is recommended in order to enhance this very good work that attention is paid to planning for the greater integration of differentiated teaching and learning strategies in lessons.
- The levels of planning and preparation demonstrated by all teachers were excellent.
- Good records are maintained by music teachers and these include records of assessments as well as daily tracking of work being covered.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal, vice principal and music 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.