

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

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

**Coláiste an Chreagáin
Mountbellew, County Galway
Roll number: 71290M**

Date of inspection: 13 May 2014



**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 DESIGN AND
COMMUNICATION GRAPHICS AND TECHNICAL GRAPHICS

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	13 May 2014
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with acting principal and teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during three class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to acting principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- Good quality teaching was observed in each of the lessons, which were well structured and paced.
- The classroom atmosphere was very good.
- Learning was good throughout.
- The subjects are well timetabled with good provision for equipment and materials.
- The arrangements for subject choice are student-based and effective.
- Subject department planning is of a high standard with well-developed written plans.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- The amount of collaborative learning should be increased in lessons.
 - Students should be provided with more regular and more extended opportunities for making oral contributions to lessons.
 - The modes of assessment used should be detailed in the subject plan and shared with students to further support their learning.
 - The subject plan should be further developed to detail more clearly the teaching methodologies and strategies to be employed.
-

INTRODUCTION

Coláiste an Chreagáin is a small co-educational rural post-primary school which provides for the educational needs of students mainly from the countryside surrounding the town of Mountbellew in East Galway. The school operates under the auspices of the Galway and Roscommon Educational and Training Board. The technologies are well represented in the school's curriculum with Materials Technology (Wood) and Metalwork in junior cycle and Construction Studies and Engineering in senior cycle as well as Technical Graphics (TG) and Design and Communication Graphics (DCG), the subject of this inspection report. The Transition Year Programme is not offered at present.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Good quality teaching was observed in each of the lessons, which were well structured and paced. Learning outcomes were written on the whiteboard at the outset and the lessons started with an exploration of the students' previous knowledge through teacher-led questioning.
- Ongoing assessment in lessons was mainly provided by teacher questioning which was skilled and varied. Good use was made of peer demonstration when students were brought to the front of the class to demonstrate the use of drawing instruments in a first-year lesson. This is a promising approach which should be further developed. Consideration should also be given to acquiring a document camera or *visualiser* to facilitate the display of work being done on the drawing board by the teacher or students.
- The written feedback seen in students' folders provides a good opportunity for the further development of effective assessment for learning. It was observed that detailed feedback focused more often on areas for improvement while positive feedback was general. Opportunities to provide detailed specific positive written feedback should be used to reinforce students' learning wherever possible.
- While classroom management was very good throughout, there was considerable scope for further development of collaborative learning to add more variety to the students' experience of learning. The teaching approaches were essentially teacher-led. It is recommended that students be provided with a greater level of challenge by working in groups to discover solutions to problems which they then share with their peers.
- Students demonstrated a knowledge and understanding of the subjects in line with expectations for students of their age and experience. This indicated that effective learning was taking place.
- The development of students' literacy skills was not systematically addressed in the lessons. More care should be taken in this area, displaying difficult subject-related terminology accurately in the classroom and engaging students in its use whenever the possibility arises. In particular, opportunities should be created for more extended oral contributions by students. This can be helped by students being tasked with explaining and describing the outcomes of problem solving done in groups.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The teaching of TG and DCG is well supported by the timetable with the customary number of periods allocated and a good weekly distribution of teaching time. While it

was noted that DCG in fifth year had no double-period lesson at the time of the inspection this is expected to be corrected in the forthcoming school year to facilitate completion of more extended tasks.

- The arrangements for subject choice in first year and fifth year are fair and transparent and meet the needs of students within the resources available to the school. First-year students are provided with experience of each of the optional subjects before making their choices. The school responds to the curricular needs of students with flexibility despite the small enrolment. Subject option bands are devised in response to students' preferences. Advice on subject choice is provided on an individual basis and informed choice is left to the student and parents concerned.
- There is a clear whole-school policy on assessment which is followed in TG and DCG. Assessments are conducted regularly. However, the system of continuous assessment should be described more clearly in the subject plan and shared with the students to make them more aware of their own learning. Consultation and collaboration with the other technology subjects should be used to provide a common approach, where possible, for aspects of assessment such as the balancing of marks for class work, homework, projects and examinations when arriving at end-of-term results.
- The subjects are very well resourced. The specialist room is large and well lit. There are information and communication technology (ICT) facilities for student use and ICT is used very effectively in teaching. The hardware and software would benefit from upgrading to remain capable of running the necessary *SolidWorks* software.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Subject department planning is active and well developed and an outline subject plan is in place that forms a very good basis for further development. The principal area of the plan that requires further development is the inclusion of more detail around the selection and development of a broader range of teaching methodologies for specific topics. A tabulated layout of the programmes of work should be considered, with columns for each aspect of planning, such as planned lesson outcomes, resources, teaching methodology and assessment.
 - The re-establishment of a department of the technologies, as previously in place, is recommended. This department should have an overall co-ordinator chosen in rotation. Innovation in teaching methodologies and strategies should be on the agenda for each meeting of this department and the teachers of the technologies should share their expertise in areas such as collaborative group-learning strategies. The outcomes of the meetings should be used in the further development of the individual subject plans.
 - Lesson planning was of a high standard throughout. Work was carefully planned and monitored. Students maintained folders of their completed work.
 - Students' attendance, involvement and progress are carefully monitored and recorded by the teachers, taking full advantage of the small numbers to enhance student care. Information is shared with parents through the students' journals, parent-teacher meetings and school reports.
-

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the acting 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; a response was not received from the board.

Published November 2014