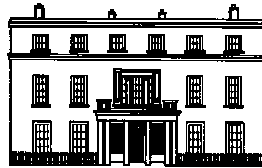


An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

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

**Leixlip Community School
Leixlip, Co. Kildare
Roll number: 91371B**

Date of inspection: 14 February 2014



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

**REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN TECHNICAL GRAPHICS AND
DESIGN AND COMMUNICATION GRAPHICS**

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	13-14 February 2014
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 six class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- Good quality, effective teaching was observed in all lessons, with some instances of very good practice.
- Student learning was good or very good in the lessons observed.
- All lessons were well structured and incorporated effective teacher demonstration and independent student work.
- There was scope for a broader range of teaching strategies and for a more developed student learning experience.
- Whole-school support for the provision of graphics subjects is very good.
- An integrated electronic platform incorporating a resource archive, a student assessment facility and a lesson planning portal has been developed within the subject department.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- More diverse teaching and learning strategies should be used in an integrated manner, to support the students' different learning styles and abilities.
 - An increased emphasis on students assessing and directing their own learning is recommended.
 - The subject department should record the progress made on the issues identified in their planning meetings.
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INTRODUCTION

Leixlip Community School is a co-educational post-primary school with a current enrolment of 665 students. The school provides Technical Graphics (TG) as an optional subject in its junior cycle programme and Design and Communication Graphics (DCG) as an optional subject in its Leaving Certificate programme. Graphics and Constructions Studies is also included as a module in the school's Leaving Certificate Applied programme. Currently, the subject is not included as part of the school's optional Transition Year (TY) programme.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Good quality, effective teaching was observed in all lessons with some instances of very good and highly effective practice.
- Student learning was good or very good, as demonstrated by the quality of students' portfolio work and class work.
- All lessons commenced with a sharing of the aim of the lesson, and the lessons were delivered in a manner that developed the subject matter in an incremental manner. One lesson made particularly good use of questioning to access and assess prior learning through the use of very effective probing and higher-order questioning. This very good practice should be extended to all lessons.
- Teacher demonstration, undertaken in an effective and very competent manner, was the principal method employed to guide new learning. Independent student work, supported by teacher input, was the predominant methodology and worked well for students who fully comprehended the demonstration. It is recommended that a broader range of methodologies, including collaborative learning practices, be employed to support learning for all students.
- In the lessons observed, good and effective use of supporting resources such as solid models, blackboard demonstration and parametric modelling supported the teachers' demonstrations. It is recommended that these resources, together with the modelling of success criteria and the display of student work, be used in an integrated manner in all lessons, to support the students' different learning styles and abilities.
- In the majority of lessons, very effective co-curricular reference served to contextualise the subject matter and to enhance student engagement. All students worked very diligently and were supported by affirming teaching styles that created a positive learning environment. There was a very strong sense of procedure and a coherent structure in all lessons.
- Records of student progress, including summative and formative assessment, are maintained. This very good practice is to be further encouraged, and the use of two-strand comments, to affirm quality work and guide improvement, is suggested.
- Corrected homework was returned to students during lessons, accompanied by some very effective oral feedback on their work. To improve the completion rate of student work, it is advised that a formatively assessed portfolio be included as part of each student's terminal examination.
- Though students' work was central to all lessons, a strongly teacher-led approach in one lesson and the lack of opportunity in general for students to describe, discuss and articulate their learning, limited the potential for student learning and for literacy development. Therefore, it is recommended that students be provided with time to reflect

on their work and to annotate their drawings. This would facilitate students assessing and directing their own learning.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Graphics subjects are very well supported in the school. Teachers of the subject are regularly rotated to teach the junior and senior cycle programmes.
- The graphics classroom is well equipped and provides teachers and students with a very good facility for both teaching and learning. All graphics lessons are scheduled for the graphics classroom.
- The allocation and scheduling of class periods are good, with four class periods allocated per week to Junior Certificate and five to Leaving Certificate classes.
- Option bands for first and fifth-year students are based on student preferences. First-year students make their decision on subject choice before entry to the school. To provide the students with a better opportunity to assess their own suitability for the subject, it is suggested that a taster programme be considered in the context of the impending junior cycle reform.
- Students may choose DCG for Leaving Certificate without having studied TG, and students joining the school during a school year are also favourably considered by the subject department.
- Though there has been an increase in the number of students taking the subject in junior cycle, the number of students selecting DCG at senior cycle is low. To support the subject, it is recommended that a design-focused TY module be created and delivered by the technology department. This would provide students with more experience of DCG while also supporting the other technology subjects in senior cycle.
- Commendably, regular continuing professional development has been undertaken by the subject department teachers. This has included whole-school support and individual teacher initiative.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION.

- Good planning structures are in place in the school. The position of subject co-ordinator is rotated among members of the subject department. Records of meetings are maintained, and shared with school management, which is good practice.
- Meeting minutes indicate a reflective department, where issues of importance to the subject have been appropriately identified. It is recommended that this work be extended to put in place strategies to address and record progress on the issues identified.
- The subject plan includes a very comprehensive list of teaching methodologies and assessment for learning strategies. It is recommended that these methodologies and associated resources be integrated into all lessons. Further development of the existing curricular plans, particularly at Junior Certificate level, should be undertaken with a focus on methodologies and the use of resources.

- A very impressive electronic-based platform, developed by a member of the department, integrates lesson planning, resource archiving and sharing, and student assessment. This platform is available for use by all department members to support planning and to promote appropriate teaching and learning methodologies.
- The performance of students in certificate examinations is also recorded in the subject plan. Students typically perform very well at the level selected. It is recommended that the department's annual review ensure that students are encouraged to study the subject at an appropriately high level, and that teaching and learning strategies be put in place to support the attainment of this objective.

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

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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 welcomes this report and intends to build on the good practices identified and engage with the recommendations.

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