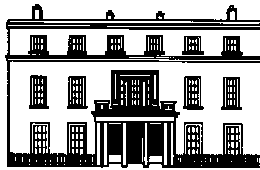


**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

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

**St. Benildus College**  
**Stillorgan, County Dublin**  
**Roll number: 60261R**

**Date of inspection: 14 November 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)**

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Date of inspection</b>	14 November 2012
<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 five class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- While there was evidence of effective classroom management and learning in all lessons observed, the quality of teaching varied considerably.
- Graphics subjects receive a high level of support from school management.
- Planning for the delivery of graphics subjects is good, particularly in relation to preparation of resources, with some scope for development in the area of curricular planning.
- Uptake of graphics subjects and achievement in certificate examinations has increased steadily over the past number of years and is particularly good at junior cycle.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Careful consideration should be given to the optimal sequencing and structuring of lessons with particular emphasis on the introduction, development, reinforcement and summation of lesson content.
  - Where student engagement and participation was identified as poor, strategies to address this should be identified, implemented and reviewed.
  - The practice of providing students with detailed written formative feedback should be extended across the subject department.
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## **INTRODUCTION**

St. Benildus College is a voluntary secondary school with a current enrolment of 730 students. The school offers TG as an optional subject in its Junior Certificate programme and DCG as an optional subject in its Leaving Certificate programme. A compulsory seven week graphics and design module is offered to students who choose to enrol in the school's Transition Year (TY) programme.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- While there was evidence of effective classroom management and learning in all lessons observed the quality of teaching observed included instances of fair, good and very effective practice.
- Each lesson observed had a clear learning outcome that provided the teacher with a focus for development. In almost all instances, these outcomes were not shared with students from the outset or reviewed during the summation of lessons. Explicit learning outcomes, differentiated according to students' abilities, should be identified, shared and reviewed during and at the end of all lessons, where appropriate.
- The structure and sequencing of lessons was best where students were guided through the lesson content in an incremental manner. This occurred when teacher demonstrations were followed by student activities. This approach was a key factor in the very good progress made by students partaking in the first-year sampling programme.
- Display and demonstration media were used very effectively during the lessons observed. Teachers' drawings were presented to students using appropriate display media and the use of these methods added to the students' experiences in all instances. In order to maximise the benefits of demonstration, teachers should ensure that all students are paying full attention and use direct questioning during these demonstrations to gauge student understanding and to engage and involve students in the process fully.
- Student engagement and interaction was poor in two of the five lessons observed. Strategies to maximise student participation should be identified, implemented and reviewed periodically. Co-operative learning strategies, brainstorming activities and placemat activities could be useful in this regard, particularly in lessons where innovation, creativity and design are key learning outcomes for students.
- In the majority of lessons, teacher circulation was good and oral formative feedback was given to students in a developmental manner. Very good practice was observed in two instances where good quality, personalised written feedback was given to students. This practice should be developed throughout the subject department.
- Student learning occurred in all lessons observed and overall, students' draughting skills were good. However, in some cases, the quality and depth of learning could have been improved by employing a more considered approach to managing and organising student learning activities.
- Uptake of higher level and attainment is very good at junior cycle in particular. Students achieve well at senior cycle and the subject department is commended for its high expectations for overall and individual student achievement.

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

- Graphics is provided for students in all curricular programmes offered in St. Benildus College. The time allocated to the subjects is in line with common practice and these lessons are appropriately timetabled throughout the week.
- The subject department receives a very good level of support from school management and this has resulted in the development of a well-equipped and well-maintained graphics classroom.
- Two suitably qualified teachers are deployed to class groups on a rotational basis. This enables both members of the subject department to deliver graphics at both junior and senior cycle as is good practice.
- The school has developed a wide range of effective strategies aimed at assisting students when choosing optional subjects. These strategies include a short sampling period at the beginning of first year, a compulsory graphics and design module during the school's TY and various information and advisory meetings for parents and students. These meetings help students to base their optional subject choices on their knowledge, skills and aptitude for the subject.
- While subject bands at junior cycle have remained relatively consistent over the past number of years, it was reported that student preferences underpin the formation of optional subject bands as is best practice.
- The uptake of graphics subjects in the school is increasing steadily. This bodes well for the future of the subject in the school.

## **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Structures to support subject planning are in place in St. Benildus College. Formal subject planning meetings are facilitated by school management three times per year. Records of these meetings are maintained as is good practice.
- A good quality graphics subject plan has been developed by the graphics department. This plan includes a section that details the organisation and provision for graphics subjects in the school and the subject department's policies in relation to differentiated teaching and assessment.
- Curricular plans have been developed for each year group. In the main, these plans are content based and framed by the student textbooks. In order to maximise the benefit of these curricular plans, the subject department should adopt a more student-based approach to curricular planning. This approach should focus on the desired learning outcomes for students and identify the most appropriate methodologies, resources and modes of assessment.
- The module plan for TY graphics and design has many positive elements and outlines a clear progression of learning during the seven-week module. The planned incorporation of active methodologies such as co-operative learning, peer review and oral presentation tasks have the potential to provide TY students with an interesting and educationally worthwhile experience. These strategies, once implemented, should be reviewed using student surveys and questionnaires to inform future TY modules.

- The subject plan includes a self-evaluation checklist that focuses on teaching and learning. This document will provide the subject department with an excellent resource when discussing classroom practices and teaching methodologies.
- The subject department has compiled a substantial catalogue of electronic and physical resources. Students may access these resources remotely thus helping them to reinforce class work. The subject department is commended for this level of preparation.

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