

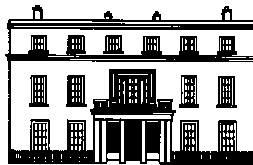
An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

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

**Saint Augustine's College
Dungarvan, County Waterford
Roll number: 64890W**

Date of inspection: 31 January 2012



**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

Date of inspection	31 January 2012
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 five class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The teaching and learning in the graphics lessons observed was highly effective in two lessons with some areas for improvement identified in one lesson.
- Effective differentiated teaching and assessment strategies were incorporated into the best lessons observed.
- An innovative assessment-for-learning approach is incorporated into most students' learning experiences at junior cycle.
- Graphics subjects receive very good levels of support from school management and are offered to students in all programmes provided by the college.
- Uptake of senior cycle Graphics has decreased in recent years.
- Planning is well developed at subject department level and consists of clear guidelines for the teaching of graphics subjects with a comprehensive approach taken to developing common curricular plans.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- To develop teaching and learning in Graphics, every effort should be made to include focused teacher demonstrations in all lessons and effective assessment strategies shared across the subject department.
 - To further promote the uptake of Graphics at Leaving Certificate level, the current Transition Year DCG module should be reviewed in order to enhance students' learning experiences and to incorporate the benefits of the assessment for learning strategies currently in operation with some junior cycle groups.
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INTRODUCTION

Saint Augustine's College offers Technical Graphics (TG) as an optional subject in its junior cycle programme and Design and Communication Graphics (DCG) as optional elements of its Transition Year (TY) programme and Leaving Certificate programme. The school is co-educational and has a current enrolment of 662.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The teaching and learning observed during the evaluation was highly effective in two lessons with some areas for improvement identified in one lesson.
- In the most successful lessons, learning outcomes were identified and shared with students at the beginning and reviewed at the end of lessons in order to determine students' levels of achievement. All lessons consolidated previous learning and the most effective lessons enabled students to develop their understanding of new concepts in a sequential manner.
- All lessons began with a brief teacher-led introduction. Examples of good practice included instances where teacher input, often in the form of demonstration, was followed by student activity in a cyclical manner throughout the duration of the lessons. In one instance, there was scope for development in relation to the level of formal instruction received by students. During this revision-based lesson, students would have benefited from a clear teacher demonstration that refocused them on their prior learning.
- Independent and autonomous student learning was promoted in all lessons. The most innovative method involved students developing their own presentation portfolio. This portfolio complemented students' drawing folders and allowed them to present examples of their work for assessment. In doing so, self-assessment practices and teacher-directed assessment for learning strategies were incorporated. This system should be adopted by all graphics teachers.
- When additional resources were utilised, lessons benefited accordingly. These resources encouraged active participation and often helped to scaffold students' work by placing appropriate emphasis on the key concepts of the lesson.
- Differentiated teaching and assessment techniques worked very well when integrated into lessons. Students progressed at a rate appropriate to their individual abilities. In the most successful lessons, students were given additional support or challenges when required. This approach is commended.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) was incorporated into all lessons observed. Effective use of ICT included electronic presentations, useful animations and good use of the visualiser. This technique provided students with very clear displays and also helped them to model best practice as demonstrated by the teacher.
- Teachers provided students with high levels of oral formative feedback throughout lessons observed. Affirmation was given to students when deserved and constructive advice was also offered when required. In one instance, a more robust system of assessment is required in relation to the correction and monitoring of students' portfolio work.
- Student behaviour was exemplary in all lessons observed. Classroom activities were well managed and students responded well to the responsibilities given to them.

- Student engagement in learning activities was very good. Student learning was good with clear developments in understanding observed during lessons.
- Uptake of higher level at junior cycle is very good. At senior cycle, uptake of higher level and attainment at both levels is appropriate to the ability ranges of students.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Graphics subjects are offered in all programmes in Saint Augustine's College. Generally, subjects are scheduled appropriately and teachers are deployed effectively. A system of rotation is employed allowing both members of the subject department to teach the subjects to the highest level.
- Technical Graphics is offered to all first-year students. After an initial sampling period, students choose the two optional subjects that they wish to continue studying as part of their Junior Certificate programme. During the optional TY programme, all students take part in a DCG module designed to develop their understanding of the subject at Leaving Certificate level. Uptake of TG is very good; however, uptake of senior cycle Graphics has decreased over the past number of years.
- The layout of the graphics room is an example of best practice. Each workstation is designed to incorporate and integrate ICT into students' learning experiences. Audio-visual displays and presentations can be incorporated into lessons easily and provide the subject department with effective tools to enhance the teaching and learning of the subjects.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The graphics subject department comprises two suitably qualified teachers. A convenor has been identified and this role is rotated annually. Good systems are in place to maintain and review the subject planning process and have resulted in the development of a very good-quality subject plan.
- The subject plan for TG and DCG consists of the general guidelines that have been developed in order to deliver the subjects and more detailed schemes of work that clearly identify desired learning outcomes for students at specific stages of their progression through the various syllabuses. An action plan has been developed to address the identified reduction in uptake of senior cycle graphics. This is a worthwhile endeavour and could be enhanced by identifying clear, measurable targets and further developing the strategies outlined within specified timeframes.
- A detailed TY plan has been developed for the four TY groups studying DCG. This plan should be streamlined in order to enhance students' experiences but also to harness their enthusiasm for the subject. The subject department should endeavour to use the DCG module as a promotional tool for the subject and incorporate alternative assessment techniques such as group project work, individual design-focused tasks and product design and marketing exercises. These activities could then form part of a TY exhibition event. The links already made with graphic and concept designers should benefit this evolving module.
- The level of planning and preparation for the lessons observed was in most cases excellent. Planned work was delivered in a sequential manner that reinforced prior

learning and also developed previously learned concepts. Extensive resources were prepared in advance of some lessons and were suitable to the topics at hand. The planned development of topic-specific audiovisual presentations should be progressed and the benefits evaluated within the subject department and in collaboration with the learning support department to identify the most applicable method of use.

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 of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

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