

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

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

**Confey Community College  
Leixlip, Co. Kildare  
Roll number: 70691C**

**Date of inspection: 4 February 2014**



**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>	4 February 2014
<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, deputy principal and subject teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- Good quality, effective teaching was observed in the majority of lessons.
- Overall, student learning was good or very good.
- Oral formative feedback was used to good effect in all lessons, with scope for development identified in the area of on-going formative assessment.
- Very good teacher-student relations were in evidence and students demonstrated a strong work ethic.
- Graphics subjects receive good support from school management in relation to facilities, resources and scheduling.
- Planning and preparation for lessons observed was very good, with some scope for development identified in the overall strategic planning practices of the subject department.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The key principles that underlie all relevant constructions and concepts should be revisited, reinforced and assessed regularly to enhance students' comprehension levels.
  - The subject department should develop and implement a formatively assessed portfolio as part of each student's terminal examination.
  - Subject department meetings should include the recording of discussion on teaching and learning issues and the progress made in respect of identified priority areas.
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Confey Community College is a co-educational community college under the patronage of Kildare and Wicklow ETB. It has a current enrolment of 785 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 the majority of lessons. In one lesson, there was scope for a deeper student learning experience.
- Overall, student learning was good or very good. This was demonstrated by the quality of the students' class work and in some cases their portfolio work.
- All lessons commenced with a sharing of the aim of the lesson or the specific learning outcomes with the students. In one lesson, clearer identification of achievable learning outcomes and greater guidance to students on the envisaged task was required to bring about a deep learning experience
- Lessons were typically structured in support of incremental development of the subject matter. Independent student work, supported by teacher input, was a feature of all lessons. Teacher demonstration was the principal method employed to guide new learning, and worked best when the demonstration was followed directly by student activity.
- Blackboard and visual media facilities were used effectively and competently to support the demonstration elements in the lessons observed. Opportunities to employ supporting resources such as real life examples, solid models and parametric modelling software should be availed of, to further support the development of students' visualisation skills and understanding.
- Questioning strategies employed, including the use of wait-time, re-direction and prompting, effectively engaged students. Some lessons were teacher-led and it is therefore recommended that a suitable balance be maintained between teacher and student voice to maximise the opportunity for students' learning.
- A very good teacher-student rapport was in evidence in all lessons, and students demonstrated a strong work ethic and exemplary behaviour. Most students choose higher level TG and DCG in the certificate examinations.
- Students, when questioned by the inspector, demonstrated varying levels of understanding of prior learning and of the construction methods used in the lesson. It is suggested that all lessons incorporate sufficient opportunity for assessment and reinforcement of learning.
- Differentiated learning was supported through the provision of additional exercises and independent work. To increase the benefit to students of this learning strategy, it is recommended that students be provided with time to reflect on their work and to annotate their drawings. This would facilitate expression and reinforcement of their own learning.

- In one lesson, corrected homework was returned to students and accompanied by very helpful individual oral commentary. Another example of good assessment for learning practice included the monitoring of students' progression during the lesson to identify common areas of difficulty, and the holding of a plenary session to offer clarification and guidance.
- Some students maintained records of their work in class. However, most of the students' previous work was not available or indicated low completion rates. There was limited formative written feedback on the students' work which was available for review. Therefore, it is recommended that an appropriate blend of formative and summative assessment be implemented across the subject department.

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

- The allocation and scheduling of class periods are good, with four class periods per week at Junior Certificate level, and five class periods per week allocated to Leaving Certificate classes. Maximum use is made of double class periods to support the completion of coursework.
- In addition to the graphics classroom, two of the technology subject classrooms are used for the teaching of graphic subjects. All classrooms have integrated ICT facilities and support the teachers' use of parametric modelling software.
- The graphics classroom is well equipped and provides teachers and students with a very good facility for both teaching and learning. There is scope to further profile student work so as to stimulate and reward students' efforts in the subject.
- Option bands for first and fifth-year students are designed based on student preferences. Option bands for first-year students are designed before entry to school based on students preferences, and are finalised after experiencing the taster programme at the beginning of first year.
- The number of students selecting DCG at senior cycle is low. To support the subject, it is suggested that a design-focused TY module be created by the technology department to support selection of DCG and the other technology subjects in senior cycle.
- To support the uptake of TG, particularly by girls, the subject department should be proactive in promoting the graphics subjects with students and parents prior to their making optional subject choices.
- The subject department has continued to up-skill through attendance at subject-specific courses and the pursuit of further education. This has been complemented by involvement in professional development programmes delivered at whole-school level.

### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Co-ordination of the subject department includes the recording of minutes of meetings and reflection on student attainment. Cross-subject department meetings take place, which is good practice. It is recommended that the agenda for the technology department meetings include teaching and learning as an item so as to encourage development, discussion, reflection and sharing of strategies within the department.

- The subject plan also includes a section to support literacy development in TG. This should be further supported by creating a display of subject specific-terminology and key terms in the appropriate classrooms.
- The subject department should develop an action plan to progress priority areas including numbers taking the subject, uptake by girls, teaching methodologies and assessment modes.
- The teachers' individual planning documents include extensive records of summative assessment for their students. An electronic archive has also been developed and used to share information with students.
- A greater effort should be made to ensure that students understand the importance of their own work as a resource to support and direct their learning. To support the realisation of this objective, it is recommended that a portfolio component, formatively assessed, be included as part of the students' terminal examination.

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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; a response was not received from the board.