

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Music
REPORT**

**Crana College
Buncrana, Co Donegal
Roll number: 71140Q**

Date of inspection: 1 April 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 MUSIC**

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	
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 in three class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged between good and very good and all lessons contained elements of very good practices.
- The development of music literacy and numeracy was well integrated into each lesson.
- Collaborative strategies such as pair work were used to very good effect in lessons.
- Students' progress is being monitored through a range of assessment strategies.
- Timetabling arrangements and support for students in making their subject choices are good; management is supportive of the continuing development of the subject.
- High quality planning and preparation was evident in all lessons.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Further opportunities should be afforded to students to perform independently of the teacher.
 - Music technology should be made available as an option for certificate practical examinations.
 - Students' work should be monitored more frequently and contain a greater level of formative feedback.
 - Over time, a medium to long-term resource plan should be developed for Music.
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INTRODUCTION

Crana College is a co-educational secondary school under the auspices of Donegal Education and Training Board (ETB). The school caters for 533 students. The following programmes are available to students: Junior Certificate; Junior Certificate School Programme; an optional Transition Year (TY); Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme. Music is a compulsory component of the TY programme. The school participates in DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged between good and very good. All lessons were characterised by a warm classroom atmosphere with very good interpersonal relationships between teacher and students. Teachers were generally enthusiastic in their lessons and in return, students responded well.
- Lesson content was presented in a coherent manner. Lessons were well structured and paced accordingly and contained a wide variety of methodologies.
- All lessons contained elements of very good practices and these included the following: the use of differentiated learning outcomes as a focus for lesson progression; the integration of performing and composing to reinforce particular theoretical concepts; the use of higher-order questions to challenge students, and an assessment of the attainment of the learning outcomes both during and at the conclusion of the lesson.
- Opportunities were taken to progress students' critical and analytical skills and, to varying degrees, to develop them as autonomous learners. Further opportunities should be afforded to students to perform independently of the teacher so that any learning shortfalls can be addressed.
- In some cases, very good use was made of contemporary music that was familiar to students to reinforce their knowledge of melodic composition.
- One commendable aspect of lessons was the development of students' skills including aural and practical. Collaborative strategies such as pair work were used to very good effect in lessons.
- In one lesson, emphasis was placed on the development of students' practical skills on their chosen instrument and this contributed to students' enjoyment of the class-based performing activity. In order to cater for the differing learning needs of students, music technology should be made available as an option for certificate practical examinations.
- The development of music literacy and numeracy was well integrated into each lesson. Students were challenged to make use of music technical language when providing responses to questions.
- Students' progress and competence is monitored through a range of assessment modes including oral questioning, homework assignments and some monitoring of written work. Teachers should now moderate samples of students' work such as composing exercises to ensure that there is a consistent approach being taken to the correction of this work.
- There is a need to increase the level of monitoring of all written work and to improve the quality of feedback in order to ensure that students are making optimal progress. For

instance, comments which identify strategies for improvement should regularly be provided to students.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Music was introduced to the school in 2009 and is now timetabled in all year groups. Senior management is very supportive and committed to the continuing development of the subject.
- Timetabling for Music is in line with syllabus guidelines. There is an appropriate spread of contact time throughout the week, along with a sufficient number of double periods in all year groups to facilitate practical work.
- Incoming first-year students are provided with a short sampling period and subsequently choose their optional subjects: the timetable is amended to accommodate their choices. Fifth-year students are also given an open choice of optional subjects. These arrangements are very good.
- Facilities for Music are good. A music room has been made available to the music department for the delivery of lessons. Resources for Music are quite good as the school has purchased equipment and materials but there is further scope for development. Over time, the music department in collaboration with senior management should draw up a medium to long-term resource plan and build on current provision as funding becomes available.
- The music department comprises two fully qualified music teachers who work well together in a collaborative and professional manner.
- The school is supportive of teachers' engagement with any initiatives that arise relating to continuing professional development. One teacher is a member of the Post-Primary Music Teachers' Association and has attended conferences hosted by them in addition to conferences hosted by the Professional Development Service for Teachers. Such events ensure that teachers are kept up-to-date with curricular developments and provide opportunities to share good practices. Attendance at such conferences is strongly encouraged.
- Students are afforded the opportunity to avail of a wide range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities. Such provision includes a musical, talent show, concerts, and national competitions. Consequently, music has a strong profile. Good links have been established with the local community as the school show is performed in the local hall.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Comprehensive planning documents were presented during the evaluation. Programmes of work have been developed for all year groups. Commendably, the TY programme is designed so that students experience an integrated approach to music.
- Minutes of meetings and discussions with the music department on the day of the evaluation indicate that formal planning time in conjunction with informal meetings is being used effectively to discuss teaching and learning as well as essential administrative matters.

- High quality planning and preparation was observed throughout the course of the evaluation. Much time and effort has been spent by teachers in developing a wide range of worksheets and handouts to support students' learning.

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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

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 of Crana College welcomes the very strong and positive findings of the inspection report issued by the D.E.S. following a Subject Inspection of Music and welcomes the affirmation given to the quality of teaching and learning in this area.

It is particularly pleasing that the Inspectorate noted the development of Music literacy and numeracy, the student's active engagement in their learning and the use of differentiated learning outcomes.

The report noted the warmth of the atmosphere in the classroom and the enthusiasm of the teachers. This recognition of the diligence and hard work of the staff is most welcome and deserving.

The Board acknowledges the dedication of the Music Department for their work and commitment to the school and congratulates them on a very positive inspection.

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

As part of this ongoing review and development, the Music Department will prioritise the various findings and recommendations of the report.

