

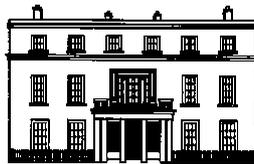
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

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

**Ramsgrange Community School  
County Wexford  
Roll number: 91431Q**

**Date of inspection: 30 September 2011**



**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**

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Date of inspection</b>	30 September 2011
<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**

- A good range of methodologies was employed during the lessons observed with some weaknesses identified in portfolio assessment techniques and mixed ability teaching strategies.
- Teachers provided students with good levels of oral feedback during lessons observed.
- While the subject has received good support, Design and Communication Graphics is facing a significant challenge in relation to its viability in Ramsgrange Community School.
- Subject planning is developing well and the collaborative development of teaching resources has resulted in the accumulation of a significant bank of high-quality teaching aids and resources.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The subject department should include differentiated teaching strategies in lessons to accommodate students of all ability levels.
  - Students should receive formative assessments of portfolio work to supplement the formative assessments administered during lessons.
  - The subject department should revisit the layout of the graphics classroom with regard to enhancing demonstration methods and classroom management strategies.
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Ramsgrange Community School offers Technical Graphics (TG) and Design and Communication Graphics (DCG) as optional subjects in its Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes. Due to the small number of students choosing DCG in fifth year and a reduced allocation, senior management made the decision to remove the subject from the fifth-year curriculum on a temporary basis. In addition to this, and due to a considerable re-structuring of the school's curriculum and rebalancing of resources, the Transition Year (TY) programme was also removed from the school's curriculum. The school has a current enrolment of 341 students and is involved in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action plan.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- All lessons observed were effective in many respects. However, there were also some areas for development in each instance.
- A wide variety of effective teaching and learning strategies was utilised including collaborative learning techniques, mind mapping, individual and group demonstrations and various independent activities undertaken by students.
- To improve students' learning, particularly in relation to collaborative activities, clearly defined protocols should be established. These procedures should include the setting of achievable targets for each group, employing strategies that encourage collaboration among group members, identifying specific tasks for each group member and collating the findings of all group activities.
- The display techniques utilised by the subject department were effective, particularly the teachers' use of the classroom chalkboard. In all instances diagrams and constructions were clear, colourful and accurate.
- During the lessons observed teachers circulated among students during prescribed tasks. This strategy provided them with the opportunity to offer appropriate guidance, advice and developmental feedback to individual students. To ensure that all students receive an acceptable level of feedback on their assigned tasks, teachers should incorporate the correction of students' portfolio work into their weekly routines.
- In one lesson, attention was given to developing students' literacy skills particularly in relation to graphics-specific terminology. Common strategies to embed these skills should be agreed upon at subject department level and implemented on a whole-school basis.
- The range of abilities in each class group observed was considerable. To address this reality in a meaningful manner the subject department should introduce differentiated teaching strategies into all lessons.
- Questioning was used effectively in some instances. Attention should be given to maximising the use of direct questioning, wait time, 'hands down' and the avoidance of global questioning techniques which had the undesirable effect of encouraging chorus answering.
- Teachers' management of the classroom environment was good and they dealt with challenging students in a firm but professional manner. As part of the ongoing management of lessons the subject department should consider reorganising the layout of the graphics classroom. Alternative layouts may be beneficial in relation to improving the

demonstration environment and integrating more challenging students into the class group as a whole.

- Student learning was observed to be at a level appropriate to their abilities. The majority of students grasped the concepts and procedures that were central to the lessons observed. Student uptake of higher level in certificate examinations has recently improved and this is a most welcome development.

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

- TG and DCG are offered to junior certificate students and leaving certificate students respectively. It was reported that the subject department provides fifth-year DCG for interested students on a voluntary basis outside of school hours. Both senior management and the subject department expressed the view that DCG would be provided as part of the mainstream senior cycle curriculum next year.
- Time allocated to graphics subjects on the school's timetable is good with a total of five class periods allocated in both second and third year.
- Upon entry, students choose three optional subjects from a possible five. At the end of first year, students then make their final choice of junior certificate subjects. At this point three subjects, that were mandatory in first year, are also included in the option bands. This sampling model provides students with the opportunity to experience the majority of subjects offered at junior cycle, thereby helping them to choose subjects based upon their interests and aptitudes.
- At junior cycle uptake of TG is appropriate with a good number of girls choosing the subject, particularly in the present third-year cohort. To maintain the viability of DCG at senior cycle it is important that the subject department ensures that next year's cohort receive appropriate advice and guidance when selecting their optional subjects. This should involve removing the clause that excludes students who have not studied TG from choosing DCG.
- The subject department receives good support from management and this has resulted in the allocation of resources and funding to support the development of the subjects. A good range of information and communication technology (ICT) resources are at the department's disposal and were introduced into one lesson to reinforce the learning that occurred.
- There are currently three teachers qualified to teach the subjects to the highest level on the staff. Of these three, two are currently deployed to teach the subjects.

#### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Records of planning meetings are maintained by the subject department and copied to the principal. These records provide evidence of a good level of discourse and the identification of actions to address areas for development.
- Graphics subjects planning has developed collaboratively resulting in a good quality subject plan.
- Common curricular plans are outlined and adhered to allowing assessments with common components to take place.

- In-depth analysis of certificate examination results forms part of the subject department's ongoing dialogue. This analysis is commended and should be used to help inform teaching practices where appropriate.
- A significant quantity of high-quality resource material has been accumulated by the subject department. These resources are stored in the graphics classroom and are easily accessible to all members of the department. This level of collaboration is commended.

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