An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Technical Graphics and Design & Communication Graphics

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Coláiste Chiaráin
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Croom Co. Limerick
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	71840V

Date of Inspection: 15-02-2019

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Department of Education and Skills

SUBJECT INSPECTION

Subject Inspections report on the quality of work in individual curriculum areas within a school. They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of the subject in the school.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated learning and teaching in Technical Graphics and Design & Communication Graphics (DCG) under the following headings:

1. Teaching, learning and assessment
2. Subject provision and whole-school support
3. Planning and preparation

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

The board of management of the school 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.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Dates of inspection	14-02-2019 & 15-02-2019
Inspection activities undertaken • Review of relevant documents • Discussion with principal, deputy principals and key staff • Interaction with students	• Observation of teaching and learning during 5 class periods • Examination of students' work • Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Coláiste Chiaráin is a co-educational school that operates under the auspices of the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB). The school participates in the Delivering Equality of Educational Opportunity (DEIS) action plan. Mainstream enrolment currently stands at 704 students.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- High quality student learning was facilitated through good quality, and in some cases, exemplary teaching.
- Generally, teachers modelled procedural skills effectively; however, on occasion, opportunities were missed to introduce new learning through teacher demonstration and the effective modelling of good practice.
- Structured and informal student collaboration were positive characteristics of all lessons observed.
- Graphics subjects receive very good support from school management.
- Overall, the quality of subject planning and individual teacher preparation was very good with some scope for improvement identified in the current Transition Year (TY) plan.
- Planned DEIS actions aimed at improving students' learning and literacy levels were observed in all lessons.

Recommendations

- Teachers should ensure that all new concepts, principles and procedures are deliberately taught in a structured manner that is underpinned by teacher demonstration or structured facilitation.
- The TY plan should be reviewed to ensure that students who choose DCG experience an interesting and significantly different approach to the teaching and learning of the subject.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- Student learning was of a very high standard in the lessons observed. Teaching was good overall with some examples of exemplary practice. Assessment in graphics subjects could be further developed to improve the feedback cycle between teachers and students.
- Students demonstrated the ability to apply their learning and to problem-solve. Lessons were most successful when the teacher planned and structured activities to reinforce these opportunities and to create an environment that facilitated this model of learning.
- The quality of student drawings was good and represented achievement levels appropriate to the age and stage of students' knowledge and skill development.
- Student achievement in examinations is in line with the subject department's high expectations. State examination results are analysed annually and the subject department reflects on these analyses to set future targets. The subject department should consider setting individual targets for students based upon their aptitude, skill level and ability. These targets would lend themselves to an enhanced use of differentiated teaching and learning opportunities.
- All lessons were characterised by high levels of student engagement and motivation. Students' work ethic and productivity was very high in all three lessons observed.
- Students were responsive when questioned and offered potential solutions to their teachers and peers voluntarily. Informal pair work and co-operation was not only common practice, but productive and useful. This good practice was actively encouraged by teachers.
- Teachers provided students with very clear learning outcomes at the beginning of lessons. Success criteria were also discussed and revisited during lessons. Very good practice was observed when teaching and learning moments were designed to enhance and to reinforce these learning outcomes.
- In most instances, teachers introduced new concepts, principles and procedures in a structured manner underpinned by teacher demonstration and the modelling of the procedure. In one case, a step-by-step worksheet was used to guide students through the task. This approach lends itself more readily to homework tasks or revision. To maximise their impact, teachers should ensure that all new concepts, principles and procedures are deliberately taught in a structured manner that is underpinned by teacher demonstration or structured facilitation.
- One example of highly effective collaborative group work was observed in a second-year lesson. The activity was skilfully managed and ensured very good levels of individual accountability, positive interdependence, competition and challenge.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) was utilised very effectively as a teaching and learning tool. ICT supported the further development of students' visualisation skills and also provided the teachers with good opportunity to check students' learning and to present key learning in a clear and professional manner.
- Student behaviour was excellent and a positive rapport was evident between students and teachers.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Graphics subjects receive very good support and are allocated appropriate time at both junior and senior cycle. Deployment of teachers and scheduling of graphics subjects is very good.
- School management supports and facilitates teachers' engagement in continuing professional development. Subject teachers have recently attended CPD courses that focus on areas including parametric modelling, new Junior Cycle specifications and other Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines such as Coding.
- The school's engagement with, and its development of, a Junior Cycle STEM short course may help to develop a symbiotic relationship between graphics subjects and the STEM curriculum in general. Key transferrable skills such as being creative, communicating and managing information and thinking, should be fostered through the graphics subject's planning processes, particularly in the context of the new Graphics specification at junior cycle.
- Students are given very good opportunities to make well informed optional subject choices. This is achieved through the provision of a sampling period in first year, a modular Transition Year (TY) programme and information provided for parents at key decision-making times in their child's progression through the school.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Overall, the quality of planning and preparation was very good.
- The subject department has developed a collaborative planning system with a shared ownership of and responsibility for the co-ordination of subject planning.
- Subject plans are well developed. Delivering equality of opportunity in schools (DEIS) action planning themes and associated actions are identified in plans. Commendably, evidence of at least three of these actions was evident in the lessons observed.
- The subject plan includes a homework policy. Consideration should be given to reviewing this policy with a view to improving the subject department's formative assessment processes and developing a more systematic approach to maintaining high quality student folios.
- Curricular plans are well organised with key learning outcomes identified for all areas of subject matter. The TY plan should be reviewed to ensure that students who choose DCG experience an interesting and significantly different approach to the teaching and learning of the subject in the Leaving Certificate programme.
- The graphics subject department are currently preparing for the implementation of the new Graphics specification in September 2019. To facilitate this preparation, the subject department should collaborate with subject teachers in phases one to four of the roll-out of the new Junior Cycle programme. This collaboration would benefit their development of units of learning, engagement with classroom based assessments (CBAs) and their understanding of the subject learning and assessment review (SLAR) meetings.
- Teachers' individual planning and preparation for lessons ranged from good to very good.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principals and members of the subject department at the conclusion of the evaluation.

THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the of quality the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	***Very good*** applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is ***outstanding*** and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	***Good*** applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a *very good* standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	***Satisfactory*** applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	***Fair*** applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	***Weak*** applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of Coláiste Chiaráin accepts, in full, the subject inspection report in Technical Graphics and Design and Communication Graphics that took place In February 2019.

The Board is very pleased with the findings of the report, particularly:

- The "high quality student learning"
- The positive characteristics of "structured and informal student collaboration" observed
- The 'very good" quality of subject planning and teacher preparation
- The observed actions aimed at improving students' learning and literacy levels

The recommendations as outlined in the report are welcomed. These recommendations will be used to inform, guide and develop current and future practice in these subject areas.

Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

The Board acknowledges the recommendations made by the inspector and are committed to their implementation. Since the initial feedback of the inspection process, the school has already set about addressing the recommendations.

A full subject department meeting has been convened to consider the specific recommendations. The leadership team together with the subject teachers are committed to addressing the recommendations arising from this inspection.

The Board will ensure that all recommendations will be actioned in a timely manner.