An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Subject Inspection: Graphics and Design and Communication Graphics
Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Colaiste Lorcain
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Castledermot Co. Kildare
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	70670R
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	15-11-2022
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	11/01/2023

What is a 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 Graphics and Design & Communication Graphics under the following headings:

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

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.

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.

Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and tackle bullying

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Child Protection</td><td>Anti-bullying</td></tr>
<tr><td>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.</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013) and this policy is reviewed annually.
2. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides a report to the board at least once a term on the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template provided in the Procedures) since the previous report to the board.
3. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils.</td></tr>
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Subject inspection

Date of inspection	15th - 16th November 2022
Inspection activities undertaken • Review of relevant documents • Discussion with principal and key staff • Interaction with students, including focus groups	• Observation of teaching and learning during five lessons • Examination of students' work • Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Coláiste Lorcain is a co-educational designated community college with 377 students under the joint patronage of Kildare and Wicklow Education Training Board and the Poor Servants of the Mother of God. It offers the Junior Cycle, the established Leaving Certificate, and an optional Transition Year (TY) programme.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- In the majority of lessons observed, teaching, learning and assessment practices were good; examples of very good practice were also noted in a minority of lessons.
- Teachers co-ordinated student-centred, challenging and supportive learning activities.
- Teachers set high expectations for student achievement and mutually respectful relationships were evident in all of the lessons observed.
- Students' use of digital learning devices was successfully integrated into lessons and made a significant contribution to their understanding of graphical concepts and procedures.
- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support was very good; school management was very supportive of the graphics subjects.
- Teachers' individual planning for lessons was of a high standard; there was a high level of collaborative departmental planning.

Recommendations

- Graphics teachers should extend their formative assessment approaches to include the setting and reviewing of learning intentions and the provision of written formative feedback on students' work.
- The current graphics plan for TY should be reviewed to reflect a more innovative approach to the teaching and learning of the subject; the STEM Education Policy Statement 2017-2026 should underpin its development.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- In the majority of lessons observed, teaching, learning and assessment practices were good; examples of very good practice were also noted in a minority of lessons.

- A notable strength of all lessons was the positive atmosphere that was created by the teachers. The students were comfortable in interacting with and asking questions of their teachers. Student focus-group participants described mutually respectful relationships with their peers and teachers and how supportive and affirming their learning environment was.

- Continuity with prior learning was very good, students' previous experiences were referenced and developed further in lessons. Teachers' presentations were clear, appropriately paced and gave students time to engage with new learning. Students had sufficient opportunities to demonstrate their learning during lessons.

- Students experienced a wide variety of strategies aimed at supporting and furthering their learning. Collaborative learning opportunities were successfully incorporated into some lessons. These approaches supported and facilitated greater levels of student participation than some of the individual tasks did.

- Learner outcomes were mostly good. A review of student work identified scope for improvement in drafting accuracy and freehand sketching in a small number of folios. Students' solid modelling part files were also reviewed during the evaluation, students should be supported to enhance their design thinking skills by placing a greater emphasis on design intent and economy when modelling design solutions. Students' portfolios indicated that homework was regularly assigned and monitored, this is good practice.

- The quality of assessment was good. Teachers provided students with good quality oral formative feedback throughout the lessons observed. The level of detail and frequency of written feedback on students' work varied. Teachers should agree a standard approach to the provision of written feedback on students' work, and plan opportunities for students to engage with this feedback.

- Lessons were introduced by teachers outlining the learning and content to be achieved. There was scope to develop how learning intentions are used to further support formative assessment. When setting learning intentions, teachers should identify the skills to be developed, and provide opportunities for reflection, review and assessment.

- A high level of autonomy and independence was observed in lessons where students were working on assignments. Students were motivated and teachers set high expectations for them. Students used digital technology to present their work very effectively. During a junior cycle lesson where students were working on a design task, they used digital devices to research the topic, and sketching equipment to freehand sketch the object, this seamless interchange between digital technology and drawing equipment is very effective practice and prepares students for lifelong-learning.

- Where learning was of a very good standard, students' drawings were constructed neatly, accurately and completed in a timely manner. Students demonstrated good knowledge and were capable of applying this knowledge when presented with challenges. This application of knowledge was apparent in one lesson where students were asked to find the picture plane, true height and auxiliary vanishing point in a two-point perspective drawing.

- A variety of questioning techniques was deployed during lessons. The general purpose was to check for understanding of prior learning and progress new learning. Questions ranged from lower order recall type responses to higher-order responses requiring deeper critical thinking. Pausing and redirecting was used cautiously in particular when students were formulating complex replies. Question distribution was good and student responses were affirmed.

- In line with good practice, students were given credit in end-of-term reports for work carried out and assessed during the term. The criteria used for the allocation of these marks should be documented in the subject plan and communicated to students.

- Exemplars of students' work were displayed in the classroom and were of a very high quality. This facilitated the establishment of high standards by enabling students to view, critique and learn from the work of their peers. It is suggested that a profile of the student who completed this work accompany the display detailing their career path and achievements.

2. Subject provision and whole school support

- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support was very good. School management was very supportive of the graphics subjects and an appropriate time allocation was provided across junior and senior cycle.

- The subjects were well resourced with very good access to audio-visual, information communication technologies and an additive manufacturing device in the graphics classroom.

- Students were provided with good supports in advance of making subject choices. The school provided prospective first-year students with an open evening where information and guidance on option subject selection were provided. Students entering senior cycle were supported through information evenings and subject sampling in the TY programme.

- The graphics department comprised three teachers all of whom are graduates in the subject area. Teachers were assigned a class group for the duration of their cycle of study, ensuring continuity for students. Commendably teachers engaged with regular continuing professional development which was facilitated and encouraged by whole-school support.

- Graphics was provided as a rotating module in TY. Subject department teachers should review the current graphics plan and provision in TY, to reflect a more innovative approach to the teaching and learning of the subject. This review should be carried out in close consultation with senior management and the STEM Education Policy Statement 2017-2026 should underpin its development.

- Uptake of Graphics was very good at junior cycle. Lower numbers of students choose DCG, this should be closely monitored to ensure the ongoing feasibility of the subject in senior cycle.

3. Planning and preparation

- The quality of subject planning, collaborative planning and individual teacher planning for lessons was good overall.

- Formal subject planning meetings were held regularly with minutes of recent meetings retained in the planning folder. A subject co-ordinator was appointed to facilitate the sharing of resources, to convene meetings and maintain the subject plan. This role was rotated amongst the teaching team annually. It is recommended that teaching, learning and assessment be standing items on the department meeting template going forward.

- A comprehensive web-based Graphics plan has been developed that facilitates collaborative teacher engagement in the planning, implementation and review of the individual units of learning. Learning units addressed all elements from the strands of the Graphics specification, teaching methods, assessments and resources. When reviewing the plan, teachers should include whole-school strategies as identified by the school self-evaluation process.

- State examination results were examined and academic achievement was analysed and monitored by teachers. It is suggested that Graphics teachers provide further contextual reflection on trends and learner outcomes as part of overall Graphics planning.

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 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 quality of 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

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management welcomes the content of this report as a true and accurate reflection of the student experience of Graphics and Design and Communications Graphics in the school. The Board congratulates the teachers of Graphics and Design and Communications Graphics on the quality of their work and thanks the school's leaders for their support of the subject. The Board, also, compliments the students for their commitment to quality learning.

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

The Graphics Department has agreed that the implementation of the recommendations will be a key part of their work, with immediate effect.

The school will publish this report to teachers, so that all teachers and learners can benefit from both existing good practice and the inspector's recommendations.

The school will publish this report on the school website, so that it can be viewed and discussed by all school partners.

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