

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Music

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Castleknock Community College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Carpenterstown Road Castleknock Dublin 15
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	76062B

Date of Inspection: 20-11-2019



**An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna**
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 Music 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.

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	19-11-2019 & 20-11-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal, deputy principals and music teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during 4 lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to deputy principals and music teachers

School context

Castleknock Community College is a co-educational, multi-denominational post-primary school under the trusteeship of Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB). The school has a current enrolment of 1164 students and offers Junior Cycle, Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the established Leaving Certificate in addition to an optional Transition Year (TY) programme. Music is mandatory within the TY programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning observed was very good with some good practices in place; on occasion students were not afforded adequate opportunities to engage with tasks independently of the teacher.
- Students were able to demonstrate a range of knowledge and skills in a variety of activities.
- Lessons were generally well planned and prepared but the level of teacher demonstration was excessive in one instance.
- Assessment practices and achievement in certificate examinations are generally very good.
- Planning is progressing well in the music department and effective use is being made of the shared online digital platform.
- Subject provision and support for Music is very good and senior management is actively promoting high quality outcomes for students.

Recommendations

- It is important that students are afforded adequate opportunities to engage with tasks independently of the teacher.
- Teacher demonstrations should be paced more appropriately so that students can recall and complete the requirements of the assigned tasks more readily.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- Four lessons were observed during the course of the evaluation. The quality of teaching in these lessons was very good with some good practices also evident.
- All lessons were generally well planned and prepared in terms of content and resources and lessons were in line with the planned programme of work for the year. On occasion, the level of teacher demonstration was slightly excessive and students required a high level of one-to-one support initially to complete the assigned task. It is important that teacher demonstrations are paced and timed more appropriately so that students can recall and complete the requirements of the assigned tasks more readily.
- Learning intentions were very clear and regular reflection took place throughout lessons ensuring that all students achieved the planned intention of the lesson.
- In most lessons, teachers facilitated the lesson and encouraged students to become autonomous learners. The inquiry-based approach to learning was used effectively. However, during some activities, students were not afforded adequate time or opportunities to engage in tasks independently from the teacher. This practice should be avoided.
- Teachers share responsibility for the delivery of the lesson for one class group. This strategy was deployed effectively as it was apparent that teachers had planned collaboratively and delivered the lesson equally. This allocation of two teachers also ensured that where necessary, students were provided with additional support.
- Questions that were deployed in lessons were effective. Students were challenged to develop and improve upon their oral responses to questions.
- The quality of learning in all lessons was generally very good.
- Learner outcomes were generally very good. Students enjoyed their learning and were motivated by the variety of teaching and learning strategies and high level of student-centred learning activities which were observed. A very good teacher-student rapport was evident in all lessons.
- Differentiated outcomes were established from the outset in some lessons and this is very good practice.
- Students' knowledge and skills were effectively developed in all lessons. Students displayed the ability to perform on their class-based instrument, compose and perform rhythmical patterns accurately, use music technology with ease, edit their work and provide good quality, analytical responses to questions when challenged.
- Knowledge of and the capacity to distinguish between individual orchestral instruments was also developed but the expectations that were set were too high for the age and stage of the students. It is important to recognise when students are experiencing difficulties and to adapt the lesson accordingly.
- Students were afforded the opportunity to take risks and assume a leadership role in lessons and this is very good. For instance, in one lesson, each student improvised on Ukuleles while one student assumed a leadership role and maintained a chordal rhythmic accompaniment for each performance.

- Learner experiences were generally very good in the lessons observed. Some opportunities were provided to students to experience the three components of Music in an integrated manner but there was further scope to adopt this strategy in all lessons, where possible.
- Collaborative practices such as group and pair work were deployed in all lessons. Students worked effectively together on their compositions and music technology. Students, when probed, provided high quality responses to questions and displayed the ability to think critically.
- Assessment practices in use by the music department are very good. Students' materials are generally well organised, regularly marked and comments to support improvement and development are being provided by teachers. These practices are in line with the school's current self-evaluation focus. To further enhance assessment practices, it would be beneficial to students if they were required to edit their written work using the written feedback as a support.
- Student outcomes in certificate examinations are very good.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Subject provision and whole-school support for Music is very good.
- Music is well resourced and a designated room has been made available for the teaching of the subject. Timetable provision is very good and is in line with syllabus recommendations.
- Students are well supported when selecting their optional subjects. Parents of incoming first-year students are provided with an information evening and a booklet is supplied. Students pre-select their subjects prior to entry and optional blocks are designed around their choices. The school adopts a flexible approach and allows students to change subjects where possible.
- Incoming fifth-year students and their parents are facilitated to attend a meeting with the guidance counsellor to discuss subject choices prior to entry. Students are also provided with an information session with the guidance counsellor.
- Senior management actively promotes high quality outcomes for students in all subjects including Music. Students' progress is tracked from first year onwards and assessment data is monitored. School reporting structures in the school have been modified to improve the quality of information being provided to parents and students.
- Formal and informal meetings are held between senior management and the music department. Of particular note is the expectation that all subject departments including Music will meet with the board of management to discuss progress within the subject department. The music department has fulfilled this obligation.
- The music department displays a high level of commitment and dedication to the development of the subject in the school. Students are afforded the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of co-curricular and extracurricular activities. These include the college choir, chamber choir, Ukulele club, DDLETB Festival of Music, liturgical ceremonies, a range of concerts among the local community, the annual LCA concert and various fundraising events. This level of provision is excellent.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The quality of planning and preparation for lessons by the music department is very good. It is evident that the music department is planning collaboratively.
- A comprehensive plan has been developed and it is very good that it is being adapted regularly.
- Planning in junior cycle is good and takes into account the revised framework for junior cycle and the requirements and rationale of the junior cycle music specification. The music department is reflective and is adapting the templates provided by the Junior Cycle for Teachers to meet the needs of students. Units of learning have been developed and good progress is being made.
- Effective use is being made of the shared online digital platform which is being used to store resources and other planning materials. It is commendable that teacher and student reflection templates are being created and used.
- Planning is inclusive of students with special educational needs. Strategies documented in the subject plan were observed in lessons.
- Formal time has been made available for the music department to meet.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the deputy principals and music teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

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.

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 <i>very good</i> 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 of Castleknock Community College welcomes the Music Inspection Report and the acknowledgement of the very good quality of learning and teaching observed by the Inspectorate.

The Board is pleased with the reference to the very good quality planning, preparation and collaborative practices as observed in particular during the team-teaching lesson. They welcome the observations that a very good teacher - student rapport was evident, that students were afforded the opportunity to assume leadership roles in lessons and that students were challenged to develop their oral responses and display the ability to think critically.

The Board of Management supports the staff in the Music Department in addressing the recommendations made by the Inspectorate. The Music Department will continue to build on the very good practice already in place to ensure that the leader experience of the highest standard.

Finally, the Board of Management will communicate the findings and recommendations to the subject departments in the College which will inform their planning and practice.

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

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