

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Music
REPORT**

Adamstown Community College

Lucan, Co Dublin

Roll number: 76097U

Date of inspection: 13 September 2012



**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

Dates of inspection	12 and 13 September 2012
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and the teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during five class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and the teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed ranged from good to very good.
- A wide range of effective methodologies, including differentiated learning strategies, was used.
- The development of students' literacy and numeracy skills was a feature in all lessons observed.
- The uptake of Music is very good.
- The music room is vibrant and very well organised. Many posters containing a wide variety of music topics are on display.
- Planning and preparation for lessons was of a very high standard.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- The music department should ensure that there is consistent implementation of its assessment policy for all class groups.
 - The music plan should be further developed so that it reflects all of the very good practices that are being used in lessons.
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INTRODUCTION

Adamstown Community College is a co-educational post-primary school under the auspices of County Dublin Vocational Education Committee (VEC). The school opened in 2009 and currently caters for 536 students. The Junior Certificate, Transition Year (TY) and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programmes are taught in the school. From September 2013, the school will offer the established Leaving certificate (LC) programme.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed ranged from good to very good. All lessons were well structured. Learning outcomes were shared with students from the outset and lessons were appropriately summarised in advance of setting homework assignments.
- Students' skills development was a key feature of all lessons. Students' aural and practical skills were developed very successfully in the lessons observed.
- Questioning strategies were very effective in helping to ensure a good level of understanding. Good use was made of differentiated questions which helped to make certain that appropriate levels of challenge were an integral part of lessons. In some lessons, students were required to reflect independently on the topic at hand and to respond to questions at a higher cognitive level. This is very good practice.
- The development of literacy and numeracy in Music was well integrated into each lesson. For instance, great attention was paid to expanding students' music vocabulary in both oral and written activities.
- Very good links were established with prior learning at the outset of lessons. This approach supported continuity, the integration of new material and seamless lesson progression.
- A wide range of very effective methodologies was used. It is good to note that some of the three components of Music, listening, composing and performing, were integrated into the lessons observed. The wider use of this strategy is recommended.
- In one lesson, innovative strategies were used to consolidate learning. These included the use of games and body percussion activities. These and other strategies currently in use should be recorded and documented in the music department plan.
- Methodologies frequently involved students in activity-based learning. Examples included the use of keyboards to reinforce key musical concepts and the exemplary use of information and communications technology (ICT) to reinforce aural skills and to engage students in oral and written tasks. In some lessons, students were used to accompany a practical activity instead of the teacher and this is very good practice.
- Learning was at the core of all lessons observed. This was evaluated both during and at the conclusion of lessons. Differentiated strategies were incorporated into most lessons, catering for differing styles of learning. Students were engaged and motivated by the content and delivery of lessons in all classrooms visited.
- Classroom atmosphere was enhanced through the excellent rapport and the high expectations which teachers set. Students' contributions were strongly encouraged and affirmed in all lessons.

- The music room is vibrant and very well organised with many posters containing illustrations of varied music topics on display. As the year progresses, students' work should also be evident in the room.
- Formative assessment strategies were very well employed in all lessons. There is scope for the music department to apply its assessment policy more consistently across all class groups regarding the correction of students' written work.
- Assessment criteria should be shared with students in order to further support learning. In addition, it is suggested that the music teachers swap and correct samples of students' work which would ensure that the agreed assessment criteria is being applied consistently.
- At a whole-school level, it is good to note the practice whereby management and year heads meet with their students to set targets for achievement in all subjects including Music, and that progress is monitored during the course of the year.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The uptake of Music is very good. The inclusion of a compulsory programme of Music in TY is positive as it provides opportunities for improvement in literacy skills, enhances skills development, and should support students in making informed decisions regarding subject choices for Leaving Certificate.
- Timetable provision for Music is in line with syllabus recommendations.
- Resources for Music are excellent.
- The music department is staffed by two, fully qualified music teachers and it is evident that these teachers are working collaboratively.
- Attendance at relevant CPD courses, further study and membership of a professional association are supported by senior management. Commendably, there has been some attendance at courses provided by the Post-Primary Music Teachers' Association (PPMTA) and the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) and this is further encouraged.
- Students are provided with the opportunity to participate in a range of extracurricular and co-curricular activities. The commitment and dedication of the music teachers in this regard is acknowledged. The contribution from other members of staff for this provision is also commended.
- Modes of assessment include formal examinations and regular class assessments. Reports are issued to parents during the year and annual parent-teacher meetings are held for each year group.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Planning and preparation for lessons was of a very high standard. This helped to ensure quality in the delivery of lessons and in supporting students in their work. The teachers have invested much time in the creation of these materials.

- A subject plan was presented and this contained much information. Programmes of work have been developed for each year group. Appropriate links have been made between the topic and the development of students' skills. However, the plan does not fully reflect the exemplary practices that are evident in the organisation and delivery of the subject.
- Over time, the plan should be developed in the following way: topics should be developed by reference to learning outcomes, methodologies, resources and assessment; the self-evaluation practices already in evidence in the music department should be developed further.
- TY planning is very good. Students are provided with a range of practical music-making activities.

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; a response was not received from the board.

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