



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

# Subject Inspection: Music Report

## REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Presentation Secondary School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Grogan's Road Co. Wexford Y35 XV70
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	63661C
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	08-12-2022
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	15/03/2023

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# 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 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.

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.

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

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:	
<i>Child Protection</i>	<i>Anti-bullying</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.</li><li>2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.</li><li>3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)</i> and this policy is reviewed annually.</li><li>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 <i>Procedures</i>) since the previous report to the board.</li><li>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/students.</li></ol>

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

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# Subject inspection

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	07 and 08-12-2022
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and key staff</li><li>• Interaction with students, including focus groups</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during four lessons</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

## School context

Presentation Secondary School is a post-primary school under the patronage of Catholic Education An Irish Schools' Trust (CEIST). It has a current enrolment of 925 female students. The school provides the Junior Cycle programme, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational programme.

## Summary of main findings and recommendations:

### Findings

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment was very good with many exemplary practices observed.
- All lessons effectively integrated the disciplines of Music and there were many instances where composing was linked to performing.
- Effective assessment strategies were observed and were generally very good.
- The quality of whole-school support and provision for Music was very good and the subject is well resourced.
- The level of collaboration within the music department is very good.
- A comprehensive and detailed plan was in place and it provided useful information regarding the teaching and learning of Music.

### Recommendations

- Assessment practices can be strengthened even further by teachers increasing the level of monitoring on some aspects of students' written work and consistently incorporating an appropriate amount of time for students to respond to questions.
- In the next review of the subject plan, the music department should ensure that the plan is more reflective of the very good teaching, learning and assessment strategies observed in lessons.

## Detailed findings and recommendations

### 1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment was very good with many exemplary practices evident in the lessons observed.
- Learning intentions were shared with students which were referenced at regular intervals during lessons enabling students to reflect on their own progress. Students were made aware of the criteria necessary for the successful completion of tasks which, in turn, led to very good learner outcomes.
- All lessons were well structured and contained an appropriate variety of content and a range of teaching and learning strategies.

- Students were provided with clear guidance in advance of all tasks. Group work was successfully deployed in lessons and students were provided with distinct roles which ensured that all contributed to the task. Without exception, they worked effectively together.
- Attention was paid to the development of students' music literacy from the outset; this was reinforced during lessons and students were enabled to incorporate music terminology when responding to oral questions. Generally, students were given an appropriate amount of time to respond to questions. It is important that this good practice is consistently applied in all lessons.
- Students' interests were reflected in the choice of music pieces selected by the teacher. This was good as it fostered a mutually-respectful environment where students' musical preferences were recognised.
- Digital learning technologies (DLT) were used effectively in all lessons and this enhanced students' experiences. It is commendable that teachers are designing or acquiring additional resources and are creating presentations and worksheets. However, it is important, where appropriate, to allow students to create notes which will enable them to further develop their own critical thinking skills and capacity for self-directed learning.
- In all lessons, the elements of music were successfully integrated. For instance, composing was linked to performing.
- In all lessons, students demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the lesson content. Students' aural and analytical skills were well developed and it was evident that they were making good progress in their work.
- Learner experiences were very good and an inquiry-based approach was adopted in lessons. This meant that students' critical thinking skills were incorporated into learning activities. In all cases, students presented as autonomous and highly motivated learners.
- Students were regularly monitored and assessed by their teacher during lessons and they were provided with helpful comments for improvement. In addition, constructive, written feedback was provided on their compositions and worksheets.
- Students are expected to store all their subject materials in folders and to record notes in hard back copies. Assessment practices can be strengthened even further by teachers increasing the level of monitoring on these materials to ensure that students are meeting teachers' expectations regarding the maintenance of their work.
- Learner outcomes were highly effective. For instance, students were able to improvise confidently, perform on their chosen instrument and respond with authority to questions.
- Students who attended the focus group meeting were very positive about learning Music. They commented favourably on the safe and secure atmosphere that is fostered in their lessons. They welcomed the many opportunities presented to them to perform in public thereby enhancing their confidence as performers. They appreciated the time and personalised attention that is given to them in lessons and beyond.

## **2. Subject provision and whole school support**

- Support and provision for Music is very good. There is one dedicated music room for lessons which is shared between both teachers. A second room is adequately resourced and used by the music department.
- Timetable provision for music in junior and senior cycles is appropriate.
- The music department is staffed by two fully-qualified music teachers.
- There are initiatives in place to support all teachers' professional development in the school. For instance, regular 'teach meet' opportunities are facilitated where staff members provide inputs to each other. These practices are very good as they can serve to foster a professional learning organisation where expertise is shared.

- The music department is facilitated to attend any relevant continuing professional development (CPD) programmes and has availed of all such opportunities. This attention to CPD by teachers is very good.
- A highly impressive array of extra and co-curricular activities is available to students. The music department has developed very strong links with the local community and consequently students are provided with very valuable performing opportunities. Examples of some activities include participation of students in liturgical ceremonies, choral events and the school musical. The dedication of the music department to the provision of all activities is commended.

### 3. Planning and preparation

- The quality of planning and preparation by teachers for Music was very good. Time is provided by senior management for all subject departments, including Music, to meet. Each teacher also meets with senior management to discuss professional matters and evaluate students' progress. This is very good as it helps to ensure high quality learning experiences for students.
- In addition to formal planning, the music department regularly meets informally to plan for teaching and learning. It is evident that the level of collaboration within the music department is very good, which was also acknowledged by students who participated in the focus group meeting.
- The school has developed an online shared digital teaching and learning platform which is accessible to teachers and students. The music department is making very good use of this platform to store plans, resources and other materials.
- A detailed and comprehensive plan is in place for Music which follows a set template designed by senior management. Programmes of work have been developed for all year groups and, as appropriate, in junior cycle, units of learning have been developed.
- In some instances, the yearly programme plan contained chapter headings from text books. In the next review, the music department should ensure that any references to text books are included as an example of a resource being used and not as the main component of the plan.
- In senior cycle, a weekly scheme of work has been developed. There is scope to develop this further to ensure it is more reflective of the very good teaching, learning and assessment practices that were evident in lessons. In addition, modes of assessment should be integrated at regular stages throughout the plan rather than as one discrete event which does not reflect the ongoing assessment practices in evidence during the inspection. In so doing, this will ensure that valuable information is not lost for future planning.
- It was evident that the music department was implementing agreed whole-school strategies for inclusion and wellbeing which were recorded in the subject plan and implemented in lessons.

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	<i>Very good</i> 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 <i>outstanding</i> 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	<i>Good</i> 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	<i>Satisfactory</i> 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	<i>Fair</i> 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	<i>Weak</i> 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;