

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of Construction Studies and  
Materials Technology (Wood)**  
**REPORT**

**Glanmire Community College**  
**Glanmire, County Cork**  
**Roll number: 76064F**

**Date of inspection: 20 October 2011**



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 CONSTRUCTION STUDIES  
AND MATERIALS TECHNOLOGY (WOOD)**

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Date of inspection</b>	<b>20 October 2012</b>
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during five class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- The very good range of teaching methodologies observed can be further developed to achieve excellence.
- The students learn effectively, encouraged by the shared interest and sense of excitement provided by their teachers.
- The teachers' knowledge and practice of assessment for learning is a positive aspect of the teaching of the subjects that should be further developed.
- The subjects are very well supported with appropriate timetabling and resource provision.
- Subject planning is well advanced and plans should continue to be developed to fully reflect all aspects of subject department practice.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The subject plans should be further developed by explicitly linking aspects such as expected learning outcomes, resources and teaching methodologies, to specific content.
  - Planning for student design should focus on increasing the challenge for students incrementally from the beginning of first year.
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## INTRODUCTION

Glanmire Community College, under the joint trusteeship of County Cork Vocational Education Committee and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Cork and Ross, caters for students from Glanmire, a village surrounded by the eastern suburbs of Cork City, and the rural hinterland. The school is non-selective and meets the diverse educational needs of all its students with a broad curriculum which includes a full range of technology subjects in its curricular programmes including Transition Year.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

- A very good standard of teaching was observed. The range of teaching methods included very effective teacher demonstration and group work. Demonstrations were well paced and enlivened by appropriate, well-directed questioning. Peer demonstration should be used to further increase student interest, particularly when reinforcing techniques taught previously. The effective group work observed in one theory-based lesson should be further developed for use in a wider range of lesson types.
- Students' progress in the subjects was judged to be good overall as they demonstrated a growing understanding and knowledge when engaged in conversation about their work. This indicated a high standard of learning.
- In one senior cycle lesson dealing with planning for sustainability in buildings students made notes and engaged in group work that was very well conceived and organised. Clear instructions were given to ensure effectiveness in the group work and this thoroughness was a characteristic of all the lessons.
- The classroom atmosphere supported effective learning that was further enhanced by teachers' regular affirmation of effort and achievement.
- Classroom management was very good and showed an appropriate attention to detail. Students were clearly aware of the expectations of their teachers and worked calmly at assigned places with willing acceptance of classroom routines such as placing their bags in a prearranged safe area of the room. The sense of order and organisation was pervasive and contributed to the maintenance of the positive learning environment.
- Some good practice in developing students' literacy skills was observed when newly encountered terms, such as *solar heat gain*, were reinforced by being written on the board and discussed. However, this was not done in all cases and there is need for a more consistent approach which should be agreed and included in the subject-department plan. Support for numeracy was an integral part of practical lessons in particular, and the strategies being used for this support should also be addressed in the plan.
- A full range of work is assessed including design development and realisation and theory. Further development of continuous assessment procedures should focus on consistency across the subject department and perhaps across the technologies.
- The respective allocation of marks for continuous assessment of written and practical work and test results, should be discussed by the subject department, agreed and then included in the subject plans. Students should be given regular structured feedback on the likely impact of their assessment marks on their end-of-term result.

- The teachers' awareness and practice of assessment for learning (AfL) techniques is a positive aspect of their teaching and is an integral part of lessons. The AfL approaches being implemented in lessons should be recorded in the subject plans.

#### **SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- Curricular provision for Materials Technology (Wood) (MTW) and Construction Studies (CS) is very good. Subject option blocks are devised in first year and fifth year to suit the expressed preferences of the relevant cohort of students. All students are free to choose to study the subjects. Flexibility is exercised when students occasionally want to change early in the year. The subjects are present in each curricular programme.
- The subjects are suitably timetabled. Lessons are evenly distributed across the week and double-period lessons are provided as appropriate to facilitate practical work.
- Whole-school policies on homework and assessment are reflected in the subject plans and practices. Formal assessment is well structured to support and encourage students' learning.
- The provision of resources is very good. Defined collaborative procedures are followed for accessing materials and other resources. The school has addressed dust extraction and the need for an additional woodwork room. The teachers' willing involvement in the development of an additional woodwork room shows commitment. The recent sanctioning of a major school extension with woodwork facilities will further improve provision.
- Uptake of continuing professional development (CPD) is very good. The teachers have accessed subject-specific CPD through T<sup>4</sup>, the Technology Subjects Support Service and they also correct certificate examinations and undertake the related training. A broad programme of CPD events is also provided for the whole school.
- Planning and implementation of health and safety measures are effective. For further improvement instructional signs for safe use of specific machines should be displayed adjacent to each machine. It is recommended that one wall-mounted storage rack for chisels be lowered to avoid the risk to students of having to over stretch.

#### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Subject department planning is well advanced. A co-ordinator is selected by the teachers annually in rotation. The subject plans are clear, consistent with the syllabuses and include appropriate programmes of work. Each topic in the programmes of work should now be tabulated with the relevant teaching methods to be adopted, teaching resources to be used and expected learning outcomes. The provision of space to note adjustments for further improvement shows that the plans are working documents.
- Students engage in a project design process. However, design is often limited to peripheral decoration. Planning for student design should focus on incrementally increasing the challenge for students from the beginning of first year.
- Some good use of the data projector was observed and should be further developed for practical lessons. The use of the visualiser should be explored for demonstration of marking out and tool use.

- Lessons were well prepared, coherently presented and suitably paced. The use of graphic organisers for lesson planning was very effective where used.
- Recording of students' progress is effective. Reporting and communication with home are also effective, utilising the students' journals and regular school reports.

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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and the 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.