



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Subject Inspection: Music

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Coláiste Chill Mhantáin
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Burkeen Wicklow Town Co Wicklow
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	76099B
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	01/12/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	29/01/2026

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.

Included in this subject inspection report is a student-friendly page that provides information for the children/young people in your school about the inspection that occurred recently. It outlines for them some of the main findings and recommendations.

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.

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>Bí Cineálta</i>
1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) are prominently displayed near the main door of the school / in the reception area. <i>Following the school's adoption of the updated procedures 2025, it is also required to display a student-friendly version incorporating the name of the DLP beside the CSS.</i> 2. The school's child safeguarding statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment. 3. All teachers visited were aware of who to go to if they had a child protection concern.	1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy using Appendix A of <i>Bí Cineálta</i>, it is reviewed annually (or earlier if required) and includes a student/pupil friendly version that is displayed where students/pupils and the school community can see it. 2. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, staff, parents and students/pupils. 3. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides an update to the board at each ordinary board meeting that meets the requirements of <i>Bí Cineálta</i>.

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

Subject inspection

Date of inspection	01/12/2025
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 three lessons • Examination of students' work • Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Coláiste Chill Mhantáin operates under the patronage of Kildare-Wicklow Education and Training Board. It is co-educational with a current enrolment of 990 students. The school offers the Junior Cycle School programme, the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate established (LCE), Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and the Leaving Certificate Vocational programmes (LCVP). The school participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action plan for education.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment ranged between very good to some practices where there was scope for development.
- Students consistently understood the intended learning in lessons and the skills and knowledge required for success.
- Students engaged effectively when lessons maintained an appropriate balance of teacher input and student participation.
- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support for Music was very good including the level of resourcing, timetabling provision and the professional learning opportunities provided to the music department.
- The DEIS planning process was well established in the school and was evident in records of meetings and other materials developed by the music department.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities was available for all students including Music.

Recommendations

- The music department should ensure that all lessons are taught so that the three components of Music, listening, composing and performing, are evident as much as possible.
- All music lessons should incorporate a variety of carefully designed tasks that engage students actively in their learning.
- The music department should build on the valuable professional learning already undertaken and actively engage in relevant music events to further enhance teaching and learning.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment ranged between very good to some practices where there was scope for development.
- Learning intentions were very clear and communicated effectively in all lessons observed. Students were also made aware of the required skills and knowledge necessary to achieve successful outcomes. These were very good practices.

- Learner experiences were very good when the teacher incorporated a series of tasks that were planned so that students were active participants in the lesson. In these instances, students performed, composed and listened to well-selected extracts of music. This integrated approach to music teaching ensured that students were provided with meaningful and musical learning experiences which developed their skills and knowledge very effectively. In this practice, students were highly motivated and took ownership over their work.
- Students engaged effectively when lessons maintained an appropriate balance of teacher input and student participation. Where a lecture style was adopted, the students' learning experience was not as good and there was some scope for improvement. It is important that the highly effective approaches that were observed in some instances are applied more consistently in lessons.
- Students were able to think critically, express opinions and explain their responses. They were eager to learn and make progress. This was evident when they were supported during class-based tasks and provided with guidance from the teacher.
- Group work was used very effectively in one lesson. Students discussed the topic of film music and were able to collectively agree the necessary music components that would be required to create Music for a range of film genres. In the lesson, students worked very well together, and each student contributed their views with ease. The wider use of this strategy is recommended.
- Students' abilities were wide ranging as expected in a mixed ability setting. Some students were very capable as evident in one lesson where they were required to compose. In this instance, there was scope to challenge this cohort as these students had potential to express themselves more creatively.
- Assessment practices were generally good during lessons and students were questioned regularly. At all times, responses were warmly welcomed and any errors were kindly and sensitively handled by the teacher. In turn, students were very comfortable asking questions of the teacher which indicated the warm and affirming learning environment that had been created.
- Students' written work was being monitored and feedback to support development provided. Particularly effective practice was evident when students were encouraged to develop their responses to oral questions.
- Students who participated in the focus group meeting were positive about their experiences in music lessons. They stated that the music department was always encouraging and willing to provide any additional support. Senior students were very positive about the level of comprehensive feedback that was provided to them on their written work and compositions and felt enabled to improve as a result. All students expressed a preference for note making stating that it allowed them to think more critically and independently of the teacher.

2. Subject provision and whole-school support

- The quality of provision and whole-school support for Music was very good. Timetabling for Music was appropriate and in line with specification and syllabus requirements. TY students were provided with a mandatory music module. This was very good as it provided students with valuable learning experiences. It also provides a solid foundation for any student who wishes to study Music in fifth year.
- All music lessons take place in a large, spacious room that is suitably resourced and equipped.
- Students were provided with very good supports when making their subject choices. While incoming first and fifth-year students made their selections prior to entry, it was very good that bands were formed around their choices. In addition, an impressive guidance booklet containing comprehensive information about all subjects, including Music, was provided to students and their parents. It was particularly noteworthy that it included an audio recording of the content.

- Students' academic attainment was being regularly tracked by senior leaders and the music department. Reports that issued to parents and students were comprehensive and described what students were doing well in their learning and aspects that required improvement. Additional commentary regarding the skills that had been attained by them including Music was provided in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement for those students.
- All staff, including the music department, were provided with opportunities to participate in useful workshops designed to improve teaching and learning. It was very good that the music teacher had engaged with other professional learning activities such as inputs on how to support students with autism. However, participation in music events organised by the Post-Primary Music Teacher Association and Oide, the national support service for teachers and school leaders would also be beneficial.
- The DEIS planning process was well-established in the school. A number of committees were in place each of which was leading the development of individual DEIS planning pillars. It was very good that the music department was a member of the school Retention Committee.

3. Planning and preparation

- The quality of planning for Music was very good. A detailed music plan had been developed with a high level of comprehensive information supportive of music teaching and learning. This plan was readily accessible on the school's online digital platform.
- Programmes of work were developed for all year groups that contained suggested timeframes for the completion of topics. To build on this very good work over time, units of learning should be developed where the three components of listening, composing and performing are clearly evident and inform the teaching and learning practices in all lessons.
- Lessons were well prepared in terms of resources, handouts and worksheets that were carefully designed and integrated at appropriate stages in the lesson by the teacher.
- Formal meeting times were provided to the music department. It was evident that the music department engaged meaningfully with the planning process and had given careful consideration to the development of strategies to address the whole school agreed DEIS targets. These were included in the subject department plan.
- The music department had engaged in effective self-evaluation. Following a detailed analysis of achievement in certificate examinations, it reflected on any changes in outcomes from previous examinations and aspects of practice that could be improved.
- Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings were meticulously documented and indicated the considerable extent to which students' work was discussed and the rationale for implementing all necessary adjustments to marks.
- A wide variety of extra-curricular activities was available for students. These included opportunities to participate in the music club, school choir, bands and external competitive events. Students during the focus meeting spoke very positively about these and other activities that the music department was providing. The work of all involved in the delivery of these music activities is highly commended.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and subject teacher at the conclusion of the evaluation.



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

For the students of Coláiste Chill Mhantáin about their learning in Music

Date of inspection:

01/12/2025

What kind of inspection did your school have?



A subject inspection was completed in your school. The inspector observed lessons and spoke with the principal and teachers. The inspector met with a group of students to talk to them about their learning in Music.

What were the main findings of the inspection?



- The quality of teaching and learning was generally good.
- Students were made very aware of what they would learn and the skills they would need.
- Planning in the music department was very good and students can take part in a wide range of music activities, if they wish.

What did the inspector recommend to make teaching and learning better in **Music**?



- All lessons should be taught in a way that allows students to engage with Music through a combination of listening, composing and performing activities.
- Students should engage in music tasks that ensures they are active learners in lessons.

Thank you for taking the time to read this page.
Special thanks to the students who participated in the focus group.

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	Examples of descriptive terms
Excellent	Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of learners. This provision provides an example for other schools and settings of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Excellent; exemplary; outstanding; exceptionally high standard; with very significant strengths
Very good	Provision that is very good is very effective in meeting the needs of learners and is of a very high standard. There is potential to build on existing strengths to achieve an excellent standard.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful
Good	Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to build on existing strengths in order to address the aspects to be developed and achieve a very good standard.	Good; of good quality; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; strengths outweigh the shortcomings; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist
Requires improvement to achieve a good standard	Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard is not sufficiently effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is good or better.	Fair; less than effective; less than sufficient; evident weaknesses that are impacting on learning; experiencing difficulty; shortcomings outweigh strengths; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard	Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard is not meeting the needs of learners. There is immediate need for significant action to address the areas of concern.	Weak; poor; ineffective; insufficient; unacceptable; experiencing significant difficulties; serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated; requiring significant change, development and improvement to be effective

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The board of management on behalf of the Music Department would like to acknowledge its ongoing commitment to positive student learning experiences in our school and appreciate that the feedback received in this report will play a part in the further development of teaching & learning in our Music Department.

The members are happy the inspectorate noted that **"learner experiences were very good when the teacher incorporated a series of tasks that were planned so that students were active participants in the lesson. In these instances, students performed composed and listened to well selected extracts of music. This integrated approach to music teaching ensured that students were provided with a meaningful musical learning experience which developed their skills and knowledge very effectively. In this practice students were highly motivated and took ownership over their work" and that "extra-curricular opportunities in Music were acknowledged"**

The board too complimented the Music Department on the high standard of subject and learning assessment review meetings noted in the report, which were described as **"meticulously documented and indicated to considerable extent to which students' work was discussed and the rationale for implementing all necessary adjustments to marks".**

Finally, the board were further assured when the student focus group reported that they **"were positive about their experiences in music lessons and that senior students were very positive about the level of comprehensive feedback that was provided to them on their written work and compositions and felt enabled to improve as a result".**

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

The board of management and the Senior Leadership Teams' commitment to continuous professional development through Oide and our own in-school staff workshops on teaching and learning will further build on the already positive culture of professional learning in our school as acknowledged by the inspectorate in this report.

The board of management, the Senior Leadership Team and staff in Coláiste Chill Mhantáin will be proactive in implementing the recommendations of this report with a view to further enhancing teaching and learning in this subject.