

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Art

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Loreto College Foxrock
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Foxrock Dublin 18
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	60240J

Date of Inspection: 15-03-2018



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 Art 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	14-03-2018 & 15-03-2018
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and key staff• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during three class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Loreto College is a girls' post-primary school in Foxrock, Co. Dublin which operates under the trusteeship of the Loreto Education Trust. The school has an enrolment of 571 students and offers the Junior Certificate, new Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY), and Leaving Certificate programmes.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was very good in the lessons observed.
- All lessons were very well-prepared with appropriate materials and high quality visual resources provided by the art department.
- The learning space is very well organised, with very good routines in place.
- Very good assessment procedures are in place and students are provided with very high quality formative feedback.
- The overall quality of planning and preparation for Art is very good.
- Whole-school support for the subject is very good; however, the subject sampling programme in first year limits classroom contact time in junior cycle.

Recommendations

- The subject sampling programme for first-year students should be kept under review to ensure sufficient classroom contact time for implementation of the Junior Cycle specification.
- Strategies should be investigated to promote uptake of Art, and to further raise the profile of the subject in the school; student leadership opportunities should be explored in this context.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was very good.
- Learning intentions were shared from the outset in all lessons. In some instances these could be developed further to refer more specifically to the intended learning for the lesson, rather than the broader learning outcomes of the scheme of work.
- Prior learning was reviewed in all lessons observed and relevant support studies were used to enhance students' knowledge and understanding of the topic. To build on this, students' own work-in-progress could be viewed and referenced as part of this process.
- A wide range of highly effective teaching approaches was taken in lessons and these were appropriate to the learning intention. These included presentations prepared by the teacher, whole-group discussion, demonstrations, peer-teaching and facilitation of appropriately differentiated practical tasks.
- Overall, a good balance between teacher instruction and student activity was achieved in lessons. This was particularly evident in practical lessons where a clear introduction was followed by appropriate instruction for students' tasks.
- One highly effective approach was taken in a practical embroidery lesson where the teacher demonstrated a range of stitching techniques to small groups of students. Students then worked in pairs to share this learning with their peers. This approach provided opportunities for students to apply their own learning from the demonstration, and to embed their understanding by sharing the learning with their peers.
- Art history lessons took a more teacher-led approach. However, very good questioning was used to involve students in whole group discussion, and individual tasks such as worksheets were given to stimulate student engagement with artworks being studied. Students contributed well to discussion, and many responses were thoughtful and indicative of very good subject knowledge and understanding. To encourage more substantial contribution from a greater number of students, a broader range of more active and collaborative teaching approaches in Art History lessons should be explored.
- Student work reviewed during the evaluation was of a very high quality and indicated a very good focus on skills development. Commendably, the use of primary sources is promoted as a starting point for project work. Exceptional examples of current and past student work are on display in the classroom and throughout the school.
- Highly effective classroom routines and structures are in place which allow students to work independently in an environment of mutual respect. Students were highly motivated in the lessons observed, and very good student engagement and enjoyment were evident.
- Very good assessment practices are in place, including student self-assessment. Students are provided with highly effective verbal feedback from the teacher throughout lessons, both individually and as a group. Very high quality written formative feedback is provided on key pieces of both written and practical student work. To further build on this very good practice, students should now be encouraged to use this feedback to set their own targets for improvement.
- A good focus on the whole-school strategies of independent learning, numeracy, and keywords to promote literacy, was noted in lessons.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Curricular provision for Art is good overall, and uptake of the subject is good in junior cycle. There is scope to improve uptake in senior cycle, and strategies should be explored by the art department in collaboration with school management and students to further raise the profile of Art in the school.
- Timetabling of Art is appropriate for the most-part, with good classroom contact time in all years from second to sixth year.
- First-year students take Art for ten double-class periods as part of a subject sampling programme. While this supports them in making an informed subject choice in second year, it reduces their overall contact with Art in junior cycle. This should be kept under review to ensure sufficient contact time to develop the necessary skills and knowledge of the course content for implementation of the Junior Cycle specification.
- School management is highly supportive of the art department. There is a very strong presence of Art in the school, with large scale collaborative student work on permanent display in prominent positions throughout the building. Two well-equipped specialist art rooms are available, and students have access to subject-specific materials for a wide range of art, craft and design disciplines.
- Very good opportunities for students to access Art beyond the curriculum are provided by the art department through portfolio classes, links with drama and the school library, and a range of external competitions. Community projects and school trips to enhance learning in Art are facilitated by management.
- The principal encourages and facilitates teachers' engagement in regular continuing professional development (CPD) and uptake by the art department is very good. This pays dividends in the classroom where teachers implement learning from CPD in their teaching approaches.
- Leadership opportunities are provided for students in fifth year who act as Art prefects. Their main role is to contribute to school open days for incoming first-year students. This role could be opened up to students in all year groups, and further developed to include a more meaningful role in leading and promoting the Arts related activities that are already taking place in the school.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- A subject co-ordinator is in place for Art and planning meetings are used to plan individually for the subject. Commendably, the art department partakes in peer collaborative visits to lessons. Consideration should also be given by the art department to meeting with other smaller subject departments to plan collaboratively where appropriate. This would facilitate discussion of teaching, learning and assessment strategies, and teachers would benefit from the peer support and shared expertise that this would provide.
- Subject planning is very good and comprehensive schemes of work take cognisance of the recent curricular and assessment changes in Art.
- Detailed analysis of certificate examinations are undertaken annually by the art department and reflections on this analysis are recorded in the subject plan. This should now be used to inform future planning for teaching and learning in Art.
- Good practices are in place for record keeping and reporting on students' work and achievement. Parents are informed of students' progress through formal school reports, and parent-teacher meetings in junior cycle. Learning advice meetings, attended by parents and students, were recently introduced in senior cycle.

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

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 of quality 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;