

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Art, Craft and Design

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	St Michaels Secondary School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Wellmount Road Finglas Dublin 11
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	607411

Date of Inspection: 12-03-2020



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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, Craft and Design 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.

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	11-03-2020 and 12-03-2020
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 four lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Saint Michael's Secondary School is a voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of the Le Chéile Trust. The school has a current enrolment of 622 girls and participates in DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. The Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate programmes are provided. Transition Year (TY) is optional and Art is provided as a module on the programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was very good; the development of teacher-designed templates to effectively encourage students to reflect on their progress is very good practice.
- Assessment practices in the lessons observed were of a good standard overall; teacher written feedback was limited on key pieces of practical work observed.
- A range of questioning strategies was used in all of the lessons observed; in the majority of instances questions were posed globally and invited whole-class answering.
- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support for Art is very good.
- Teachers of Art are very committed to the on-going development of the subject and demonstrate very good levels of engagement with continuing professional development.
- Overall the quality of planning and preparation for Art is satisfactory; currently planning for Junior Cycle units of learning is heavily focused on the practical skills from art, craft and design areas of practice.

Recommendations

- The team of art teachers should further expand the use of written feedback to include key pieces of practical work.
- The art department should continue to plan for and use a more balanced approach to questioning so as to ensure that the learning of individual students is better ascertained.
- The team of art teachers, when planning students' learning experiences in Junior Cycle, should take further cognisance of the learning outcomes of the Visual Art specification.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was very good.
- A very good teacher-student rapport was evident in the lessons observed. Teachers have high expectations for student achievement. In the lessons observed, teachers modelled motivation, enthusiasm and enjoyment in Art and were highly affirming of students' contribution and effort.
- Lessons were very well planned, and there was a good use of additional resources such as electronic presentations. Teacher demonstrations were also used to good effect.
- Commendably, a range of art, craft and design areas of practice is available for learners to study, and primary sources were well used in all practical lessons. In a few instances, to ensure learning and development of ideas from primary sources was optimised, teachers ascertained students' understanding of the rationale for using primary sources. This is good practice.
- Observation of junior cycle sketchbooks indicate that, in general, students effectively reflect on their own progress using a series of teacher-designed templates. The templates encourage students to record self-assessments at varying stages throughout their course work. The development of this series of hand-outs is very good practice.
- There is a need to review how senior cycle students record their learning from theoretical lessons in Art. The infrequent attendance of a few students was noted as a reason for the variety of practice observed in copybooks. Therefore an agreed system that enables all students to take responsibility for building up and storing theory work from lessons should be further explored.
- Assessment practices in the lessons observed were of a good standard overall. At times there was scope to use additional assessment practices to better ascertain individual students' learning.
- Teachers provided very good oral feedback to support the learning of students throughout the lessons observed. Some examples of very good written formative feedback were noted in student copybooks.
- A large amount of practical work was reviewed during the evaluation. It was noted that teacher feedback was not recorded on key pieces of practical work. In some instances, the inclusion of teacher feedback would have proved beneficial to support learners in making improvements to their work. It is recommended that the use of written feedback be further expanded to include key pieces of practical work.
- A range of questioning strategies was used in all of the lessons observed. A good combination of lower and higher order questions was used. However, in the majority of instances, questions were posed globally and invited whole-class answering. At times, there were opportunities to use more directed questions to assess individual student's learning. It is recommended that the teachers continue to plan for and use a balanced approach to questioning so as to ensure that the learning of individual students is better ascertained.
- In all almost all lessons teachers planned plenary sessions to assess students' achievement of the intended learning. However, in many instances the plenary sessions were not effective, as they tended to be very brief. Teachers should ensure that in planning for plenary sessions, sufficient time is given to ensure students can fully demonstrate their learning.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support for Art is very good. Students have good access to Art. Uptake for the subject at junior cycle is very good and there is good uptake at senior cycle.
- The art department is very committed to the on-going development of the subject and a very good level of engagement with continuing professional development is evident.
- There are two designated spaces for the teaching of Art. The specialist rooms are very well resourced and maintained as vibrant learning environments. Displays of student work promote high expectations for achievement.
- The art department offers a wide variety of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities to support achievement of Art. Some examples include projects completed in collaboration with the subject departments of Physical Education and Mathematics, as well as involvement with the design of a cover of the student journal. Commendably, very strong links have been established with past pupils who have undertaken the study of Art at third-level.
- Health and safety procedures for Art are well established. The department has appropriate risk-assessment procedures and classroom safety protocols in place, including procedures for using the kiln. Appropriate safety signage is also on display in the specialist rooms.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Overall the quality of planning and preparation for Art is satisfactory.
- Planning for junior cycle is at the early stages of development. While long-term plans are based on the learning outcomes from the Junior Cycle Visual Art specification, planned learning experiences are heavily focused on the practical skills from the art, craft and design areas of practice. It is recommended that the team of art teachers, when planning students' learning experiences in each unit of learning, takes further cognisance of the learning outcomes of the Junior Cycle specification.
- Very good lines of communication exist between the art department and senior management. Minutes of subject meetings are shared with senior management. Minutes of meetings reviewed outline decisions and the actions to be completed by the team of art teachers. It was noted that teaching and learning is not a consistent agenda on minutes of meetings. The art department should give consideration to having teaching and learning as a regular agenda item on minutes of meetings.
- An appropriate plan of work has been developed for TY Art. The art department reported that in planning for a range of learning experiences, TY Art activities include access to the *Creative Engagement* programme and a series of gallery visits and artists' talks. Continued development of a varied and broad range of areas of practice in the TY art plan, is welcomed.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and members of the art department 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 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;