

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Art, Craft and Design

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Loreto College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Swords County Dublin
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	60810B

Date of Inspection: 24-10-2017



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 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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Date of inspection	24-10-2017
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 class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Loreto College is an all-girls secondary school with a current enrolment of 625 students. Art is an optional subject within the Junior Certificate, the optional Transition Year (TY) and in the Leaving Certificate programmes.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good, with many instances of highly effective practice noted.
- Learning was of a very high quality.
- The overall quality of in-class assessment was good; there is scope to progress student engagement in using the feedback provided to them.
- Whole-school support and subject provision for Art is very good; timetabling of art lessons ensures that optimal use is made of the shared specialist room.
- Health and safety procedures are very well established in art lessons; a few aspects of health and safety regarding specialist equipment need to be addressed.
- Good-quality planning and preparation for Art are apparent; a collaborative approach to subject planning is evident.

Recommendations

- The art department should develop strategies that engage students in using the formative feedback provided to encourage them to take more ownership of their learning.
- The art department, in collaboration with senior management, should carry out an annual health and safety risk assessment of the art room and, as resources permit, plan for the provision of safety equipment to address the issues identified during the evaluation.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good, with many instances of highly effective practice noted.
- High-quality teacher preparation was evident. Lessons were well planned, structured and sequenced. Students in all lessons were motivated to learn and had a positive approach to participation in class tasks.
- The learning space in the specialist room was well organised and maintained to a high standard. This modelling of good routines is commended as it encourages students to adopt a very good level of self-organisational skills in practical lessons.
- High-quality learning was evident during the lessons observed. Students were on task and engaged purposefully in set activities in all lessons.
- A range of teaching strategies was observed in lessons. These included clear instruction, demonstrations, as well as opportunities for independent and collaborative student activities. Where very effective teaching approaches were observed, the strategies deployed provided appropriate challenge for students, and the planned tasks facilitated deep levels of learning, self-reflection and skills development.
- Students are facilitated to use a wide range of media. Learning was most effective where students were provided with opportunities to experiment and advance previously learned skills. Students were given occasions to extend their drawing skills and apply knowledge aptly. One such instance observed was where a drawing activity was completed outdoors using found material.
- Meaningful and authentic connections between learning from different subject areas were integrated seamlessly into all lessons observed. For example, students were encouraged to make links with prior learning in History regarding manuscripts and scriptoria and then used that understanding to investigate effectively the origins of handwriting.
- Primary sources were used very successfully in all practical lessons. Students demonstrated a very good understanding of using primary sources as starting points in their developmental work.
- The overall quality of assessment in the lessons was good. There is scope for development in some aspects of assessment practice.
- The quality of oral feedback provided during lessons was very effective. A commendable variety of written formative feedback was noted on students' practical and theory work. As a next step, it is recommended that the art teachers collaboratively develop strategies to engage students in using the feedback provided. This would enable students to take more ownership of their learning.
- A range of questioning strategies was used in all lessons to monitor students' overall understanding of lesson concepts. In a few instances, higher-order questioning was used effectively to encourage students to show an understanding of their art work. However, in many of these instances, students' answers were brief and teachers tended to provide the answers to the questions posed. Teachers of Art should plan for the use of higher-order questions as a means of further promoting deep critical-thinking skills during plenary sessions with students.

- Commendably, a series of student self-reflection and review tasks has been developed by the teachers of Art. In completing these tasks, students demonstrated good use of subject-specific language. To build on this good practice, the questions posed for these tasks should be refined to elicit a deeper response by students to the learning within their work.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of whole-school support and subject provision for Art is very good.
- Access to the subject is good. Junior-cycle option subjects are chosen prior to commencement of first year and option bands for senior cycle are informed by student choice.
- There is one specialist room shared between the teachers of Art. This space has recently been refurbished and is well maintained and welcoming. The display of work within the room is indicative of a purposeful working environment.
- Timetabling of Art is appropriate, ensuring an equality of access to the shared specialist room for all class groups.
- Health and safety procedures are well established for art lessons and are included in subject department planning. During the evaluation, health and safety issues with regard to specialist equipment were noted. There was a lack of appropriate protection and ventilation around the kiln. School management should now plan, as resources permit, to provide for these safety measures in respect of the kiln.
- In addition, it was noted that a risk assessment had not been formally carried out by the art department in the recent past. It is recommended that the art department, in collaboration with senior management, carry out an annual health and safety risk assessment.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Good-quality planning and preparation for Art were evident. A commendably collaborative and collegial approach to subject planning was evident.
- The art department holds regular planning meetings, both formally and informally. Minutes of meetings are appropriately documented; a useful template for recording minutes has been adopted. In moving forward, the department should include a teaching and learning section within the template.
- A transition year (TY) programme of work has been developed. This plan demonstrates a good balance between theory and practical work. It is indicative of effective practice that the TY art plan is reviewed regularly. There is scope, as part of upcoming review, to evaluate the suitability of the current timetabling arrangements for TY art. Opportunities to include the student voice in this review would also prove beneficial.
- The art department undertakes a good analysis of student outcomes in the certificate examinations, and analyses the data collated on student progression after senior cycle.
- Commendably, the department has built up great links with past pupils who have progressed into art professions or related courses. The teachers of Art have developed strategies to promote these links; for instance, inviting role models back to participate in various projects. These links help to enhance students' appreciation and understanding of Art outside the classroom.

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

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 welcomes the report on the Inspection of Art. The report confirms the commitment of the school to the provision of Art and the support given to the subject as an aspect of school life.

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 of Loreto College wishes to confirm that a Health and Safety Risk Assessment of the Art Room and its contents has been carried out by the Art Department and that an assessment will be carried out annually from next September.

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;