

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Art, Craft and Design

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Saint Patrick's College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Cavan County Cavan
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	61060M

Date of Inspection: 05-02-2018



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; a response was not received from the board.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Date(s) of inspection	05-02-2018
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 two class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and art department

School context

Saint Patrick's College is a Catholic secondary school for boys which operates under the patronage of the Diocese of Kilmore. Currently, there are 689 students enrolled. The programmes provided are the Junior Cycle, the Leaving Certificate and an optional Transition Year (TY).

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning was effective overall.
- Very good use of information and communication technology (ICT) was noted in the lessons observed.
- The overall quality of in-class assessment was appropriate; there is scope to advance aspects of questioning strategies.
- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support for Art is very good.
- A highly effective cross-curricular programme of work is in place for students to enrich their understanding of Art.
- Good progress has been made in planning and preparation for Art; there is scope to further advance aspects of programme planning for the subject.

Recommendations

- The art department should plan for the use of higher-order questions to promote deep critical-thinking skills in lessons.
- Subject planning should be further developed to link differentiation and assessment practice with specific schemes of work and take cognisance of the specification for Junior Cycle Visual Art.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was effective in the lessons observed. All lessons were well prepared and well paced, with learning intentions shared at the start. To further expand on the good practice, learning intentions should be expressed in terms of what students should know or be able to do.
- A stimulating and purposeful learning environment was created in the specialist room and around the school by the range of artwork displayed, all of which modelled best practice and helped to create high expectations for students' achievement.
- A range of effective teaching and learning methodologies was noted during the lessons observed. Teacher instructions and demonstrations were communicated clearly to the students. However, at times there was an over reliance on teacher-led activity; this should be addressed with further use of student-centred activities recommended.
- In one lesson, students undertook a graphic-design practical task. Although students undertook the same the whole-class activity, opportunities for individual student creativity were skilfully exploited.
- A very good range of learning experiences is provided in Art. Student work reviewed during the evaluation displayed competent technical skills in using a wide variety of media. However, opportunities to engage and explore a more focused approach to the development of artistic ideas should now be progressed to complement the development of technical skills.
- Very good use of ICT was observed in all lessons. High-quality images were used to initiate discussion or to provide a visual hint sheet supporting the students' completion of a class activity.
- In-class assessment is appropriate overall. Lower-order global questioning was the predominate method of assessment used in the lessons observed. In many instances, student answers were brief. It is recommended that questioning strategies be developed, to include higher-order questions, in order to foster students' deeper critical thinking about art work.
- Very good use of written formative feedback was noted on theory work and on some practical work. At the time of the evaluation, the art department was developing an effective strategy to engage students in using feedback more meaningfully. The teacher-designed template encourages students to record self and peer assessments, and to address the improvements needed to progress their learning. This strategy is indicative of very good practice and should be progressed with all year groups.
- Appropriate differentiation was noted in a few instances. For instance, the teacher facilitated one-to-one support for a small number of students. There is scope to expand the range of teaching approaches that provide for effective differentiation. This would ensure that all students engage purposefully in set tasks.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support for Art is very good. Access to the subject is very good overall, with option bands constructed based on student choice.
- Uptake for Art is good at junior cycle; however, numbers have declined in recent times at senior cycle. Whilst the art department and senior management are aware of possible factors for the decline, the actual reasons should be investigated further. Strategies that ensure the subject's ongoing sustainability in senior cycle should be implemented.
- The art department displays great enthusiasm in its work and is dedicated to promoting Art within the school. A highly effective cross-curricular programme of work is in place and the strong collaboration undertaken in such projects, by both students and other subject departments, is noteworthy. Such linkages help to enhance students' appreciation and understanding of Art outside the classroom.
- A very good level of engagement by teachers with continuing professional development (CPD) is evident.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall quality of subject planning is good. There are good schemes of work in place for each year group and it is effective practice that these schemes are used by teachers as working documents to reflect on progress. To build on this good practice, it is recommended that the department include differentiated learning intentions and align them to specific assessment practice in each programme plan.
- It was evident from the planning documentation reviewed that the art department has integrated the study of Art History intrinsically into the planned learning for junior-cycle students. This very good practice builds students' understanding of and interest in Art History and Appreciation from first year.
- The art department undertook subject-specific CPD recently for Junior Cycle Visual Art. It is timely that subject planning in first year should now be developed to link the learning outcomes across the three strands of the Visual Art specification.
- A very interesting curricular plan has been prepared for TY with a good emphasis placed on the development of artistic skills. The school reported that the art department differentiates tasks for students who have not completed Art in junior cycle. This good practice should be reflected in planning documentation. Additionally, and with a view to increasing uptake in Leaving Certificate Art, consideration should be given to devising formal mechanisms for including the student voice in providing feedback to inform on-going development of TY Art.
- It is good practice that a health-and-safety risk assessment is reviewed annually. A kiln with safety signage is in place and an appropriate extraction fan. During the evaluation, it was noted that no safety cage surrounds the kiln. Whilst it is acknowledged that the school has in the past researched and reviewed this provision, it is advised that during the next risk assessment review, as resources permit, that the inclusion of a cage be advanced.
- A good analysis of student outcomes in the certificate examinations is completed by the art department. This analysis has informed departmental targets such as the planning for the careful reading of examination questions by students. Decisions arising from such analysis should be documented within a departmental action plan.

4. CHILD PROTECTION

During the evaluation, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The school principal is aware that revised child protection procedures for primary and post-primary schools came into effect on 11 December 2017 and arrangements are in place to begin the process of implementing these procedures.
2. The name of the designated liaison person for child protection matters was prominently displayed near the main door of the school.
3. The school has a child protection policy in place.
4. All teachers are aware that they are mandated persons and of their responsibilities in that regard.

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

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