

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection in Art**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Loreto College
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Mullingar Co Westmeath
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	63290Q

**Date of Inspection: 15-01-2020**



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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 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

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	14-01-2020 - 15-01-2020
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and key staff</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during four lessons</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### School context

Loreto College Mullingar is an all girls' post-primary school with a current enrolment of 852 students. The school provides the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The quality of learning and teaching was very good or good in the lessons observed.
- The art department has implemented very good formative assessment strategies.
- In line with good practice teachers encourage students to explore primary sources including photographs taken by themselves, however in some instances students preferred to work from secondary sources.
- Student work reviewed was of a very good quality, indicating a strong focus on technical skills.
- Subject provision and whole-school support for Art is very good.
- Very good, collaborative planning processes are in place, however short-term planning requires some attention.

#### Recommendations

- Teachers should explore further strategies to ensure that students understand the benefits of exploring physical primary sources as a starting point for their work.
- In all lessons, teachers should incorporate a creative element to ensure that students develop their technical skills simultaneously with their creative and critical thinking skills.
- The art department should further develop short-term plans by developing units of learning that take cognisance of the very good teaching methodologies, success criteria and formative assessment strategies observed in lessons.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was very good or good.
- Art is taught in an atmosphere of mutual respect where students are affirmed for effort and participation. Teachers modelled enthusiasm, motivation and enjoyment of the subject.
- All lessons were well prepared and the teachers provided clear instructions for the planned activities.
- Learning intentions were shared and meaningfully reviewed at key points during lessons. In line with the school's self-evaluation strategy of encouraging students to take ownership of their learning, teachers facilitated students to use success criteria to ensure that they understood what was required of them to achieve the intended learning. This is very good practice.
- In all lessons teachers provided very good opportunities for productive student participation in meaningful activities. Students were enabled and encouraged to work independently at their own pace.
- In some lessons, teachers used appropriate visuals or video clips of artists' work to support students' learning of the particular area of study. This good practice should be extended to all lessons where appropriate, to expose students to a range of artists' styles and genres.
- In line with good practice, teachers encouraged students to use primary sources as the starting point for project work. In many cases this included students taking, and working from, photographs on their mobile devices. In a few instances students preferred to work from internet-based secondary sources on their mobile devices. While these are valid sources of inspiration, students should understand the benefits of exploring physical objects that are meaningful and interesting to them. Such benefits include the opportunity to study art elements including colour, texture and form in greater detail, and to manipulate objects to explore ideas.
- Student work reviewed during the evaluation was of a very good quality, indicating high expectations of students. Outcomes of students' self-evaluation indicated the high value placed on accurate recording of art elements in their work, and there was a strong focus on technical skills in lessons observed. To ensure that students also see the value of forming a personal creative response to a stimulus, all lessons should have a creative element. Students should be encouraged to experiment with media, and develop technical skills simultaneously with creative and critical thinking skills.
- Teachers implemented strategies such as prompts, targeted questions and good wait time to encourage students to participate in whole-group discussion. While students complied with teachers' requests to share their views with their peers, they were often hesitant to volunteer responses or elaborate on their opinions in front of their peers. Teachers should explore strategies to encourage more meaningful participation in such discussions.
- In a few lessons, students worked collaboratively in small groups, which effectively facilitated students to contribute more deeply to discussion within a more intimate setting. To maximise learning, teachers should allocate sufficient time for students to share their learning with the wider group, and to consider how they could apply their learning to subsequent activities.
- The art department has implemented very good formative assessment strategies that facilitate students to meaningfully reflect on their learning, track their progress, and identify areas for improvement.
- Teachers facilitated effective peer-assessment and provided very good verbal formative feedback to students throughout the lessons observed. To build on this students should be

encouraged to record feedback provided by teachers, and use this along with their own reflection, to plan for implementation of identified areas for improvement.

- Teachers regularly assign art history and drawing homework. Teachers monitor this work and provide high-quality formative written feedback on completed work. This is very good practice.

## **2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support is very good.
- Art has a high profile in the school, which is enhanced through permanent displays of student artworks throughout the building, and consistently updated displays of current artworks outside the art rooms.
- The art department offers students very good opportunities to access art beyond the curriculum, including art trips, TY drama production, local and national competitions, and an extra-curricular animation club. Commendably, the student-run art club promotes student leadership.
- The school uses very good means to celebrate student achievements in Art, including junior and senior art awards, art exhibitions and the principal's reports to the board and parents council.
- A small class is provided for third-year students who are not studying modern foreign languages (MFL). Most of the students in the class have additional needs. The art department, in collaboration with the SET team, should develop student support files to ensure, where appropriate, that the students' identified needs are specifically targeted.
- Art is an optional subject and uptake is very good. Senior management has identified that there is scope to expand student choice in junior cycle and has begun to explore timetabling options to address this.
- Two well-equipped specialist rooms cater for a very good range of art, craft and design areas of practice. The art department has developed a safety statement which outlines safe use of art equipment. The existing risk assessment section should be updated to include a review of student access to the kiln.

## **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Planning and preparation in Art is very good overall. The art department has prepared very good long-term plans for all programmes. In line with good practice, long-term plans are based on relevant learning outcomes and subject specifications.
- Teachers have individually prepared short-term plans, which currently take the form of assignment briefs for students. The art department should further develop short-term plans for units of learning that document the highly effective teaching and learning methodologies, success criteria and formative assessment strategies observed in lessons.
- The school's online platform facilitates collaborative planning, and senior management regularly provides time for formal subject planning meetings. Minutes of department meetings indicate discussion of teaching and learning, and identification of areas for development based on analysis certificate examination data and outcomes of subject learning and review meetings. This is very good practice.
- A subject co-ordinator is in place for the art department and the role rotates from time to time. The role should be rotated on a more regular basis to facilitate leadership opportunities for all members of the art department.

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

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.

## 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	Example of descriptive terms
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;

# Appendix

## SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

### Submitted by the Board of Management

#### Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management welcomes the findings of the Inspection Report, in particular the following:

- The recognition of very good formative feedback and assessment strategies incorporating student reflection on learning and tracking progress as per SIP
- Acknowledgement as very good practice the SSE strategy which encourages students to take ownership of their own learning through the established use of learning intentions and success criteria. This is a school-wide practice.
- Acknowledgement of the very good quality work of students, as a result of the high expectations of students and their own self-evaluation.

#### Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

- Teachers continue to emphasise the importance of using primary sources as a starting point for their work.
- The Art department will continue to prioritise the Health and Safety requirements for Art students to include a review of student access to the kiln.
- The school and Art Department acknowledge the importance of rotating the role of subject co-ordinator and intend to do so as staffing allows. There has been a number of staff changes over recent years which impacted on this practice.
- The Art Department will further develop units of learning as part of their short-term plans, further building on the very good teaching methodologies, success criteria and formative assessment strategies observed in the lessons.