

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

**Subject Inspection in Art, Craft and Design**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Loreto Secondary School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Saint Michael's Navan County Meath
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	64370T

**Date of Inspection: 07-12-2016**



**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. Learning, teaching 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 DURING THIS INSPECTION

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	06-12-16 and 07-12-2016
<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 class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Loreto Secondary School is a Catholic voluntary secondary school for girls catering for 796 students. Art is offered as an optional subject within the Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate, and in the Transition Year (TY) programmes.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was very good.
- The art department has identified a series of departmental teaching and learning targets to progress during this academic year.
- The overall quality of assessment practice in Art was good, with some areas for development noted.
- The quality of whole-school provision and support for the subject is very good.
- There is a strong collegial environment inherent within the art department.
- It is commendable that students of Art are provided with opportunities to assume leadership roles.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- The art department should develop strategies that engage students in using the formative feedback provided on their work and involve them in setting and tracking their own progress.
- In planning, the art department should outline its expected learning intentions in a differentiated manner, thereby providing greater opportunity to identify specific outcomes for all learners.

### DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was very good.
- Classroom management was effective in all lessons, with clearly established routines evident. The range of artwork displayed in both specialist rooms and in rotating displays in designated

areas around the school provided a model of best practice and created high expectations for students' achievements.

- In both art rooms, questions and keywords were displayed alongside exhibited pieces of work. This strategy enables students to familiarise themselves with terminology for describing artwork. The questions posed should be re-phrased to reflect the current classroom and whole-school focus on comment-only marking.
- Clear learning intentions were set and shared with students and reviewed during each lesson. Very good practice was noted in instances where the learning intentions actively supported students' self-reflection on their learning. Such an approach is encouraged further.
- In most lessons, there was a good balance between teacher input and student participation and response. Learning was most effective when group work was structured and encouraged full student engagement; for instance, when students explored colour theory.
- Commendably, primary sources were used by students in all of the practical lessons observed. The department has prioritised the use of more primary sources as starting points for all year-group tasks. To support the implementation of this priority, the identification of well-chosen primary sources that relate to students' interests should be integrated into schemes of work.
- The overall quality of assessment in Art is good; some areas for development were noted. Examples of very effective written feedback was observed in students' copybooks and on practical work. Oral feedback was also a strength noted during the lessons observed. Strategies should be explored to engage students in using the formative feedback provided on their work to encourage learner autonomy.
- A range of effective questioning strategies was used in the majority of lessons observed, with very good wait-time afforded to students when answering questions.
- In all lessons observed, a strong emphasis was placed on the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) through digital presentations. The department has introduced a digital platform for senior students to submit essays. Whilst good progress has been made in using this facility, it is suggested that students illustrate essays using imagery they have produced and not rely on downloaded pictures from the internet.
- As part of a whole-school approach to improving literacy and numeracy, there was a good emphasis on developing students' understanding of key concepts and the reinforcement of relevant numeracy concepts such as ratio in colour mixing.

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

- The quality of whole-school provision and support for Art is very good.
- Uptake of Art is good at both junior and senior cycle. This is supported by a short subject-sampling programme in first year where students get an opportunity to sample and choose their preferred optional subjects based upon their experience. In senior cycle, the construction of options bands is also informed by student choice.
- In line with best practice, the health and safety procedures and maintenance of specialist equipment are reviewed and documented as part of an annual risk assessment. During the evaluation, it was noted that there is a misalignment between the equipment documented in the whole-school safety policy and the subject department risk assessment template; this should be addressed. Appropriate signage on the door of the designated room for the kiln should be also displayed.

- Teachers have engaged actively with ongoing continuing professional development (CPD). In discussions with the art department and management, it was evident that teachers share resources, carry out peer observation and discuss learning from the CPD attended. This good practice should be recorded formally in departmental minutes which are in turn forwarded to senior management.
- It is commended that students of Art are provided with opportunities to assume leadership roles by curating artwork. Involvement in such initiatives highlights the department's commitment to providing a broader understanding of Art to students outside of the classroom.

### **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The overall quality of planning and preparation observed was good.
- An effective and collaborative approach to subject planning was noted. Planning documentation outlined general and specific learning outcomes for all year groups. It is recommended that the subject plan be further developed to incorporate differentiated learning intentions and to link appropriate assessment methodologies to relevant content in the schemes of work.
- Good records of students' progress are maintained by the teaching team. These records are analysed and used in setting targets for individual students. In order to build on this good practice, these results should now be shared with the students to plan individual learning goals and encourage them to take more ownership of their learning.
- The department participates in good discussions on the analysis of student attainment each year. In order to advance this practice, the art department could now consider using this analysis to devise specific targets and actions to support student learning.
- Overall, planning for TY Art is good. The plan of work indicates an appropriate balance between the study of Art Appreciation and the development of artistic skills in most of the modules reviewed. The TY Craft module did not have an appropriate link documented with historical or contemporary Art Appreciation; this module should be reviewed with this balance in mind.

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.

# **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 affirmation of the very high quality of learning and teaching in the Art Department of the school.
- Validation of very effective teacher feedback, both written and oral, being given to students is further welcomed.
- The Board appreciates the recognition of the school's commitment to a very high level of access to art.
- The Board also notes the report's finding that *'whole school provision and support for art is very good'*.
- As the development of leadership potential is a key facet of our broader educational aims the Board notes with satisfaction the report's finding that *'students of art are provided with opportunities to assume leadership roles'*.
- It is equally satisfying that the school's commitment to the public display of artwork throughout the school was commended as *'a model of best practice creating high expectations for students'*.

### **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 recognises the applicability of the two key recommendations for all subject departments of the school. As a result

- These recommendations will be shared with the full teaching staff at a staff meeting in the current half term
- Opportunities at individual subject department level to evaluate how these recommendations might be used to enhance teaching and learning across all subjects will be provided by management
- The Board of Management will provide the resources necessary to support staff in its efforts to implement the recommendations 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 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. Overall, learners have access to a basic level of provision. 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