

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Art, Craft and Design

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	John Scottus Secondary School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Old Conna House Ferndale Road Rathmichael Co. Dublin
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	68071G

Date of Inspection: 10-10-2017



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.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Date(s) of inspection	10-10-2017
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 three class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and art department

School context

John Scottus Secondary School is a co-educational, fee-charging, post-primary school with a current enrolment of 130 students. Art is offered as a compulsory subject within the Junior Certificate and in the optional Transition Year (TY) programmes, and is an optional subject at Leaving Certificate level.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was very good.
- A recently-adapted space has been developed as a vibrant learning environment; the displays of exemplar material foster a culture of high expectations among students.
- The overall quality of in-class assessment was good, with some aspects for development noted in the area of teachers' planning for the use of higher-order questioning.
- Very good written formative feedback was noted on students' work to support learning; there is scope to develop strategies to engage students in using the feedback provided.
- The overall quality of provision and whole-school support for Art is very good; health and safety procedures are well established for art lessons but no risk assessment has been prepared.
- Good quality progress has been made in planning and preparation for Art; effective reflective practices were evident.

Recommendations

- The art department should plan for the further use of higher-order questions to promote deep critical-thinking skills in lessons.
- The art department should develop strategies to support students in using the formative feedback provided to encourage them to take better ownership of their learning.
- In addition to the health and safety subject policy and guidelines the art department, in collaboration with senior management, should carry out an annual health and safety risk assessment of the specialist facilities.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was very good.
- The lessons observed were well planned, structured and sequenced. Students in all lessons were motivated to learn and had a positive approach to participation in class tasks.
- A stimulating and purposeful learning environment was apparent. Students' art work was exhibited to very good effect and the range of artwork displayed modelled best practice and created high expectations for students' achievement.
- A clear set of aims was shared with students at the beginning of each lesson and this provided students with a focus on the lesson content. In order to maximise student engagement, it is suggested that the department consider phrasing learning intentions with a clearer focus on what the students should know and understand by the end of the lesson.
- Student behaviour was good in all lessons. It was evident that students have clearly established routines for managing classroom materials.
- In all of the lessons observed, there was a very good balance between teacher input and productive student participation. There was very good recall of previous learning in all instances, and this practice proved effective in supporting the tasks set for the lessons observed. An appropriate integration of theory with practical skills was also evident.
- Observation of student work indicates that primary sources are used by students as a starting point for project work. This is good practice.
- In all lessons, information and communications technology (ICT) was used effectively to enhance explanations and display images designed to support student learning. For example, in one lesson the use of a short film was used to explore Installation Art. To encourage a greater interrogation of digital source materials, students should be provided with prompt questions in advance of watching video clips to guide a purposeful student discussion.
- A highly-commendable range of methodologies has been developed to integrate the History of Art routinely into the learning experiences planned for junior cycle students. This noteworthy practice builds students' confidence and facilitates a deep understanding of Art History and Appreciation from first year.
- The overall quality of in-class assessment was good; with some areas for development noted in planning for the use of higher-order questions and students' use of formative feedback.
- The content and presentation of written and practical work examined during the evaluation demonstrated purposeful, ongoing learning. Very good examples of written formative feedback were noted on both theory and practical work. However, some samples observed repeated the same instruction for improvement over a few pieces of work for individual students. Moving forward, it is recommended that the art department progresses strategies that engage students in using the formative feedback provided on their work to encourage more learner autonomy.
- The use of higher-order questioning was observed in lessons. In many instances however, students gave very brief answers and the teacher then expanded on the answer themselves. It is recommended that the art department plans for the further use of higher-order questions to promote deep critical-thinking skills in lessons.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of provision and whole-school support for Art is very good.
- The school has recently relocated to a new building which includes an adapted space to create a specialist room for Art. The department in consultation with management, has devised action plans to continue advancing and organising resources for this space.
- The teacher displays great enthusiasm and is dedicated to promoting Art within the school. A significant variety of extra-curricular activities is available to students, including portfolio preparation for third-level entry.
- Notably, the art teacher has developed some very good cross-curricular links. For example, high-quality standards in the display of student work around the school are shared with staff. One such example was noted between the Art and French departments. In addition, learners are encouraged to apply and adapt the skills learned in Art whilst completing work in other subject areas.
- Health and safety procedures are well established for art lessons and are included in the subject department plan. At the time of the evaluation a risk assessment had not been prepared for use by the art department. It is recommended, that a risk assessment for the art room be developed and reviewed annually.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Good quality progress has been made in planning and preparation for Art. There is scope for improvement in a few areas.
- Effective reflective practice is a significant strength within the art department. This is evident from the inclusion of a reflective notes section in the curricular plans.
- There is a strong link between subject planning for Art and the whole-school values of John Scottus. For example the whole-school value placed on '*enquiry*' underpins many aspects of the planning documentation for Art. This was also evident in the lessons observed, for example where students explored materials and their limitations and perceptions about modern art.
- Whilst a good emphasis is placed on developing students' use of subject-specific terminology, it is an appropriate time for the art department to review the implementation of literacy strategies which support students for whom English is not their first language.
- The art teacher fosters good cross-school collaborative practice and this is evident from the link with colleagues in neighbouring schools. This is good practice. Actions arising from such collaboration should be documented in the art minutes as starting points to guide current focus for the department.
- A good analysis of student outcomes in the certificate examinations is completed by the art teacher. This analysis has informed departmental targets such as reviewing the integration of support studies for junior-cycle students. Decisions arising from such analysis should be documented in a departmental action plan.

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 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.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

We welcome the report and for the observations about the quality of learning being very good, the vibrant learning environment, the very good written formative feedback, the very good overall provision and whole school support for Art and the effective reflective practices.

It is part of our school ethos to continually enquire into how to provide the best learning and teaching environment to our students, and we embrace the recommendations in the report to guide this enquiry.

Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

As part of our learning and teaching strategy we at John Scottus continually endeavour to refine and improve the standard of learning and teaching through collaborative professional dialogue and planning, the development of learning communities, coaching pairs, peer observations, student surveys and educational workshops.

In this context we will be taking into special consideration the recommendations in the report to plan for further use of higher order question, to support students in using formative feedback and to conduct annual health and safety risk assessments to complement the health and safety subject policy.

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;