

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

Subject Inspection in Art

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Oaklands Community College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Sr. Senan Avenue Edenderry Co. Offaly
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	725400

Date of Inspection: 14-09-2016



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** 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.

Subject Inspection

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	13 & 14 September 2016
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 six class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to deputy principal and art teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Oaklands Community College is a co-educational post-primary school under the management of the Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board, and has a current enrolment of 711 students. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. Art is offered in the established Leaving Certificate, Transition Year, Junior Certificate and Junior Certificate Schools Programmes (JCSP), as well as in a class for students with autistic spectrum disorders.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- Effective and highly effective teaching practice was noted in the lessons observed, and the quality of learning for students was very good overall.
- The overall quality of assessment in Art is good, with further scope for written formative feedback to be developed for the continual assessment of practical work.
- Student work reviewed during the evaluation demonstrates a good understanding of process in Art and Design, and indicates the use of primary sources as a starting point for some project work.
- Well-being of students is a priority for the art department and the learning environment promotes motivation, enthusiasm and enjoyment of the subject.
- Management is highly supportive of Art in the school, and subject provision is very good.
- Preparation for lessons was very good overall, and high-quality resources that enhance student learning were prepared in advance of all lessons observed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The use of primary sources should be further developed as a starting point for student work, in favour of internet sourced imagery.
- Subject plans should be further developed to link the learning intentions with specific schemes of work and matching these with the appropriate teaching approach.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching was effective or very effective in the lessons observed during the evaluation, and the quality of learning was very good overall.
- Learning intentions were shared in most lessons which is very good practice. Differentiation of the learning intentions was good overall and an appropriate level of challenge was generally set by teachers, with some scope to further extend more able learners.
- A good range of teaching approaches was taken by teachers. Whole-group demonstrations were frequently used to introduce new skills, and individual attention and instruction was directed appropriately.
- The lessons observed were highly inclusive and predominantly student-centred. In the best lessons there was a very good balance between teacher input and student activity, and there was sufficient time for students to engage with the given task.
- Very good references were made to Art History throughout senior practical lessons. Excellent learning opportunities were taken where students made connections between these references and their own work. In some instances the presentation of support materials could be moderated to allow more time for students to assimilate new information, and to put it into practice before engaging with additional material.
- A range of student portfolios was reviewed during the evaluation, and a good understanding of art and design process was noted in this work.
- Some good use of primary sources as an initial reference point for project work was noted in the review of portfolios. Students have access to an impressive array of objects and artefacts to inspire their work and should be encouraged to use this, in place of internet sourced imagery as observed.
- Behaviour of students in all lessons was exemplary and engagement with the subject was very good overall. Students were enabled to work independently, and were highly motivated in the lessons observed.
- An excellent rapport was noted between students and their teachers, and enthusiasm and affection for the subject is promoted by staff. It is clear that well-being as well as learning is fostered in the art department.
- Some good questioning techniques were observed in lessons. In some instances wait time for responses could be increased as there was a tendency at times for teachers to answer their own questions rather than allow students to risk an incorrect response.
- Assessment of students' work is good overall. Verbal feedback was given to students throughout lessons and affirmative comments were balanced with clear directions for improvement, which was very good. Some written formative feedback was seen in student copybooks, and for some practical work at the completion of a project. This could be more consistently applied to all written and practical work in progress.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Art was introduced onto the school's curriculum seven years ago and it is very well supported by school management.

- Timetabling of Art is very good. All students have adequate weekly contact with the subject to develop the skills that are necessary to deepen their knowledge of the course content.
- Access to Art is very good and is available on an optional basis for students. Uptake of Art has steadily grown, particularly in junior cycle. Increasing uptake at Leaving Certificate has been identified as a long term goal by the Art department, and it is commendable that teachers have plans in place to achieve this, by promoting a greater understanding for students of the subject and its value.
- Opportunities are available for students to engage with Art beyond the curriculum. Students have successfully competed in a range of local and national Art competitions, and student work is celebrated through initiatives such as pop-up exhibitions and 'Artist of the Week'.
- Teachers are deployed in accordance with qualifications and the role of co-ordinator rotates which is good practice. Teachers are facilitated by management to access continuing professional development and this is to be encouraged.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS' LEARNING

- The lessons observed were informed by the subject plan which is in line with curricular requirements. Preparation for lessons was very good, and teachers have generated a substantial bank of high-quality visual resource materials to enrich student learning.
- An effective subject plan is in place for Art, and this includes clear and concise aims and objectives for the Art department, and a list of learning intentions for each area of practical skills development. This could be further developed by linking the learning intentions listed to specific schemes of work and matching these with the appropriate teaching approach.
- Assessment procedures are outlined in the subject plan, and teachers maintain records of individual student progress.
- The art department meets regularly and records indicate a collaborative approach to planning. Teaching and learning is discussed at meetings, which is to be encouraged. Attainment in state examinations is analysed which is very good practice. Art teachers have noted positive trends in attainment, and have also identified areas for improvement.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation. The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

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
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 very good 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;