

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

**Subject Inspection in Art**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Adamstown Community College
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Station Rd Adamstown Co Dublin
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	76097U

**Date of Inspection: 30-11-2017**



**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 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

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	29-11-2017 & 30-11-2017
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal, deputy 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

Adamstown Community College is a co-educational post-primary school with a current enrolment of 953 students, and operates under the auspices of Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board. The school offers Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate (Established), Transition Year (TY), and the Leaving Certificate Applied programmes.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good or very good in the lessons observed, with scope to increase the level of challenge for some students.
- The overall quality of assessment was very good.
- The high quality learning spaces and classroom structures provided in Art facilitate independent and active learning for students.
- Art is well supported by school management.
- Uptake of Art is good in junior cycle; there is scope to improve uptake in senior cycle.
- The quality of subject planning for Art is very good.

#### Recommendations

- The consistent use of primary sources should be further developed as a starting point for students' work.
- Strategies should be put in place to raise the profile of the Art in the school and to address uptake of the subject in senior cycle.
- The TY curriculum for Art should be further developed to ensure that opportunities are provided for students to build confidence and skills in a broader range of visual art disciplines, and differentiated to meet their varied needs and interests.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good or very good in the lessons observed. There was scope in a few lessons to differentiate the learning.
- Learning intentions were shared by teachers in all lessons, and clear instructions were provided for the planned tasks from the outset. These were most effective where students had a clear understanding of the intended learning for the lessons, as well as the planned task to achieve that learning.
- The learning spaces were very well-organised. Effective classroom routines and structures ensured a safe and productive learning environment. Student work is stored appropriately, and samples and exemplars of their work are displayed throughout the art rooms to enhance learning.
- All lessons were well prepared with appropriate resources and materials prepared by teachers. In the best lessons students prepared for their lesson by bringing appropriate resource materials to support their own learning.
- Lessons were well-structured and a range of effective teaching approaches was used by teachers. Clear presentations, demonstrations and instructions were provided for students in lessons. Good references were made to prior learning and students' understanding of assigned tasks were frequently checked.
- Lessons were active and student centred. This good practice was noted where students were enabled and encouraged to work at their own pace, to experiment, and to work independently. While students engaged purposefully with assigned tasks in all lessons, in some instances the level of challenge could be increased to deepen the learning for students.
- Collaborative learning was facilitated in most lessons. Students generally engaged well with group work. However to ensure that learning from student collaboration is optimal, the rationale for the group-work activity should be clear, and it should be supported by effective structures.
- High quality student work was reviewed during the evaluation. Commendably, there is a move towards the use of primary sources as a starting point for project work. However, there is still scope to develop their use more consistently. A clear understanding of the rationale for using primary sources should be ensured, so that students achieve optimal benefit from their use.
- A very good rapport was noted between teachers and students and student behaviour was exemplary throughout the evaluation.
- Highly effective questioning was used to assess student knowledge and understanding and good strategies were used to elicit substantial student response. To ensure more students answer questions, strategies such as targeted questions or think-pair-share could be employed.
- Student responses to questions demonstrated very good understanding of course content, including key words. Student questions indicated curiosity and interest in Art and teachers encouraged this.
- A range of means is used to assess students in Art. Very good AfL strategies are used to consistently assess students' understanding throughout lessons. To build on this, the outcomes of this assessment should be used to adjust the lesson where appropriate, and to inform future planning.

- Students were provided with very good verbal feedback in lessons and very high-quality written formative feedback is provided on some student work. To build on this excellent practice, written feedback should also be provided on key pieces of work-in-progress, and students should then use this feedback to progress their work.

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

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole-school support for the subject is very good, however there is scope to increase student access to Art in TY.
- Option bands in junior and senior cycle are generated on the basis of student choice, which is good practice.
- Uptake of Art is very good in junior cycle, however the art department has identified uptake in senior cycle as an area for development. This should be addressed by raising the profile of Art further in the school. Raising awareness of the value of the subject in enhancing students' creativity and critical thinking skills, and its benefits for learning across the curriculum, should also be considered.
- Overall, the timetabling of Art is very good, with appropriate provision for Junior and Leaving Certificate programmes.
- Provision for Art in TY currently consists of a furniture upcycling half-yearly module. While this is a worthwhile programme in itself, it should be differentiated to meet students' varied needs and prior experience of Art.
- Overall, the provision of Art in TY should be reviewed to ensure that students have sufficient contact time to maintain skills developed in junior cycle; and for those who have not previously studied Art to be exposed to a broader range of art disciplines, and to develop the basic skills necessary to access the subject in senior cycle.
- A range of opportunities is provided for students to access Art beyond the curriculum including exhibitions, gallery visits, and cross-curricular links such as the school musical. Permanent and temporary student artworks are on display throughout the school.
- Two well-equipped specialist rooms are provided for a range of disciplines in art, craft and design, including a functioning kiln.
- All art teachers have engaged in recent continuing professional development and have identified upskilling in ceramics as an area for development to acquire the expertise necessary to use the kiln.

## **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Overall, the quality of planning for Art is very good. The art department has collaborated to prepare a comprehensive subject plan that includes schedules for delivery of curricular content for each year group and programme. To build on this, a review section should be included to ensure that planning evolves to meet the needs of students.
- The subject plans are up-to-date and reflect recent curricular and assessment changes in junior and senior cycles.
- A subject co-ordinator is in place, however all art teachers share responsibility for many aspects of running the art department, including administration and developing teaching and learning in Art.

- The art department meets regularly and minutes of these meetings indicate that teaching, learning and assessment are discussed. The art department analyses attainment in certificate examinations and has identified areas for improvement. To build on this, subject planning for improvement should be informed by this analysis.

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.

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.

## 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 in 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;