

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Art

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	St Aidan's Community School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Brookfield Tallaght Dublin 24
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	91338D

Date of Inspection: 12-11-2019



**An Roinn Oideachais
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

Dates of inspection	11-11-2019 and 12-11-2019
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 four lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

St Aidan's Community School is a co-educational post-primary school under the joint trusteeship of the Loreto Education Trust and Dublin and Dún Laoghaire education and Training Board. With a current enrolment of 407, the school offers the Junior Cycle, Junior Certificate School programme (JCSP), Leaving Certificate established, and Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA). The school participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment ranged from satisfactory to very good, with scope for greater differentiation.
- Art is taught in an atmosphere of mutual respect with student care at its heart.
- Student engagement was best in lessons that were active and student centred.
- Overall, the study of visual culture is integrated well with technical studies; creative skills are less well integrated.
- The quality of subject provision and whole school support is very good.
- The overall quality of planning and preparation is good; the potential of collaborative planning for improvement is not yet fully realised.

Recommendations

- Teachers should develop the implementation of student-led, active learning opportunities in all lessons to maximise learner engagement, increase confidence and encourage ownership of learning.
- The art department should plan and implement greater integration of creativity with technical skills, by ensuring that students are able to develop ideas from primary sources that are meaningful and interesting to them.
- The art department should plan and implement further differentiated teaching approaches in lessons to match the wide range of students' learning needs.
- The art department should use available data to inform collaborative action planning for improvement in Art.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment ranged from satisfactory to very good.
- The art department provides an attractive and stimulating learning environment with displays and visuals that support student learning. Art is taught in an atmosphere of mutual respect with student care at its heart. Students are consistently affirmed for engagement, effort and positive behaviour.
- Learning intentions were shared with students in most lessons. These were most effective when framed in terms of what the students will learn, as well as do. In line with the school's DEIS plan for attainment, students should be made aware of the success criteria for achieving the stated learning intentions.
- Teachers used a range of methodologies to deliver lessons. Student participation and learning was optimised in lessons that were active and student centred. In one lesson students were facilitated to work collaboratively to peer assess. Such approaches should be extended to build students' confidence in working with others.
- In some instances, teacher-led approaches such as student note taking led to passive learning. To ensure that student engagement is maximised, teachers should consistently aim for an appropriate balance between teacher instruction and student activity, in line with the school's DEIS plan.
- Overall, the study of visual culture is integrated well with practical studies. In most lessons, teachers made very good references to artworks to enhance learning. Students are encouraged to research artists relevant to their work. This is good practice.
- Students' practical work has a strong focus on the art elements and technical skills, which is an important basis for learning in Art. In line with good practice, teachers encourage students to use imagination and primary sources as starting points for project work, particularly in senior cycle. The art department should now plan and implement the integration of creativity and critical-thinking skills with technical skills from first year, by ensuring that students are able to develop ideas from primary sources that are meaningful and interesting to them.
- In line with the school's literacy plan, all teachers supported students' understanding of subject-specific vocabulary through identification of key words. To ensure that students develop their ability to use subject language in a confident manner, teachers should provide opportunities to apply their understanding of new vocabulary in context during lessons.
- Teachers reported that poor attendance and punctuality impacts on student progress in Art. The school has implemented a very good range of strategies to track, reward, promote and support attendance. To build on this, the art department should consider classroom strategies that encourage student attendance, and maximise learning for students with poor attendance when present.
- In most lessons students were facilitated to work at their own pace, however there was scope to more effectively match the wide range of learning needs through differentiated approaches. Art teachers should familiarise themselves with the JCSP Visual Art statements and facilitate participating students to use them effectively to support their learning, and should challenge more able students to deepen their learning through extended learning opportunities.

- Teachers effectively used methods such as written formative feedback on students' work, peer assessment and self-assessment, and individual verbal feedback to assess students' work and progress. To build on this, students should be encouraged to make a record of verbal feedback and use it to plan for improvement. Teachers should expand the range of formative assessment strategies used in lessons to assess students' achievement of learning intentions and consolidate learning.
- Teachers used questioning in all lessons to check students' knowledge and understanding. Students engaged most effectively in answering questions when teachers used prompts, sufficient wait time, and a range of question types. In many instances students were reluctant to respond if they were unsure of the answer. Teachers should explore strategies to build students' confidence in risking incorrect responses.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of subject provision and whole school support for Art is very good. Art has a high profile in the school, with the display of permanent and temporary student artworks throughout the building, and on the new school website.
- Option bands are generated on the basis of student choice, which is good practice. All programmes have appropriate timetabled provision for the subject, and uptake of Art is very good, particularly in junior cycle.
- Senior management facilitates regular formal meetings of the art department. The school has correctly identified differentiation and active learning as areas for improvement in teaching and learning and has facilitated whole-school continuing professional development (CPD) to support this. Commendably, minutes of recent meetings indicate that discussion centred on implementation of such teaching and learning strategies.
- The art department provides a range of opportunities for student engagement in Art beyond the curriculum through creative JCSP and LCA initiatives, Creative Engagement and art competitions. Commendably, the art department attributed improved LCA attendance to students' involvement in one such initiative: *Junk Kouture*. To build on this the art department should now consider further means to promote student leadership opportunities in Art.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall quality of planning and preparation for Art is good. Long-term and short-term plans are in place for all programmes.
- Teachers individually plan schemes of work for their own classes, and share their plans through the school's online platform. Schemes are most effective where they focus on student learning as well as teacher delivery. To ensure consistency in teaching, learning and assessment, teachers should now plan all schemes of work collaboratively.
- The art department has begun to plan for improvement in the subject by including a reflection section in some schemes of work, and analysing outcomes of certificate examinations, however the potential of collaborative planning is not yet fully realised. Teachers are now encouraged to use a reflection section in all schemes of work to track student progress and inform ongoing planning. The art department should use available data, such as outcomes in certificate and house examinations to action plan for improvement in the subject. Learning from CPD could be used to support this.

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 quality of 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;