

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Art

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Hartstown Community School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Clonsilla Dublin 15
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	91339F

Date of Inspection: 17-01-2017



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. 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

Date of inspection	16 & 17-01-2017
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal, Deputy Principal and key staff• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during seven class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and relevant staff

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Hartstown Community School is a co-educational post-primary school serving students from the Hartstown and Huntstown areas of Dublin 15. The school offers a range of programmes in junior and senior cycle, and Art is offered to Junior Certificate, Transition Year (TY) and Leaving Certificate students. At the time of the evaluation the school had an enrolment of 1127 students.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning in Art was very good or good, with improvement needed in some areas.
- Student work reviewed during the evaluation indicates high quality learning, participation and achievement in Art.
- The overall quality of assessment in Art is very good.
- Art is very well supported in the school, and excellent opportunities are also provided for students to experience the subject beyond the curriculum.
- Students have very good access to the subject overall, and it is commendable that the TY Programme offers both practical and appreciation modules in Art.
- A comprehensive subject plan is in place for the subject, and all lessons were well prepared.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- In lessons where further improvement was needed, greater cognisance should be taken of the differentiated learning needs of students in the planning and delivery of the curriculum content.
- TY Art Appreciation should be further developed collaboratively by all teachers of the module to make best use of their expertise, and to ensure a consistent experience for students.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in Art was very good or good, and while there were areas which need improvement in some lessons many examples of highly effective practice were noted in the review of students' work.
- A very good rapport was noted between teachers and students and Art is taught in an atmosphere of mutual respect and inclusivity. Students are strongly affirmed for effort and achievement.
- Teachers demonstrated very good subject knowledge, and selected and used a variety of teaching approaches. These were most effective where the lesson content took account of the full range of students' learning needs and abilities, and appropriately differentiated learning experiences were provided. This approach should be developed throughout the department.
- Commendably, an Art Appreciation module has been introduced in recent years to TY, and its development, while ongoing, should ensure that students are provided with a more consistent learning experience. There is a wealth of teacher expertise from both practical and art history backgrounds, and this valuable resource should be exploited further through greater collaboration on the aims and learning intentions for this module, the course content, and approaches to its delivery.
- Highly effective demonstrations were a feature of most lessons, and these were often enhanced through the use of a digital visualiser. Excellent visual resources prepared by teachers, and exemplars of students' work were also frequently used to demonstrate the expected learning outcome.
- In lessons that were skills-based, teacher modelling and instruction were used effectively to guide students through the necessary steps to understand and implement a new technique or concept. Opportunities to investigate and experiment were facilitated, but in some instances a greater degree of creativity and challenge could be provided for students who develop skills more quickly.
- Students were facilitated to work collaboratively in all lessons. The rationale for the use of group and pair work was appropriate, and overall student engagement was good. Commendably, in some instances worksheets were prepared to focus students on the task. To optimise learning for each student in the group, further structure on pair work and group work, such as clarity of roles and timing of the activity should be developed.
- Primary sources are frequently used by students as a starting point for project work, as noted in some very rich samples of student work reviewed. This good practice should be promoted further for all project work from first to sixth year, and over-reliance on internet sourced imagery should be avoided.
- The overall quality of assessment in Art is very good. Formative verbal and written feedback is provided by the art department, and students are facilitated to self and peer assess, which is very good practice. The high quality written formative feedback noted in the review of students' art history copybooks, and on some completed project and examination work, could be usefully extended to students' practical work-in-progress.

- Literacy was inherent in most lessons through good use of subject specific language by teachers and students. Very good links with numeracy concepts, such as scale, were made with practical learning in Art.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support for Art is very good. Students in junior and senior cycle have very good access to the subject on an optional basis, and compulsory modules in both Art and Art Appreciation are provided in TY. Both specialist rooms are well equipped with a good range of materials and facilities that are very well maintained by the art department.
- A very good range of opportunities is provided by the art department for students to access the subject beyond the curriculum through work-experience, exhibition and artist visits; and links with third level institutions, the County Council Arts office, and local theatre.
- Commendably, students' work and artistic achievements are celebrated through exhibition of work and through the school's newsletter. To build on this the art department could consider ways of facilitating students to further showcase their work, participation and achievement in Art.
- School management supports and facilitates teachers' continuing professional development (CPD), which is good practice. Members of the art department attend and facilitate a range of CPD events, and continue to upskill and refine their practice.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Effective planning and preparation practices are in place, and a comprehensive subject plan details the overall organisation of the department.
- Long-term plans indicate curricular content and learning outcomes for each term. Effective teaching methodologies, and teaching interventions and differentiation for students with special educational needs are listed separately. To ensure a more differentiated approach in lessons, these methodologies and interventions should be linked with the intended learning outcomes. The school's long term planning template could be used for this.
- The role of subject co-ordinator is currently shared and the team meets informally on a regular basis. School management facilitates formal meeting times for which minutes are maintained, which is good practice. Time should also be facilitated where possible for cross-curricular planning in TY.
- State examination data is analysed by the art department and minutes of meetings indicate discussion and identification of areas for development. This is very good practice and could be further utilised to inform planning for improvement in the subject.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and art 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, 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

The Board welcomes this very positive report and acknowledges the high quality of learning, participation and achievement in Art.

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 Art department will work towards implementing the Inspector's recommendations.

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;