

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Art
REPORT**

**Saint Mary's Secondary School
Holy Faith Convent
Glasnevin, Dublin 11
Roll number: 60770P**

Date of inspection: 20 January 2016



**AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS**

**REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN ART**

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date(s) of inspection	19 and 20 January 2016
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during four class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- High-quality learning was apparent in all of the lessons observed; students demonstrated a very good knowledge of material appropriateness for set tasks.
- Very good use of constructive written feedback was evident in students' copybooks and sketchbooks.
- Very successful questioning strategies were a feature of all lessons observed; higher-order and lower-order questions were used appropriately.
- There is scope to develop the potential of information communication technology (ICT) to support the teaching and learning of Art.
- The art department shows a high dedication and commitment to extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, which support student achievement.
- A very good collaborative approach to subject planning is evident among the team and good individual programme plans have been developed.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- 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.
 - Senior management should review the arrangements for form-class roll call to minimise the impact on the tuition time available for first class period.
 - The art department in collaboration with senior management should devise an action plan for the development of ICT facilities in the art rooms, which can be implemented as resources permit.
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INTRODUCTION

Saint Mary's Secondary School operates under the auspices of the Le Chéile Trust and has a current enrolment of 757 girls. The school offers the Junior Certificate, an optional Transition Year (TY) the established Leaving Certificate programmes, and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme. The study of Art is optional in Junior and Leaving Certificate and is compulsory for students in TY.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching observed ranged from good to very good, with many instances of exemplary practice noted. Good teacher preparedness for lessons was evident, however, in one instance there was scope for improvement with the pacing of lesson content. High-quality learning was observed in all of the lessons.
- Clear learning intentions were set and shared with students at the start of all lessons. This very good practice proved effective in supporting and assessing students' learning and clearly focused them on the knowledge and skills to be developed.
- In all lessons, classroom management was effective, with clearly established routines evident. A stimulating and purposeful learning environment was observed during the evaluation. A range of artwork is exhibited to good effect in both permanent and rotating display areas around the school.
- In all of the lessons observed, teachers had high expectations of their students. Teacher-student rapport was mutually respectful but was also appropriately friendly. Teachers were most affirming of students' contributions and efforts.
- Students demonstrated a very good knowledge of material appropriateness for set tasks. The content and presentation of written work in copybooks, practical work in notebooks, and larger art pieces demonstrated purposeful, ongoing learning.
- An effective use of comprehensive oral feedback and good-quality written formative feedback was apparent in students' copybooks and sketchbooks. To facilitate students to take better ownership of their learning, the art department should develop strategies to encourage learners in using the formative feedback provided on both theory and practical work.
- Very successful questioning strategies were a feature of all of the lessons observed. Appropriate higher-order and lower-order questions were used to encourage students to reflect on and to show understanding of the concepts of their art work.
- An emphasis on the development of students' literacy skills was a feature of all the lessons observed. Students demonstrated a very good knowledge and understanding of subject-specific language whilst discussing and writing about art work. Going forward, further opportunities to develop structured oral work should be integrated into lessons.
- A highly commendable emphasis is given to supporting students' numeracy in art lessons. Very good references to mathematical concepts were observed in all lessons. Additionally, two large art pieces displayed in the school, based on the themes of distance and time, offered further linkage to students' appreciation and understanding between Art and mathematical concepts.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of provision and whole-school support for Art is good. Systems are in place to support the uptake of Art and option bands are constructed based on student choice.
- It was noted during the evaluation that form-class attendance was taken during the first lesson period. As a result, ten minutes of tuition time can be lost, as the teacher and students move between classrooms during this time. It is recommended that senior management reviews the arrangements for form-class roll call to minimise the impact on the tuition time available for first class period.
- There is scope to enhance the provision of ICT to support the teaching and learning of Art. It is recommended that the art department, in collaboration with senior management, devise an action plan for the development of ICT facilities in the art rooms that can be implemented as resources permit.
- The art department shows a high dedication to extra-curricular and co-curricular activities. This supports student achievement and provides them with an enriching and well-rounded understanding of Art. Significant efforts to incorporate the visual arts into a variety of school activities were also evident. One such collaborative project, currently underway, is the making of a shadow puppet film based on the period of 1916.
- Health and safety procedures are very well established for art lessons. A health and safety document has been developed for inclusion in the subject plan.
- Teachers of Art are actively engaged with ongoing continuing professional development (CPD). In discussions with the art department and management, it was evident that teachers share resources and expertise in planning for the teaching and learning of Art.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall quality of planning and preparation to support the teaching and learning of Art is good. The art rooms, the development of classroom resources, the storage of artwork, and presentation of class materials were all very well organised.
- An effective and collaborative approach to subject planning was noted during the evaluation. Planning documentation outlined general and specific learning outcomes for all year groups and differentiated learning outcomes have been discussed and reviewed by the department. It is worthwhile considering in moving forward that decisions and actions arising from subject department reviews should be documented in the minutes of subject meetings.
- A good range of relevant teaching resources was integrated into lessons. There is clear reflective practice evident in subject planning documentation for TY. This commendable practice should be extended and continued so as to evaluate and inform schemes of work in all subject department planning.

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, 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 of Management is very pleased that the Report recognises and positively affirms the work being done by the Art Department where many instances of exemplary practice were noted in the quality of teaching observed.

We are happy that the report highlights:

- The high-quality learning that was apparent in all of the lessons observed
- The very good use of constructive written feedback that was evident in students' copybooks and sketchbooks
- The very successful questioning strategies that were a feature of all lessons observed where higher order and lower-order questions were used appropriately
- The high dedication and commitment to extra-curricular and co-curricular activities shown by the Art Department that supports student achievement and provides them with an enriching and well-rounded understanding of Art
- The very good collaborative approach to subject planning evident among the team
- The Health and Safety procedures that are well established for art lessons

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 Board of Management acknowledges the Main Recommendations of the Report.

- 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.

The Report highlights the very good use of formative feedback and recommends that the Art Department develop strategies to support students in using this feedback constructively. The school supports this recommendation and supports a whole school strategy to ensure that all teachers engage with formative feedback that helps students identify their strengths and weaknesses and target areas they need to work on, and where teachers recognise where students are struggling and address problems immediately.

- Senior management should review the arrangements for form-class roll call to minimise the impact on the tuition time available for first class period.

This issue is presently under review and has already been discussed at a full staff meeting. The school will follow best practice in relation to class times and will adhere to specifications laid down by the Department of Education and Skills.

- The art department in collaboration with senior management should devise an action plan for the development of ICT facilities in the art rooms, which can be implemented as resources permit.

Management is fully supportive of this recommendation and has already sanctioned the purchase of a visualiser to alleviate the problem of data projection. Management is aware that facilities available to the Art Department are not up to standard and commends the excellent work done in spite of this deficit. A sub-committee has been formed to research the needs of the practical

subjects generally with a view to making an application to the DES for additional and appropriate accommodation for these vital subject areas. Regarding ICT facilities, after a review of computer facilities in the school, five re-conditioned computers are to be re-located to the main art room where broadband ports are already in place.