

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Art
REPORT**

**Mount Carmel Secondary School
King's Inn Street, Dublin 1
Roll number: 60853T**

Date of inspection: 25 November 2015



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

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

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

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| Date(s) of inspection | 24 and 25 November |
| 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 three class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers |

MAIN FINDINGS

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good in most of the lessons observed; however, there was scope to enhance students' learning in some lessons.
- The provision of oral feedback to students was a significant strength in the lessons observed.
- There was good integration of strategies to support students' literacy and numeracy skills in lessons.
- Access to the subject is good and option bands are constructed based on students' choice.
- Good records of students' progress are maintained; these are analysed and used in setting targets for individual students.
- The art department actively promotes Art within the school and has developed good links with local community projects.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- The art department should provide further opportunities to use written formative feedback in the assessment of both theory and practical work.
- The use of higher-order questions should be extended in all lessons to promote deep critical-thinking skills.
- Differentiated learning outcomes should be incorporated into all schemes of work to support students' learning.

INTRODUCTION

Mount Carmel Secondary School is a voluntary Catholic secondary school for girls which caters for 371 students. The school participates in DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity Schools), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. Art is offered as an optional subject within the Junior Certificate, Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP), the Leaving Certificate and the Transition Year (TY) programmes.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good in most of the lessons observed. There was scope to enhance students' learning in some lessons.
- In all lessons classroom management was effective, with clearly established routines evident. A stimulating and purposeful learning environment was evident. The range of artwork displayed modelled best practice and created high expectations for students' achievement.
- All lessons were well planned and showed continuity with prior learning. The lesson content and pace were pitched appropriately for the class groups observed.
- An over-emphasis on using secondary sources as a starting point for drawing activities was observed in lessons. In a number of instances there was scope to incorporate primary sources as stimuli for the drawing activity. To support the students' full engagement with, and understanding of observational drawing and application of tone, well-chosen primary sources that relate to students' interests should be integrated into drawing lessons.
- Students' work is assessed regularly and the quality of oral feedback provided to students was a significant strength in the lessons observed. In one lesson, for example, effective feedback regarding the intensity of colour applied to a drawing, and how it may change by layering another colour on top of it, transpired between the teacher and a student. This feedback provided support while maintaining the high expectations set for this student.
- Observations of students' copybooks indicated some very good practices to support learning. Constructive formative feedback and teacher-designed templates offered very good guidelines for student note-making and essay writing. The art department should extend the use of written feedback on both students' art and written work to enhance quality learning.
- Good differentiated teaching was observed in some lessons. In these lessons, there was provision of one-to-one support to students who needed additional assistance as well as appropriate challenge for others to extend their work. This good practice should be developed in all lessons.
- Some good use of questioning strategies was observed. For the most part, appropriate higher-order and lower-order questions were directed to students. However, questioning strategies need to be extended to ensure whole-class engagement in answering questions.
- A good emphasis is placed on Art History. This was evidenced by the questions set in the terminal examinations reviewed during the evaluation. As part of the questions posed, students had to look at and examine art work in relation to developing their own work practice.

- A focus was placed on developing students' subject-specific vocabulary. There was good repetition and reinforcement of keywords to encourage the correct use and pronunciation of appropriate terminology. Going forward, the art department should plan additional opportunities to allow students critique their own art work, as well as of other artists, orally thereby enriching students' oral literacy further.
- There was a very good emphasis on integrating relevant mathematical concepts during the lessons observed. In one lesson, for example, the numerical concepts of estimation and pressure were explored when students had to estimate the amount of pressure that they would have to apply to a pencil to create a range of tones in preparation for a tonal exercise.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of school provision and whole-school support for Art is very good. Access to the subject is good and option bands are constructed based on students' choice; this has resulted in a very good uptake of Art.
- Students' achievement is celebrated with certificates of merit, end-of-year awards and work is framed and displayed prominently around the school.
- Health and safety procedures are very well established for art lessons. A risk-assessment document was reviewed during the evaluation. In line with good practice, the health and safety procedures and maintenance of specialist equipment, in particular the kiln, should be reviewed annually and documented as part of the health and safety policy.
- Art is actively promoted within the school. Good links have been developed with local community projects such as '*What makes North Wall Quay unique*'. Such linkage helps to enhance students' appreciation and understanding of Art outside the classroom.
- The art department has engaged with continuing professional development (CPD). In continuing this practice, a self-audit of CPD achievements and needs should be carried out.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall quality of planning and preparation was good. The art room, the development of classroom resources, the storage of artwork, and presentation of class materials were found to be very well organised.
- Good records of students' progress are maintained. These records are analysed and used in setting targets for individual students. As a development to this good practice, these results should now be shared with the students to plan individual learning goals and encourage them to take more ownership of their learning.
- The art department holds regular planning meetings. In consultation with management, the department could explore cross-curricular links by meeting with other practical departments during formal meeting periods.
- Schemes of work have been developed which outline general and specific learning outcomes for all year groups. To build on this good practice and support students' learning, it is recommended that the department incorporate differentiated learning

outcomes into schemes of work, to cater for the full range of student abilities evident in mixed-ability settings.

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