

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Art
REPORT

Donabate Community College
Donabate, County Dublin
Roll number 761040

Date of inspection: 25 January 2012



A N R O I N N | D E P A R T M E N T O F
O I D E A C H A I S | E D U C A T I O N
A G U S S C I L E A N N A | A N D S K I L L S

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

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	25 January 2012
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 five class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning during this evaluation was very good. Students are progressing well in a wide range of disciplines.
- The delivery of information was clear and enthusiastic and it very effectively referenced students' daily lives to illustrate concepts; there was some scope to develop questioning strategies further.
- High expectations of learners were communicated in all lessons.
- Classroom management was very good in all cases.
- Whole-school support for the subject is very good.
- The quality of planning for Art is very good.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- A balance should be maintained between global questions and questions targeted at individuals.
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INTRODUCTION

Donabate Community College has an enrolment of 248 male and 202 female students. The school is newly established and currently enrolls students up to and including Transition Year (TY). The other programme offered at the school is the Junior Certificate and the school plans to offer the established Leaving Certificate in September 2012. Art is an optional subject in the junior cycle and is offered in TY both as a module for all students and as an option for those who would like more engagement with the subject.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning in the art lessons observed was very good.
- The teaching methodologies used were very appropriate to the learning context and suitably varied to sustain students' motivation and to cater for different learning styles.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) was used well to generate resources for lessons. It was used very effectively in class to display images designed to enhance understanding.
- The delivery of information was clear and enthusiastic and referenced students' daily lives to illustrate concepts. This very good work is commendable.
- A good range of questions was used to support students' learning. It is recommended that a balance be maintained between global questions and questions targeted at individuals.
- The pace of lessons was very appropriate to the needs of the students in the lessons observed.
- The levels of challenge presented to students were very supportive of differentiation. High expectations of learners were communicated in all lessons. Where appropriate, individual students were encouraged to challenge themselves further.
- Students were encouraged to work in groups and as individuals, thus supporting group and co-operative learning.
- The quality of students' work presented during the evaluation shows that learners are progressing well in a wide range of disciplines.
- Students' use of terminology during the lessons observed was very good.
- Classroom management was very good in all cases. Each lesson had a very good structure with well-established routines for students.
- Students were very well monitored during lessons.
- The classroom atmosphere was very conducive to learning in all of the lessons visited. A very positive and supportive rapport has been established between students and their teacher. Students are affirmed on a regular basis for their efforts and achievements.
- Very good quality handouts were used during lessons to support and reinforce learning. These handouts were specifically developed for each class group and were most useful. In particular, they provided effective supports for the development of students' literacy skills.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The curricular provision and timetabling for Art in the school is very good, as are the arrangements for student access to the subject.
- The art department has developed a very rich programme of extracurricular and co-curricular activities and opportunities for students. Activities include providing artefacts for school events such as musicals and concerts.
- The art department has been instrumental in developing areas of the school as high quality exhibition spaces for students' work. The work exhibited during the evaluation was of a very high quality, and in particular, the presentation techniques used were most effective.
- The art department has created links with various agencies to familiarise students with professional art practice and with professional artists and their work. Students are directly involved in the generation of site-specific art work for the school and this offers very rich opportunities for learning in the subject.
- Assessment-for-learning techniques are regularly used in the art department. Students' work and efforts are assessed regularly. Formal summative tests are held twice each year in the school.
- Parents are kept informed of their child's progress via school reports, parent-teacher meetings and the school journal.
- The art department is staffed by one specialist teacher. It is good to note that this member of staff maintains contact with the Art Teachers' Association of Ireland. Contact should also be made with the Professional Development Service for Teachers.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Evidence was provided to show that subject planning is very well supported by the principal in the school. The quality of planning for Art is very good.
- An art department plan was presented during the evaluation. This document was very well developed and is a very useful tool in supporting teaching and learning of Art in the school.
- The art teacher engages in a significantly high level of reflective practice. This is a very good approach to maintaining high standards of teaching and learning.
- It is good to note that curricular plans are firmly focussed on the students and their needs. Students are provided with a very rich variety of assignments and tasks which are educationally sound and which use students' interests to support motivation. This is very good work.
- A good understanding of professional art practice, including contemporary art practice, is used to plan lessons for students. This supports meaningful engagement with the subject and deepens life-long learning.
- The plans for TY balance the teaching of practical aspects of the subject with the development of an appreciation of art history and contemporary art. This very good practice is commended.

- It is good to note that students wishing to generate a portfolio of art work for submission to third-level colleges are supported by the school's making this a timetabled option for TY students.
- Two purpose-built art rooms are provided in the subject. These rooms are very well equipped. It is good to note that the organisation and maintenance of the room currently in use is of a very high order.
- The art department has good ICT facilities. Consideration should be given to obtaining a scanner and image manipulation software as the department develops and as resources permit.
- Very good quality lesson plans were presented for each individual lesson observed. They were carefully detailed and evidenced a very good approach to teaching and learning.
- Good records of students' attendance, achievements and effort are kept.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject teacher at the conclusion of the evaluation. The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.