

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Art
REPORT

O'Connell Secondary School
North Richmond Street, Dublin 1
Roll number: 6044OR

Date of inspection: 24 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	24 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 four class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning was good in the lessons observed.
- A good range of appropriate methodologies was used.
- The plans for lessons were good and appropriately student centred.
- The atmosphere in lessons was very good and students were enthusiastic about their work.
- The quality of the students' work on display shows that they are progressing well in a wide variety of disciplines.
- Whole-school support for the subject is good.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Specific learning outcomes for each lesson should be shared with students at the outset of each lesson.
 - Key terms and important information should be written and displayed to support students' literacy.
 - The plans for lessons should include written accounts of the assessment and evaluation methods to be used.
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INTRODUCTION

O'Connell Secondary School is a post-primary school with an enrolment of 309 male students. The school's repeat Leaving Certificate year group includes 36 female students. The school offers the Junior Certificate programme, the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), the Leaving Certificate programme, the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). The school participates in DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning was good in the lessons observed.
- The plans for the lessons observed were good. They were student centred and used motivational subject matter to keep students on task.
- A good range of methodologies was used. Teaching approaches were appropriate to the learning context. Specifically, the methodologies employed were designed to engage students in learning and made use of their innate curiosity and life experience.
- Information and communications technology (ICT) was well used to display images in lessons and to prepare resources for lessons.
- To support students' learning, it is recommended that planned learning outcomes specific to each lesson be shared with students at the outset of lessons and referred to at appropriate points during lessons. This will help to direct students' focus and support assessment for learning practices.
- Some very good questioning techniques were used during lessons. These were used at times to reinforce learning and to further challenge students. In particular, the questioning techniques helped students to use the relevant terminology with confidence.
- The history of art and art appreciation were very well integrated into the lessons observed.
- The structure of lessons was good. Students were familiar with routines which helped the lessons to progress smoothly.
- Demonstrations were used effectively. Challenging concepts and tasks were demonstrated to the class group and further demonstrations were held for smaller groups to support their work. Care was taken to ensure that each step to achieve the learning outcome was carefully explained to students.
- Classroom management was good. Learning activities were well organised.
- Students were monitored appropriately as the lessons progressed.
- The teacher was very encouraging of students' efforts and achievements. Affirmation was given regularly, enthusiastically and generously. Students responded with enthusiasm for and interest in their work.
- In one of the lessons observed, students were encouraged to examine their own and their peers' work to establish proportion and the accuracy of the recorded observations. This is good assessment practice and should be extended to other lessons as appropriate.

- Recapitulation was built into some of the lessons. This is a good strategy for reinforcing learning.
- Homework was assigned in the lessons observed. This homework was appropriate and supportive of the learning achieved during lessons.
- To further support students' development of literacy competence, key terms and important information such as questions to be answered should be displayed for each lesson.
- The quality of the students' work on display shows that they are progressing well in a wide variety of disciplines.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Timetabling for Art is generally good. School management should endeavour to provide double periods for all class groups if possible.
- The arrangements for students' access to the subject are good.
- A wide range of extracurricular and co-curricular activities is provided to enrich students' timetabled Art education. These include trips to galleries and heritage sites as well as creating artefacts with students to celebrate school events such as musicals.
- A good system is in place to assess students' progress in the subject. Marking schemes based on criteria from the certificate examinations should be shared with and applied by students to help them understand the assessment process.
- One specialist teacher staffs the art department. The teacher avails of the subject support available through the Art Teachers' Association of Ireland.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- An art department plan was presented during the evaluation. This document showed a very good approach to planning positive learning experiences for the students. The art elements are given good attention and appropriately, students are encouraged to use them to express their ideas in their own work.
 - The plans for lessons should include written accounts of the assessment and evaluation methods to be used.
 - The resources provided for Art are well managed and maintained. Planning for resources is good.
 - The art room has been developed into a stimulating and inviting learning environment for Art. To further celebrate the work of the art department, students' work could be displayed in other more public areas of the school.
 - Preparation for lessons was very good. All of the materials required were organised and accessible.
 - Good records of students' effort and achievement are maintained.
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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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.