

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of Art**  
**REPORT**

**St Joseph's Secondary School**  
**Stanhope St, Dublin 7**  
**Roll number: 60843Q**

**Date of inspection: 25 October 2011**



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

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

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Date of inspection</b>	25 October 2011
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during three class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- The quality of teaching and learning observed was good overall.
- Very good use of information and communications technology (ICT) was observed.
- The atmosphere in lessons was very positive and students' behaviour was exemplary.
- Students are progressing effectively in general and in some areas are progressing very well.
- Homework is assigned and corrected regularly. Formative assessment is well used to direct learning.
- The art room has been developed into a very welcoming and attractive learning environment for students.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Future curricular planning should be developed in terms of short term and longer term learning outcomes. Short term learning outcomes should be shared with students at the outset of lessons, as appropriate.
  - The appreciation of contemporary art should be included in the plans for Transition Year (TY).
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## **INTRODUCTION**

St Joseph's Secondary School is a voluntary secondary school with an enrolment of 288 female students. The school offers the Junior Certificate programme, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate programme and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme. Art is compulsory in TY. In every other instance, it is optional. 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**

- Three lessons were visited as part of this evaluation and the quality of teaching and learning observed was good overall.
- The teacher-generated ideas for the lessons observed were very good. Students' interests and motivations were incorporated into lessons to support students' engagement.
- Whole-group tuition was used in the main and individual students were monitored and supported as they worked. This is good practice.
- The learning intention was shared with students at the beginning of lessons. To increase clarity and focus for students, it is recommended that lesson outcomes be developed. Short term learning outcomes should be shared with students at the outset of lessons, should be achievable within a lesson period, and students should be able to check if the outcomes have been achieved at the end of lessons.
- A variety of methodologies was used in lessons including instruction and demonstrations. These worked very well when students understood how each step would achieve the lesson objectives. It is recommended that very clear links be made between the lesson outcomes and the methodologies to be used to achieve them.
- Very good use was made of ICT to show presentations, including audio-visual clips.
- It is good to note that imagery was used to aid students' understanding of concepts and skills. Some of the images used were very appropriate as they were directly relevant to the lived experiences of the students. To ensure that students gain maximum advantage from this methodology, it is recommended that all the images chosen should be as relevant as possible to the students in the class group.
- Further attention should be given to key words in lessons. Emphasising relevant key words on the white board, encouraging students to use key words in discussions and repeating key words during lessons are ways to help students understand and remember specific terminology. It is also suggested that handouts should be distributed when ICT presentations are shown.
- Good questioning techniques were used in lessons to help students form opinions and also to check for understanding. Global questions were asked and individual students were nominated to answer. To build on this good practice, it is recommended that target students be asked higher and lower order questions in line with their abilities.
- To support students' use of terminology and the further forming of evidence-based opinions, more opportunities should be created for students to make contributions to lessons. These will allow students to practise their use of terminology and to form opinions whilst being guided and challenged by the teacher.

- It is good to note that the art department has very high aspirations for students. Students are introduced to a very wide variety of art practices and concepts in lessons. However, during the evaluation, some elements of lessons were too difficult for some students. Where this occurs, the level of the lesson should be revised to better suit the students' current knowledge base and abilities.
- Roll call was carried out in some of the lessons. It is recommended that roll call be taken in all lessons.
- The atmosphere in lessons was very positive. The teacher ensured that all activities were carried out in a calm and organised manner. The interactions between the teacher and students were respectful and pleasant. Students' behaviour was exemplary. The energy and efforts of the art department to provide a holistic and supportive environment for students' academic progress is commended.
- Homework is assigned and corrected regularly. High quality, supportive and directional comments are made about students' work. These are delivered to students during lessons and are also written on students' work as appropriate.
- A number of history and appreciation of art copies were examined during the evaluation. These evidenced very good progress in the area. It is noted that the students' sketches in these notebooks were of a very high standard.
- Students are progressing effectively in general and in some areas are progressing very well. It is particularly good to note that students' own interests and motivations are encouraged as inspiration for their practical work.

#### **SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- Senior management is supportive of the subject. Timetabling, the provision of resources and access to Art for students are very good.
- The art department is accommodated in a large bright room. The management of the art room is good and the good practice of displaying students' art work is observed. A wide range of resources for Art has been collected. In summary the room has been developed into a very welcoming and attractive learning environment for students.
- To support the department's commitment to recycling, a pug mill should be obtained when possible. A drying rack and a digital camera should also be obtained as resources become available.
- To benefit from the subject-specific supports available, it is recommended that the art department make contact with the Art Teachers' Association of Ireland and the Professional Development Service for Teachers.

#### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- It is clear that a high level of care and concern for students' progress and welfare informs planning. Lesson plans are appropriately driven by the various syllabuses and combined with motivational subject matter to support students' learning.
- Current learning plans are outlined using topics, activities and timeframes. It is recommended that future planning be documented using short term and longer term learning outcomes. These should then be used to develop criteria for assessment.

- It is recommended that the TY plan include an input on the appreciation of contemporary art.
- A very good bank of resources including notes and visual resources has been collected to aid teaching and learning.

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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal 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; a response was not received from the board.