

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Art
REPORT

Inver College
Carrickmacross, County Monaghan
Roll number: 72180K

Date of inspection: 20 February 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	20 February 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 overall.
- A range of methodologies was used in the lessons observed but there is scope to develop this range further.
- Curricular planning is being reviewed to include the development of learning outcomes for students; this is very positive.
- The classroom atmosphere was generally good in lessons observed and students' behaviour was very good; however, there was scope at times to engage students in active learning.
- The evidence provided shows that students are progressing well.
- Whole-school support for the subject is positive.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Learning outcomes should be shared with students at the outset of all lessons.
 - Questions that target individual students should be used wherever possible.
 - The range of methodologies being used should be extended to support active learning.
 - Specific strategies to support literacy in the subject should be developed in line with the school's Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) plan.
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INTRODUCTION

Inver College has an enrolment of 265 male and 199 female students. The school offers the full range of curricular programmes: the Junior Certificate programme, the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), an optional Transitional Year (TY) programme, 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 observed was good overall.
- Planning for individual lessons was good. Resources were prepared and were accessible for students.
- Each lesson began with recapitulation of topics from previous lessons. This good practice should be extended by sharing the specific learning outcomes with students at the outset of lessons, and referring to them as appropriate as the lesson progresses. This will ensure that students remain focussed throughout lessons
- Some questioning techniques were used well during lessons. Where this worked best, named students were targeted for specific questions. This practice should be extended to all lessons. In terms of the history and appreciation of art, there is scope to develop a framework of questions to help support students' investigation of an artefact. This approach should be introduced to first year students, and developed incrementally as they progress through the school. Higher-order and lower-order questions should be included to challenge students to reach their potential.
- During the evaluation, it was clear that the teacher was very knowledgeable and keen to enthuse students. However, during lessons observed, some words and terminology were used which were not clear to all students. To ensure clarity and focus for learners, and to support literacy and numeracy development, the important topics and concepts should be highlighted and keywords should be written on the board. Care should be taken to refer to the keywords in discussion in order to reinforce understanding and use of subject language. Other supports such as student use of a notebook for terminology should be explored. An art history and appreciation time line should be displayed in the room.
- A range of methodologies was used in the lessons observed but there is scope to develop this range further. In the best lessons, methodologies were varied in order to help students remain focussed. The use of information and communications technology (ICT) was a positive teaching strategy.
- The learning atmosphere during lessons was generally good. However, during some lessons, a number of students were passive and not sufficiently engaged to enable them make maximum progress. Where this occurs, it is recommended that the balance of teacher input and student input be reviewed. The art department is now encouraged to develop its repertoire of methodologies further to support students' active engagement in learning.
- Students' responses during lessons, and their art work examined, both point to a good level of learning. In some cases, the quality of students' work was very good. Students' print work and embroidery deserve special mention.

- Affirmation was given regularly in lessons which supported students' confidence and sense of achievement.
- During the evaluation, students' behaviour was good in most cases. Where students were easily distracted, positive behaviour strategies were used to focus attention.
- The art department has focussed on developing its assessment practices in recent times. This good work should be further developed by increasing the regularity and immediacy of assessment and feedback for students. At senior cycle, the marking schemes used in the certificate examinations should be regularly shared with students to familiarise them with the requirements of the examinations.
- It is good to note that formative comments are used on students' work. This good practice should be used more frequently.
- Homework which was relevant and achievable was assigned during the lessons observed. To further support students' literacy skills, it is suggested that homework be written on and taken down from the board.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Whole-school support for the subject is good.
- The art department provides a range of extracurricular and co-curricular activities for students to support their learning in Art. It is good to note that the art department enjoys a positive reputation in the school and uses the resources available to it to support school activities and events.
- The art department is situated in a large, bright, well-maintained room. Exemplars of students' work and stimulus materials are used to provide a good learning environment for students. This approach is commended. The department has identified presentation of students' work as a priority for further development.
- The art department is staffed by one specialist teacher who regularly engages in upskilling and continuing professional development in personal time. This is commendable.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The art department has established some very good practices to support the development of students' experience of the subject. This includes mentoring for student teachers, and maintaining contact with professional artists and arts agencies.
- The art department plan documents organisational details and curricular planning for all year groups and programmes. Generally, planning for lessons is sound and appropriate to the needs of students but some areas need to be reviewed. An example is the time required to complete individual learning projects for first and second-year students. At this stage of their development, students are better suited to short rather than long-term projects. In senior cycle, attention should be given to art appreciation skills from the outset.
- Curricular planning for lessons is currently under review and is being developed to include learning outcomes for students. This is commendable. The TY plan is also under

review. It is suggested that the reviewed TY plan include the study of some elements of art appreciation and contemporary culture.

- Some students have significant difficulty with subject terminology and have specific learning needs in literacy and numeracy. This has been identified by the art department as an issue. Plans are underway to address this. It is recommended that the department develop plans for improvement in literacy and numeracy in line with the school's DEIS plan.
- Good quality records including students' attendance and achievement are maintained in the art department.

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.