An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Art

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Clongowes Wood College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Clane Co Kildare
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	61720F

Date of Inspection: 21-03-2018

An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

SUBJECT INSPECTION

Subject Inspections report on the quality of work in individual curriculum areas within a school. They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of the subject in the school.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated learning and teaching in Art under the following headings:

1. Teaching, learning and assessment
2. Subject provision and whole-school support
3. Planning and preparation

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.

The school did not meet the requirements in relation to 1 above, as the Child Safeguarding Statement had not yet been put on display, and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, the school has subsequently furnished evidence of compliance with these requirements.

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Dates of inspection	20-03-2018 & 21-03-2018
Inspection activities undertaken • Review of relevant documents • Discussion with deputy principal and key staff • Interaction with students	• Observation of teaching and learning during three class periods • Examination of students' work • Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Clongowes Wood College is a post-primary boarding school for boys with a current enrolment of 447 students, and operates under the patronage of the Jesuit Order. Art is offered in the new Junior Cycle, Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate and the compulsory Transition Year (TY).

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory or good in the lessons observed.
- Very good use of the school building and surrounds is made by the art department as a valuable learning resource.
- Art history was integrated into lessons at both junior and senior cycle.
- Assessment of learning in Art is very good, but there is scope to develop assessment for learning (AfL) practices.
- Whole-school support for Art is very good, and recent changes to subject options bands for Junior Cycle have prompted a significant increase in uptake in first year.
- Adequate planning and preparation practices are in place for Art.

Recommendations

- The range of teaching approaches should be broadened to include more student-centred approaches, and to ensure an appropriate level of challenge.
- The use of AfL strategies should be further developed by the art department to enable students to be more active participants in their learning.
- Strategies should be devised by the art department, in collaboration with senior management, to raise the profile of the subject, and to maintain increased uptake in junior cycle and improve uptake in senior cycle.
- Planning and preparation should be further developed with a focus on clear and appropriate learning outcomes linked to teaching and assessment approaches, and underpinned by recent curricular and assessment changes in junior and senior cycle.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The quality of teaching and learning in Art ranged from satisfactory to good in the lessons observed.
- Lessons were generally well prepared with appropriate materials provided. Supplementary materials such as presentations and relevant video clips were prepared or sourced by the art department in advance of lessons.
- The lesson topic was shared from the outset in all lessons. To ensure greater clarity for students on the expected achievement in lessons, the learning intentions should be shared, and reviewed in lessons to consolidate learning.
- Teaching approaches taken in lessons included demonstrations, presentations, whole-group and individual instruction, and facilitation of student tasks. Teachers' knowledge of Art and Art History was good, and this was used to inform and instruct students in lessons.
- Student engagement was best in a practical lesson where instructions were clear, experimentation with techniques and media was encouraged, and tasks were differentiated appropriately. This approach facilitated students to take greater ownership of their work. Such student-centred methodologies should be expanded to ensure an appropriate level of challenge.
- Student-teacher rapport was very good, and Art is taught in an atmosphere of mutual respect where students are affirmed for effort and achievement. Students contributed well to class discussion and answered questions confidently and enthusiastically. Students' use of subject knowledge and vocabulary was very good.
- The use of primary sources as a starting point for project work was noted in practical lessons. This is very good practice. However, the use of tracing from photographs and secondary sources should be discontinued, and the skills needed to draw from primary sources further developed to build student confidence in observational drawing.
- Very good use was made of the architectural and decorative features of the school building and grounds as a rich visual and historical learning resource for Art. This is to be encouraged.
- Commendably, Art History is integrated into practical lessons. To facilitate students to analyse and make connections with the artwork, and to apply their learning from it to their own work, lessons should focus on a smaller range of artworks that are more specific to the intended learning.
- Questioning strategies were used for the most part to assess student knowledge and recall of information. To build on this the use of higher order questioning should be explored to develop students' critical thinking skills.
- Assessment of learning was very good. Students are assigned grades with comments regularly on completion of written work. Good verbal formative feedback was provided in practical lessons, and some effective formative feedback was noted in Art History essays. The good practice of providing regular written formative feedback should be extended to both practical work-in-progress and realised work, and AfL strategies should be further developed to enable students to be more active participants in their learning.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Management is highly supportive of the subject, with generous timetabled provision of Art in junior and senior cycle and access to a very well equipped specialist room.
- Students have very good access to the subject on an optional basis for Junior and Leaving Certificate programmes. All students in TY take a short module in Art on a rotation basis.

- Management is cognisant of the challenges in promoting uptake of Art. To address this the principal has recently made changes to the option band structure in Junior Cycle, which has already led to a significant increase in the uptake of Art in first year. Strategies should now be devised by the art department, in collaboration with school management, to raise the profile of the subject in the school. Student leadership opportunities, the consistent showcasing of current student work, and a review of the TY programme for Art could be explored in this context, as well as management's plans to devise and implement a creativity strategy for the school.
- A good range of opportunities is provided by the art department for students to access the subject beyond the curriculum including portfolio preparation, the school play, collaboration with the school library, and the opportunity to exhibit alongside practising artists at an annual charity exhibition.
- Continuing professional development (CPD) is facilitated and encouraged by school management. The art department has accessed recent training for the implementation of curricular and assessment changes in junior and senior cycle Art. To build on this, ongoing CPD opportunities to develop skills in active learning methodologies and AfL strategies should be considered.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Adequate planning and preparation practices for Art are in place. Long-term plans indicate aims for the subject, the overall running of the department, and schedules for delivery of curricular content for each year group. The subject plan should be updated to reflect the new Junior Cycle specification, and further developed to link the planned classroom activities to the intended learning. Modes of assessment should be planned to monitor and inform the intended learning.
- The TY plan should be further developed to include a greater focus on developing key art skills to increase students' confidence and engagement in the subject, and provide the necessary foundation to access Leaving Certificate Art should they wish to choose it.
- Analysis of attainment in certificate examinations is undertaken by the art department, which is good practice. This valuable data should be used to inform future planning for teaching and learning.
- A subject co-ordinator is in place for Art, and planning meetings are facilitated by management. Consideration should be given by the art department to meeting with other smaller subject departments to plan collaboratively where appropriate, and to facilitate discussion of teaching, learning and assessment strategies. Teachers would benefit from the peer support and shared expertise that this would provide.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the deputy principal and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the of quality the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	***Very good*** applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is ***outstanding*** and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	***Good*** applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a *very good* standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	***Satisfactory*** applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	***Fair*** applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	***Weak*** applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

The Child Safeguarding Statement is displayed in accordance with requirements.

The Art Department will continue to promote active learning methodologies and develop AfL strategies in response to recent curricular and assessment changes in junior and senior cycle.

The College will continue to raise the profile of Art as a subject and expects the increased uptake at Junior Cycle to follow through to the senior cycle.