An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Subject Inspection: Visual Art and Art
Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	St Louis Secondary School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Carrickmacross Co. Monaghan
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	64760J
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	03/10/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	22/11/2024

What is a 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(s) evaluated learning and teaching in Visual Art and Art under the following headings:

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

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.

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.

Included in this subject inspection report is a student-friendly page that provides information for the children/young people in your school about the inspection that occurred recently. It outlines for them some of the main findings and recommendations.

Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and tackle bullying

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Child Protection</td><td>Anti-bullying</td></tr>
<tr><td>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.</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013) or Bí Cineálta (2024) and this policy is reviewed annually.
2. The school's current anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and students.</td></tr>
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Subject inspection

Date of inspection	03/10/2024
Inspection activities undertaken • Review of relevant documents • Discussion with principal and key staff • Interaction with students, including focus groups	• Observation of teaching and learning during four lessons • Examination of students' work • Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Saint Louis Secondary School is an all-girls voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of Le Chéile Schools Trust. The school provides the Junior Cycle, a compulsory Transition Year (TY) programme, the established Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). Art is an optional subject in all of these programmes. The school's current enrolment is 409 students.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was of a very high quality.
- Many opportunities were afforded by the teachers of Art to students in lessons to develop their capacity to think critically and creatively.
- The quality of assessment practices observed was very good.
- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support was very good.
- The overall quality of planning for Art was of a very high quality.
- The art department was very dedicated to promoting the subject within the school through a commendable range of initiatives.

Recommendations

- In continuing to support all students in making improvements to their work, the art department should plan for and use targeted strategies to encourage students to use the feedback being provided to them on key pieces of development work.

- A risk assessment for the school's designated ceramic room should be completed. This risk assessment, alongside those for the art rooms, should be carried out annually.

- To build on the good practice of teacher reflection during departmental meetings, the art department should plan for and progress targets arising from department meetings.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was of a very high quality in the lessons observed. Learner experiences were of an exceptionally high standard in most lessons.
- Art teachers' passion and enthusiasm for their subject was evident in all lessons and supported students' motivation and engagement. Interactions among students and between teachers and students were very respectful. Teachers of Art were affirming and encouraging of all contributions made by learners in the lessons observed.
- Planning and preparation for lessons were well considered. There was high quality use of visuals and exemplar material to enhance students' understanding of complex terminology and concepts in theory lessons, as well as teacher demonstrations. Students in the main were engaged by their learning and displayed a very good capacity to contribute effectively in lessons.
- Commendably, many opportunities were evident where teachers had planned for and developed students' capacity to think critically and creatively. Students in these instances were challenged to think about and justify answers and ideas. This was particularly evident in the practical lessons observed.
- Learning intentions were shared in most lessons. In these instances, lessons were framed within a series of carefully considered learning intentions and explained in a student-friendly way. This gave students a clear sense of what they would know, understand and be able to do.
- Teachers made effective use of the specialist rooms. These rooms were well-organised. Samples of student work were displayed in and around the art rooms; this encouraged student enjoyment and celebrated student achievements within the subject. Students during the evaluation spoke about the learning environments and how all of the displays inspired them.
- The practical work reviewed during the evaluation indicated that primary sources were used alongside photographs taken by the students to develop students' observational skills. In discussions with some students, a few of them noted that they preferred to work from internet-based secondary sources or from photographs.
- Commendably, the art department planned for the promotion and use of primary sources. Primary sources were used during all practical lessons observed. While the use of internet-based secondary sources or photographs are valid sources of inspiration, students should be further encouraged and reminded of the benefits of exploring physical objects that are meaningful and interesting to them.
- Student reflection was a significant strength noted during the evaluation. Students were afforded instances during lessons to discuss, critique and assess their own work. Opportunities for students to make notes were also observed in some lessons. Students themselves commented upon how note-making was helpful to them to support their own learning.
- The quality of assessment practices observed was very good.
- During the evaluation, shared summative and formative assessment approaches were observed. This very good practice included the use of individual oral feedback to support the learning of students throughout the lessons observed.
- The range of student work and sketchbooks reviewed during the evaluation indicated a focus on experimentation and being creative with media. Of the samples of work reviewed, examples of very good written formative feedback were evident. In some instances however, the feedback provided was not used effectively by some students and often the advice was repeated by the teacher.
- The art department reported that they had identified this repetition of feedback as an area they wanted to address and, as a positive beginning, the department introduced a reflective strategy. This self-reflection followed summative assessments and encouraged students to reflect on feedback they received on in-house assessments. To build on this good start, it is recommended that the art department plan for and use

targeted strategies to encourage students to use the feedback being provided to them on key pieces of development work.

2. Subject provision and whole-school support

- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support was very good. School management was very supportive of the subject and good lines of communication existed between the management team and the art department.
- Access to the subject at both junior and senior cycle was good, with option bands constructed, which were based on students' choices after completing a short taster programme in first year. In senior cycle, the school had recently changed its approach to how students chose subjects. This change was made after trends were noted regarding student participation in sampling subjects in Transition Year.
- The art department was committed to the ongoing development of the subject and a very good level of engagement with teacher professional learning (TPL) was evident.
- A risk assessment was completed by the art department for the two art rooms and reviewed every two to three years. This should be addressed to ensure risk assessments are completed annually.
- In addition, a risk assessment for the ceramic room should also be completed; this is recommended. Inclusion of the specialist equipment, namely the kiln and its safety requirements, should be detailed more explicitly in this risk assessment. School management should plan to provide for the safety measures with regard to the kiln, in the short and longer term, as resources permit.

3. Planning and preparation

- The overall quality of planning for Art was of a very high quality. There were evident strengths in the collective planning and preparation for Art, such as the range of resources shared between teachers and the consistency and use of teacher reflections.
- The art teachers made very good use of the school's digital platform to plan collaboratively for teaching and learning. Minutes of meetings were recorded in planning documentation. An agenda was set by senior management, which encouraged teachers to reflect on and discuss aspects of teaching and learning. To build on this good practice, it is recommended that the the art department plan for and progress targets arising from department meetings.
- Appropriately, subject planning was based on the learning outcomes set out in subject specifications. It would prove beneficial for the art department to routinely audit planning documents to ensure that students experience and engage in a balanced way with all of the learning outcomes within the strands outlined in the curriculum specifications.
- In all units of learning reviewed, success criteria were detailed. Commendably, in a few lessons, success criteria were co-created and shared with students. These opportunities enabled students to contribute to their own learning journey.
- The art department was very dedicated to promoting the subject within the school through a commendable range of initiatives. Such examples included preparation of set designs, murals and the range of art work displayed in and around the school environment.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the senior management and the art department at the conclusion of the evaluation.

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

For the students of St Louis Secondary School about their learning in Visual Art and Art
Date of inspection: 03/10/2024

What kind of inspection did your school have?

A subject inspection was completed in your school. The inspector observed lessons and spoke with the principal and teachers. The inspector met with a group of students to talk to them about their learning in Visual Art and Art.

What were the main findings of the inspection?

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good.
- Teachers gave students many opportunities to develop their thinking and creative skills.
- Teachers worked hard to make art important in the school by organising many different projects and activities.

What did the inspector recommend to make teaching and learning better in Visual Art and Art?

- Teachers should help students, where needed, to make better use of the feedback given on key pieces of their work.
- Teachers should set goals and make plans to reach the goals during department meetings.

Thank you for taking the time to read this page.
Special thanks to the students who participated in the focus group.

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 quality of the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Examples of descriptive terms
Excellent	**Provision that is excellent** is exemplary in meeting the needs of learners. This provision provides an example for other schools and settings of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Excellent; exemplary; outstanding; exceptionally high standard; with very significant strengths
Very good	**Provision that is very good** is very effective in meeting the needs of learners and is of a very high standard. There is potential to build on existing strengths to achieve an excellent standard.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful
Good	**Provision that is good** is effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to build on existing strengths in order to address the aspects to be developed and achieve a very good standard.	Good; of good quality; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; strengths outweigh the shortcomings; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist
Requires improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard** is not sufficiently effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is good or better.	Fair; less than effective; less than sufficient; evident weaknesses that are impacting on learning; experiencing difficulty; shortcomings outweigh strengths; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard** is not meeting the needs of learners. There is immediate need for significant action to address the areas of concern.	Weak; poor; ineffective; insufficient; unacceptable; experiencing significant difficulties; serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated; requiring significant change, development and improvement to be effective

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of St. Louis Secondary school welcomes this very positive Subject Inspection report. It particluary appreciates the positive findings within the report which recognises the very good quality odf teaching and learning, exceptionally high student experiences and how students are encouraged to develop the capacity to think critically and creatively and reflect on their work.

The report's encouragement of experimentation and creative use of media in student work was found to be beneficial.

The school's Art subject department felt very affirmed from the inspection.

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 Board of Management welcomes and accepts the recommendations contained in this report and is fully committed to its implementation.

The Subject Department will continue to build on the good practice of formulating strategies to further encourage the students who need additional support with taking feedback on board, School Management will work with the subject department to achieve this goal.

School Management has also engaged professional support in carrying out a risk assessment in the ceramic room which will be completed in the next few weeks.

Target setting will be a key area of focus at department meetings going forward.