

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

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

**Mohill Community College**  
**Mohill, County Leitrim**  
**Roll number: 76089V**

**Date of inspection: 26 February 2016**



**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**

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Date(s) of inspection</b>	25 and 26 February
<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 four class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed in lessons ranged from good to very good.
- The quality of oral and written feedback provided to students was a strength in the lessons observed.
- A series of good student self-reflection sheets has been developed by the art department.
- Due to insufficient uptake, Art is not timetabled for fifth years in the current academic year.
- A strong collegial environment is inherent within the art department.
- A very good focus is given to supporting teachers' continuing professional development (CPD).

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The art department, in collaboration with senior management, should devise an action plan to monitor student uptake at senior cycle with a view to promoting Art as a viable option at Leaving Certificate level.
  - Minutes and decisions arising from planning meetings and reviews should be recorded more regularly by the art department.
  - In planning, the art department should outline the expected learning outcomes in a differentiated manner thereby providing greater opportunity to identify specific outcomes for the full range of learner abilities.
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Mohill Community College has an enrolment of 369 students. It provides a range of programmes that includes the Junior Certificate, established Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), and an optional Transition Year (TY) programme. Art is offered as an optional subject on all of the curriculum programmes.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed in lessons ranged from good to very good.
- In all lessons, classroom management was effective with clearly established routines evident. The classroom space was inviting and the range of artwork displayed modelled best practice and created the expectations set by the department for students' achievement.
- Overall, a very good range of teaching and learning strategies was observed including pair work, group critiques, teacher instruction, demonstrations and individual tasks. This facilitated a good balance between teacher talk and student input in almost all lessons. Lessons, underpinned by active learning strategies, offered opportunities to increase student responsibility for their own learning in an environment that was supportive and challenging of all abilities.
- Good differentiated teaching was noted in some lessons with the use of one-to-one tuition and adapted questioning. However, there is scope to develop this further to ensure participation of, and progression for, all learners. The use of 'hint sheets' or extension work as discussed during the evaluation should be developed to appropriately challenge the full range of abilities typical in a mixed-class setting.
- Students' work is assessed regularly and the quality of oral and written feedback provided to students was a strength in the lessons observed. This feedback provided support whilst maintaining the expectations set for each student. Moving forward, the art department should develop strategies to engage students in using the formative feedback provided on their work to facilitate them to take better ownership of their learning.
- Effective questioning strategies were used in most of the lessons observed. There is scope to develop the use of higher-order questions for all year groups to challenge deeper critical understanding of the students' own work and the work of others.
- A series of good student self-reflection sheets has been developed by the art department. To progress this practice, explicit questions need to be incorporated into the reflection sheets to encourage deeper analysis and understanding of work.
- Most of the students who interacted with the inspector showed great confidence in using subject-specific language whilst discussing their art work. There is scope to further develop literacy skills amongst all art students. The department should plan additional opportunities to allow students to critique their own art work orally, thereby enriching students' oral literacy further.
- An appropriate focus on numeracy was evident by linking lesson content with relevant mathematical concepts. In one lesson, for instance, some students used viewfinders to observe sections of support-study work, and then carefully considered the abstracted image and its composition. Using this detailed section, students then measured a grid and

drew the enlarged image. This practice and focus on mathematical concepts should be reinforced in subject planning.

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

- The overall quality of whole-school support and subject provision for Art is very good. Access to the subject is good and option bands are constructed based on students' choice.
- Due to insufficient uptake, Art is not timetabled in fifth year during the current academic year. In an effort to address students' needs, Art is offered outside of the school timetable, and the uptake is small. The teachers of Art and school management realise that this is not a suitable option going forward for the provision of Leaving Certificate Art. In an effort to address the needs of the students, it is recommended that the art department, in collaboration with senior management, devises an action plan to monitor student uptake at senior cycle with a view to promoting Art as a viable option at Leaving Certificate level.
- There was a very good focus on health and safety procedures in all of the lessons observed. A health and safety document was available during the evaluation and good practice is evident in reviewing safety practice for the specialist room.
- The art department displays great enthusiasm in its work and is dedicated to promoting Art within the school. A programme of co-curricular activities provides further opportunities for students to experience Art. Some activities undertaken include the provision of displays for school events.
- A very good focus is given to supporting teachers' CPD. This engagement to up-skilling is commended.

#### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The quality of planning and preparation to support the teaching and learning of Art is good. The art room, classroom resources, the storage of artwork and presentation of class materials were found to be well organised. The art department should consider the development of further display areas or notice-boards within the art room, as resources permit.
- It was very evident that a strong collegial environment is inherent within the department. Art teachers meet informally on a weekly basis. While one formal planning meeting is held at the beginning of the school year, examination of planning documentation indicates the need for more regular formal planning meetings to ensure consistent quality planning, and that minutes and decisions arising from reviews and meetings should be recorded.
- An analysis of students' results was included in the planning documentation presented during the evaluation. This analysis should be integrated further into subject planning documentation.
- Schemes of work have been developed that outline general learning outcomes for all year groups. To develop the schemes of work, it is recommended that the art department outline the expected learning outcomes in a differentiated manner thereby providing greater opportunity to identify specific outcomes for the full range of learner abilities.

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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the deputy principal and art department 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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

*Published May 2016*

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

### **Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board of Management welcomes the Inspection of Art and is very pleased with the very positive affirmations in the Report. Positive affirmations include:

- A strong collegial environment within the Art Department, with great enthusiasm for and commitment to Art.
- Teachers' commitment to continuing professional development (CPD).
- Student confidence in using subject-specific language whilst discussing their artwork.
- The quality of oral and written feedback provided to students in teacher assessment of their work.

### **Part B: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection**

#### **Follow-up actions planned**

- Student uptake of Art at senior level will continue to be monitored. In this regard, the Art Department is enthusiastic about the revised Leaving Cert Art Course commencing September 2017 and the impact this may have in fostering uptake of Art at senior level.
- The Art Department will outline the expected learning outcomes in a differentiated manner.
- Additional support will be planned for to allow students to critique their own Art work orally, thereby enriching students' oral literacy.
- Minutes and decisions arising from planning will be recorded more regularly by the Art Department.