An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Visual Arts

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Wood National School</th>
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| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Ardara  
County Donegal |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number | 01733B |

Date of Evaluation: 29-05-2017
WHAT IS A CURRICULUM EVALUATION?
Curriculum Evaluations report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects of the *Primary School Curriculum* (1999). 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 Visual Arts under the following headings:

1. Quality of pupils’ learning
2. Supporting pupils’ learning through learning experiences and teachers’ practice
3. The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils’ learning

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.

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.
Curriculum Evaluation

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>29-05-2017</th>
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<tr>
<td>Inspection activities undertaken</td>
<td>Observation of teaching and learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion with principal</td>
<td>Examination of pupils’ work</td>
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<td>Review of relevant documents</td>
<td>Interaction with pupils</td>
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<td>Pupil focus-group interview</td>
<td>Feedback to principal and teachers</td>
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SCHOOL CONTEXT

Wood National School, Ardara is a co-educational school under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Bishop of Derry and Raphoe. The current enrolment is seventeen pupils and there are two mainstream teachers, a shared resource teacher and one special-needs assistant.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of learning in Visual Arts is good; there is scope to provide further opportunities for pupil discussion relevant to the Visual Arts.
- Support for pupils in Visual Arts is of a high level with an appropriate emphasis on inclusive teaching approaches to facilitate learning for pupils of all ability levels.
- The quality of assessment in Visual Arts at the individual classroom level is satisfactory; there is scope to develop a whole-school approach to monitoring pupils’ skill progression.
- Overall, planning for the subject is of a satisfactory standard; individual teachers’ planning does not align with the whole-school plan in some areas.
- The pupils’ work is displayed prolifically, and with great care and attention, around the school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pupils should be provided with further opportunities to augment their learning through peer-to-peer discussion and self-reflection.
- Teachers’ individual planning should align with the whole-school plan for the subject, and the whole-school plan should include detail of learning progression from class to class in terms of concepts, skills, vocabulary and understanding, and how this is to be monitored through the appropriate use of assessment.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING in VISUAL ARTS

The overall quality of learning for pupils in Visual Arts is good; however, there are aspects for improvement. Pupils enjoy the subject and are motivated to learn. In lessons observed in the strands of drawing, and fabric and fibre pupils demonstrated commendable skills and awareness of texture and pattern. Some good work is evident in the development of line and this should be progressed further. A specific focus on skills’ progression from class to class is needed across all strands of the
curriculum to further support skills’ development over time. In the lessons observed, pupils worked independently on assigned tasks and were confident in their approach. Evidence of completed project work was also available. In the lessons observed, there was scope to provide further opportunities for learning through purposeful peer discussion and reflection. In talking with the inspector, pupils could discuss their learning, to a satisfactory level, in relation to four strands: drawing, paint and colour, clay, and fabric and fibre. Going forward, there is need to develop their vocabulary and knowledge across all strands to a greater extent so that they can more readily describe their Visual Arts experiences, identify the design elements and outline the creative processes involved. In discussion, pupils were not sufficiently familiar with how to identify their own progress through self-reflection of samples of work. Pupils are provided with opportunities to engage with local artists and crafters; ongoing, targeted use of local expertise would be worthwhile as means to further enhance pupils’ learning experiences. There is scope to develop the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in the Visual Arts.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE IN VISUAL ARTS

The overall quality of learning experiences in Visual Arts is good. Observed lessons were well prepared, and there was evidence of good integration with other subjects. All pupils were actively engaged in their learning. Enjoyment of Visual Arts is promoted and celebrated with attractive displays of pupils’ work throughout the school environment. In the main, pupils demonstrated appropriate use of skills during lessons with good guidance from teachers when required. Pupils had access to an appropriate range of resources which were very carefully readied by teachers in advance of the lessons.

The overall quality of teaching in Visual Arts is good. Lessons were structured appropriately and effective use was made of visual and tactile stimuli. Teachers discuss the work of famous artists regularly with their pupils and focus on art elements such as line, shape, colour and texture. There are further opportunities to use the immediate school environment as a valuable resource for learning and, as aforementioned, to include the work of local artists and craft designers to a greater extent.

The overall quality of assessment is satisfactory. Generally, teachers assess pupils’ learning through teacher observation and retain some samples of work in a variety of strands. It is recommended that teachers introduce additional assessment approaches in the subject; for example, the use of art portfolios for every pupil would provide opportunities for more structured self-reflection by pupils. Pupils’ progression in learning from class to class across all six strands of the subject should be assessed appropriately and monitored carefully.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS’ LEARNING IN VISUAL ARTS

The quality of school planning in Visual Arts is satisfactory overall; there is need for improvement in certain areas. Teachers agree thematic approaches to teaching and learning but, in discussion, they identified that the whole-school plan is in need of review. The current plan does not inform teachers’ individual planning or practice in the subject effectively. In order to provide a more progressive learning experience for pupils, the plan should include more specific detail in relation to content, skills, vocabulary, learning objectives and assessment. It should also provide appropriate guidance in terms of short-term planning, multi-class provision and differentiation. There is also scope to ensure enhanced development and progression of skills in clay. Teachers’ individual planning should reflect
the revised whole-school plan in outlining development of content, skills and subject-specific vocabulary for each class level. Overall, lessons as outlined in teachers’ planning are appropriately challenging for the majority of pupils but there is scope to develop differentiated approaches for pupils of varying abilities. Assessment-for-learning (AfL) and assessment-of-learning (AoL) practices should be augmented in order to better monitor pupils’ progression and inform future planning in Visual Arts. The use of local expertise in supporting Visual Arts education should be outlined in planning.

Currently, as there is a teachers’ union directive in respect of engagement with SSE, teachers have not been engaging with the SSE process. In the short-term, therefore, a focus on enhancing pupils’ vocabulary in the Visual Arts should be included in the school’s plan for developing pupils’ overall oral-language skills.
Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management
Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

We welcome the feedback and recommendations following the school inspection on 29th May 2017.

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

We are currently working on our whole school plan and it is due for discussion and ratification at our next Board of Management meeting this month. We have tried to make this document a more useful tool for teachers with ideas for art, vocabulary to be used, objectives for learning and assessment ideas. We have covered all strands of the Visual Arts Curriculum. We hope this policy will help make all strands more accessible and enhance pupils’ learning.

We are implementing pupil art portfolios this year. Before this we would have kept records of pupils’ art work by photograph for annual school photo album.

One teacher has had professional development in visual arts as a summer course and has disseminated ideas and information to all staff. This has proved to be very informative and useful. This course was given by a local teacher and artist.

We endeavour to make visual arts an enjoyable and worthwhile experience for all.

We enjoy presenting pupils’ art properly for display for all to enjoy.

We aim to improve assessment of art so as to enhance pupils’ experience and potential.

As a school we strive to improve all areas of the curriculum so as to achieve the full potential of each child.
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 the school’s provision of each area.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td><strong>Very good</strong> 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 <strong>outstanding</strong> and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.</td>
<td>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</td>
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<td>Good</td>
<td><strong>Good</strong> 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.</td>
<td>Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement</td>
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<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong> 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.</td>
<td>Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas</td>
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<td>Fair</td>
<td><strong>Fair</strong> 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.</td>
<td>Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils’ learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve</td>
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<td>Weak</td>
<td><strong>Weak</strong> 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.</td>
<td>Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;</td>
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