## Curriculum Evaluation

### Music

#### REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School name</th>
<th>Church Hill Mixed N S</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School address</td>
<td>Cuffesgrange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co Kilkenny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll number</td>
<td>05927L</td>
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**Date of inspection: 29-01-2019**
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(s) evaluated learning and teaching in [Subject] under the
following headings:
1. Quality of pupils’ learning
2. Supporting pupils’ learning through learner 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 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.

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 and 2 above and there was not fully
compliant with the checks undertaken. The school has subsequently furnished me with evidence
that they are compliant with checks 1 and 2.
### Curriculum Evaluation

**Date of inspection** 29-01-2019

**Inspection activities undertaken**
- Discussion with principal and deputy principal
- Review of relevant documents
- Pupil focus-group interview
- Observation of teaching and learning
- Examination of pupils’ work
- Interaction with pupils
- Feedback to principal and deputy principal

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Church Hill N S is a rural, co-educational school situated in Cuffesgrange, Co. Kilkenny and operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ossory. At the time of the evaluation there were six mainstream teachers, including a teaching principal. 163 pupils are enrolled at the school.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils’ learning in Music is good with particularly high quality choral performance noted and scope to develop pupils’ composing skills.
- The overall quality of teachers’ practice is good, teachers provide pupils with meaningful activities and lessons are well paced and structured.
- The overall quality of school planning is satisfactory, the school plan provides limited guidance to teachers’ practice and planning in Music.
- The overall quality of pupils learning experiences is good and pupils are provided with a wide range of rich experiences, the current arrangements for instrumental Music lessons should be examined to ensure equality of access for all pupils.
- Very respectful interactions between teachers and pupils and among pupils was observed and pupils presented as highly engaged and motivated learners.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school should agree and provide specific core composing experiences for pupils at each class level in order to enable pupils to create new music while applying their understanding of musical literacy and concepts.
- The school should review and amend how it currently funds and organises instrumental Music lessons.
- The whole-school plan for Music should be further contextualised to provide teachers with practical guidance on content to be taught at each class level and on teaching and assessment approaches to be used when teaching Music.

### DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING

The overall quality of pupils’ learning in Music is good. Pupils presented as highly-motivated learners who were engaged in their Music lessons. They could articulate why they learn Music and the benefits it provides to learners. In the lessons observed, pupils enjoyed their learning and were observed moving to Music and singing with expression and interest. In the focus group which was conducted as part of the evaluation, all pupils identified Music as one of their favourite subjects and reported that they enjoyed it because it was activity based.
During the evaluation, pupils were observed singing in rounds, in call and response and part singing. Particularly high quality singing and performing was observed with the senior choral group where pupils displayed very good knowledge of their songs and a good vocal range. In all classes, pupils could sing songs and in some classes the range of these songs was wide and encapsulated a number of genres. Pupils are very articulate and during classroom interactions could discuss their learning competently. They display very good understanding of the language of Music particularly subject specific language and terms for musical concepts. Music literacy is explicitly taught in some classes, there is scope to extend this to all classes and to include details of how literacy will be taught and developed throughout the school in order to ensure progression in pupils’ learning from class to class.

It is noted that the school has identified the composing strand as an area to develop within Music and while pupils in some classes have been given composing experiences, there is scope to extend and embed this strand across the school. In order to allow pupils to gain meaningful and regular opportunities to apply and synthesise their understanding of musical literacy and musical concepts, the school should agree and provide specific core composing experiences for pupils. The details of these experiences should be added to the school plan in order to provide practical guidance to teachers and establish parameters for pupils’ learning.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE

The overall quality of pupils’ learning experiences is good. Learning environments are well resourced, attractive and display pupils’ learning in Music. The school has invested in a wide range of percussion and melodic instruments. Information and communication technology (ICT) is effectively used to enhance pupils’ engagement during lessons. On the day of the evaluation, very positive interactions between pupils and teachers and among pupils were evident. Pupils were observed actively engaging in a wide range of meaningful activities. During the focus group, pupils spoke with pride of the many opportunities afforded to them to share their talents at school ceremonies or performances outside the school. The addition of Music as a station in Aistear is praised as it allows pupils to explore and create Music in a playful and supportive way.

The school offers pupils the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument with an external teacher. Pupils report that they enjoy these lessons. Pupils can elect to take a class and are charged a fee for the lesson. In order to ensure that all pupils have equal access to this learning experience, the school should examine how it funds and organises these musical lessons.

The overall quality of teachers’ practice is good with some very good practice also observed. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and most of the lessons observed were well paced and structured. Teachers demonstrate a commitment to the school and the pupils in their care. Where highly-effective practice was observed teachers used active methodologies to promote pupil participation. This practice should be extended to all settings.

Some very good checklists are used to assess pupils’ understanding of Music and musical concepts. Teachers make skilful use of questioning to assess pupils’ progress. To build on this good practice, the school should consider how to add self-assessment and peer-assessment to Music lessons in order to promote pupils’ ownership of their learning.

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

The overall quality of school planning is satisfactory. While the plan covers all three strands of the curriculum, it is general in nature. There is scope to further contextualise the plan. It is
recommended that the plan be reviewed to reflect current practice within the school and inform individual teachers’ planning and preparation. The plan should provide practical guidance to teachers on specific content to be taught at each class level and should outline consistent teaching and assessment approaches to be used when teaching Music at the school.

Teachers’ individual planning is good overall. Teachers were well planned and prepared for the lessons observed. Where practice was very effective, learning objectives were clearly delineated, shared at the outset of lessons and checked at the end of the lesson. This praiseworthy practice should be extended to all classes.
Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

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

The inspection report accurately portrays the pupils’ involvement, teachers’ practices and planning and the overall learning experience of the children in the school. Report is very positive towards the school and the recommendation around an instrument programme is well received. It requires a practical adjustment. Retention of the programme by the outside teacher is still desirable but a balance will be struck between those who elect to partake in that programme and the complete enrolment in the school. Over the full primary cycle a good/very good standard of instrument knowledge should be acquired. Percussion, wind and strings will form the basis of this whole-school instrument programme.

Adding greater access to composing is suggested in the report content and further teacher upskilling will be required to achieve this goal. Teachers have committed to this already. Teacher in-service has fallen short over the years in supporting the arts subjects. It is wished that the situation would be reviewed by the Dept. of Ed and Skills.

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

1. Developing pupil's composing skills

The school has identified the composing strand as an area to be developed within our music plan. This will be amended to provide specific composing experiences for the pupils at each class level in order to enable pupils to create new music while applying their understanding of musical literacy and concepts. Staff will agree on the changes made to the current school plan at planning meetings. This process is already underway with teachers planning to undertake Music Summer Courses in order to upskill themselves in this area.

2. Content to be taught at each class level

The Whole School Plan for Music will be changed to provide teachers with more practical guidance on the content to be taught at each class level. Staff will select a bank of 10 songs of different genres to be taught. Also, the music literacy progression from Junior Infants to Sixth Class will be clearly identified and outlined, this will range from the representation of musical concepts in pictures (graphic notation) in the infant classes leading gradually to the children being able to read music from the 5 line stave in the senior classes. Teachers with particular expertise in music will guide and assist their colleagues in this area.

3. Teaching and assessment approaches

Teachers have identified the need to develop a simple system for assessment when teaching music, keeping onerous recording to a minimum. It will be done on the spot where it will have more relevance to both the teacher and the child. The pupil’s own collections of work samples, portfolios, projects and self-assessments, together with curriculum profiles will facilitate this task.


Through rotation of teacher talent and retention of the services of the external teacher the school will design an instrumental programme to allow children learn the skills of playing an instrument.
The programme will be modular lasting 8 weeks and will also give the children the experience of playing in an orchestra/band setting.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td><strong>Very good</strong></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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td><strong>Good</strong></td>
<td>Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong></td>
<td>Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td><strong>Fair</strong></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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td><strong>Weak</strong></td>
<td>Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;</td>
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