An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills  

Curriculum Evaluation  
Drama  

REPORT  

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<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Presentation Primary School</th>
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| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Terenure  
Dublin 6W |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number | 13612F |

Date of inspection: 12-02-2019
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 inspectors evaluated learning and teaching in Drama 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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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 met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.
Curriculum Evaluation

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| Inspection activities undertaken | • Observation of teaching and learning  
• Interaction with pupils  
• Feedback to principal and teachers |

• Discussion with principal  
• Review of relevant documents  
• Pupil focus-group interview

SCHOOL CONTEXT
Presentation Primary School, Terenure is a large urban school catering for girls from junior infants to sixth class. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. There are 23 mainstream teachers and six special education teachers two of whom work in a job-share capacity. At the time of the evaluation there were 595 girls enrolled in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
• The overall quality of pupils’ learning in Drama is very good overall; scope exists to further develop pupil capacity to reflect on Drama.
• The quality of pupils’ learning experiences in Drama is good overall; opportunities should be provided to further enrich pupil experiences.
• The overall quality of teaching in Drama is very good with a strong emphasis on educational Drama, consistent use of agreed strategies and subject integration.
• Whole school planning for Drama is of a high quality overall; further detail is required in terms of progression of content and learning experiences from class to class.
• Very effective examples of peer and self-assessment were observed during the evaluation.
• All lessons observed were well structured and supported by a good range of agreed whole school strategies.

RECOMMENDATIONS
• In order to develop pupil learning, reflection on Drama should take place through the systematic engagement with the language of the curriculum and elements of Drama on a progressive basis.
• Learning experiences of pupils in Drama should be further enhanced through the provision of more frequent opportunities to engage in performance drama for a range of audiences.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
The quality of pupils’ learning in drama is very good overall. Pupils enter into role and character very effectively over an extended period of time. They can use space and objects creatively to deepen the drama context. Most pupils understand how the fictional past and the desired future influence the dramatic action. In some settings, costumes are used to develop pupil learning. Senior pupils could distinguish between various genres such as comedy, fantasy and tragedy. Very high levels of pupil participation and confidence in making drama in groups were observed during the evaluation. Pupils display exemplary tolerance and respect for each other; they work co-operatively in groups in all settings observed to develop fictional relationships and enact scenes for others. Pupils in the focus group were very enthusiastic about their learning in Drama. Listening and communication skills are fostered in pupils through Drama. In all settings, pupils were encouraged to reflect upon Drama. Pupils’ ability to reflect can be further enhanced by more systematic engagement with the specific language of the curriculum and the elements of Drama.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE
The quality of pupils’ learning experiences in Drama are good overall. Pupils experience a range of drama activities including drama based on everyday experience and issues the teacher wishes to explore in literacy and Social Personal and Health Education. Drama is also used to explore aspects of life from the past, the present and the future, and content and issues from other curricular areas. Pupils are provided with regular Drama lessons. In addition Drama is integrated with Irish. Aisteir: the Early Years Curriculum Framework is used very effectively to facilitate pretend, socio-dramatic, make-believe, role and fantasy play. All pupils experience the prerequisites for making Drama including content, fictional lens and a safe environment for Drama to a very high standard. All pupils experience input from outside professional performers visiting the school and some pupils engage in performance drama. Drama is also offered as an extra-curricular activity in the school. During the focus group pupils indicated that they take part in scripted and non-scripted Drama activities. Pupils expressed a desire to engage in more performance drama. They also indicated that while they enjoy Drama games, they would like more variety and progression. While the school places commendable emphasis on educational drama, the learning experiences of pupils would be enhanced through further opportunities for pupils to perform drama for a range of audiences in the school community. Consideration should also be given to a review of the current whole school plan for Drama to ensure development and progression in all aspects of pupil experiences in Drama.

The quality of teaching in Drama is very good overall. All teachers prepare short-term and long-term plans for Drama. However, a more consistent approach to planning for the teaching and assessment of the language of the curriculum and the elements of Drama is required. Classroom management in all settings is of a very high quality. Safe spaces are provided consistently in all settings through the use of Drama contracts. All lessons observed had very good structure and pace and teachers ensured notable levels of pupil participation and inclusion in Drama lessons. Digital technology was used effectively to provide stimuli and support for pupils’ learning. Teachers skilfully integrated Drama into other subject areas. Pupils in the focus group indicated high levels of enjoyment in Irish when integrated with Drama.

A good range of assessment strategies is used throughout the school. These include Assessment for Learning approaches such as peer and self-assessment, checklists, teacher led questioning, pupil led
questioning and displaying learning outcomes. Teachers should assess and record pupil learning outcomes informed by the Drama curriculum strand units and elements of Drama at each class level. Consideration should also be given to the use of digital technology to record and reflect on and assess Drama.

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

Whole school planning for Drama is of a high quality. A whole school plan for Drama is in place. It was evident during the evaluation that agreed strategies for the teaching of Drama were used consistently in all settings observed. The strategies observed during the evaluation included defining the space, hot seating, conscience alley, thought tracking, teacher in role, whole group improvisation, paired improvisation and still images. Further consideration should be given to contextualising the whole school plan for Drama to include a more comprehensive guide to teaching and assessment practices at each class level. The plan should draw on expertise within the school and include specified learner experiences, agreed language and the elements of Drama, progressively developed at each class level. Exemplars of drama lessons to ensure progression and development should also be included in the whole school plan along with an audit of resources and materials used to teach Drama.
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.

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<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 <strong>very good</strong> 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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