Curriculum Evaluation

Science

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Taney Parish Primary School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Sydenham Villas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dundrum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dublin 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>15284B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date of inspection: 17-01-2019
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 inspectors evaluated learning and teaching in Science 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 met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.
Curriculum Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Inspection</th>
<th>17-01-2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Inspection activities undertaken** | **Observation of teaching and learning**
• Discussion with principal and teachers
• Review of relevant documents
• Pupil focus-group interview
• Examination of pupils’ work
• Interaction with pupils
• Feedback to principal and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT
Taney Parish Primary School is an urban, co-educational school, under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough. Currently, the school is catering for 436 pupils from junior infants to sixth class.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
• Pupils display very high levels of interest in Science and the quality of their learning is very good overall.
• The school supports pupils’ learning in Science very effectively.
• Teachers model enthusiasm for Science, and the quality of teaching in Science is very good overall.
• While teachers use a variety of good assessment practices, there is a need to further develop consistent whole-school approaches to assessment in Science.
• For the most part, the quality of teachers’ planning for Science is good; there is scope to further develop the whole-school plan.
• Commendably, there is a whole-school strategy to ensure that pupils experience a variety of field trips.

RECOMMENDATIONS
• In order to support continuity and progression of learning from class to class, the school should develop agreed systems to monitor the development of pupils’ knowledge and skills in Science.
• The whole-school plan for Science should be further reviewed in order to provide clear and comprehensive guidance to teachers’ classroom practice.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING

The overall quality of pupils’ learning in Science is very good. Pupils’ participation and interest levels in Science are very high. Most pupils are confident in their recall of previously taught content, and they display a very good level of knowledge and understanding in line with the objectives set out in the curriculum. They are able to use subject-specific language when describing their learning experiences. Pupils in middle and senior classes are familiar with the concept of a fair test. In discussion, pupils reported that they find Science interesting, and that they prefer lessons with experiments. Where the learning is strongest, pupils demonstrate an ability to pose questions, predict results and test out ideas through experimentation. They are enabled to develop their scientific skills and can apply their scientific knowledge and understanding through designing and making products. More regular opportunities for all pupils to develop their designing and making skills across the curriculum should now be provided in order to nurture their inventive and creative capacities.

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

The school supports pupils’ learning in Science very effectively. The enjoyment of Science is promoted and pupils are motivated to learn. The majority of classrooms host displays and photographs of pupils’ work. Pupils are provided with a wide variety of opportunities to take part in interesting and meaningful learning experiences, both inside and outside the school environment. These include a range of gardening activities, the incubation of chickens’ eggs, the creation of a bug hotel, and coding activities. Commendably, there is a whole-school strategy ensuring that pupils experience interesting and meaningful field trips, including excursions to discovery centres, farms, bogs, rock pools and the seashore. The school encourages parental involvement in aspects of the delivery of the science curriculum. This is characterised by parental support of the Green Schools Programme, and the facilitation of occasional workshops by particular parents.

Teaching in Science is very good overall. Teachers model enthusiasm for Science, communicate learning intentions clearly, and manage their classrooms very effectively. They have high expectations for their pupils’ learning and facilitate pupils to work collaboratively during pair work and group work activities. A variety of resources and approaches are used to engage pupils and to respond to their individual learning needs. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to engage in experiments across the science curriculum. In the best instances, teachers are very familiar with the curriculum objectives for their class level and are clear regarding what they expect pupils to achieve in terms of both skill development and understanding. The effective balance between the development of scientific knowledge and understanding on the one hand, and the processes of working scientifically on the other hand, should be shared as best practice and extended to all settings.

Teachers utilise a good variety of assessment strategies to assess pupils’ knowledge, including, questioning, observing, monitoring of pupils’ copybooks and checklists. In order to better support the continuity and progression of learning from class to class, the school should develop agreed systems to monitor the incremental development of pupils’ knowledge and skills in Science.
3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS’ LEARNING

The quality of planning for Science is good. All teachers prepare long-term and short-term plans. The school is commended on their engagement with the process of school self-evaluation. Currently they are reflecting on the standard of teaching and learning in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education.

While there is a whole-school curriculum plan in place for Science, it does not sufficiently guide teachers’ classroom practice. Therefore, a further review of this plan is advised in order that it will provide clear and comprehensive guidance to teachers’ practice, along with sufficient detail relating to the specific programmes of work for each class. The reviewed plan should clearly document the school’s approaches to the development of scientific knowledge and understanding on the one hand, and the processes of working scientifically on the other hand. Agreed whole-school approaches to assessment, along with strategies designed to monitor pupils’ incremental development of knowledge and skills, should also be included.
Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

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

The board is delighted that this report acknowledges and affirms the great work being done in our school. We appreciate the report’s positive and constructive comments and look forward to implementing the recommendations.

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

(Blank)
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>
</thead>
<tbody>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>