An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation  
Social, Personal and Health Education

REPORT

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Fairymount NS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Fairymount, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>15425Q</td>
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Date of Evaluation: 19-10-2016
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 Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) 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 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.
**Curriculum Evaluation**

**INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>19-10-2016</th>
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| Inspection activities undertaken | • Observation of teaching and learning  
• Examination of pupils’ work  
• Interaction with pupils  
• Feedback to principal and teachers |

**SCHOOL CONTEXT**

Fairymount National School is a rural co-educational two-teacher school located ten kilometres east of Ballaghaderreen and almost seven kilometres west of Frenchpark in Co. Roscommon. It participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. There are two mainstream class teachers based in the school and there is a current enrolment of twenty-five pupils.

**SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**FINDINGS**

- The quality of the pupils’ learning in SPHE is very good.
- The SPHE policy is very good as it outlines a broad and balanced programme of work over a two-year period. The identification of skills to be acquired and subject-specific language to be taught at each class level would benefit the implementation of the policy.
- *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is implemented very successfully in the junior classroom and develops social and co-operative skills very effectively.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and eager to participate in purposeful and well-planned activities that cover all strand units. The strand unit of developing citizenship requires further development.
- Teachers prepare comprehensively and diligently for lessons.
- A caring ethos and an affirming atmosphere supports positive learning experiences for the pupils.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The SPHE policy should include a glossary of subject-specific language to be taught at each class level and a list of the skills which pupils need to acquire.
- Pupils should be enabled to explore diversity further in the local, national and international communities.
1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING IN SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

The quality of pupils’ learning in SPHE is very good. They are developing self-confidence and positive self-esteem. They are motivated to learn and this is evident in the observation of lessons and pupils’ engagement in the focus-group discussion. They are developing co-operative, communication and problem-solving skills through Aistear. They have acquired strategies to support themselves in making decisions and choices. They are exploring pertinent topics through debating and persuasive writing. The pupils have a sense of ownership of their work and log their food intake in food journals as part of a healthy eating programme.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING IN SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION: LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE

The quality of support for pupils’ learning experiences is very good. A warm, affirming, inclusive atmosphere is evident. The classrooms and environs promote an appreciation for SPHE and pupils’ work is celebrated. Pupils engage purposefully in collaborative learning and independent learning activities. This work on environmental care is highly commendable, notably on waste, water and the travel theme at present. Circle work, the use of information and communications technology (ICT), talk and discussion and co-operative games are very successful in supporting pupils in their learning. Interactions between staff and pupils are respectful and reciprocal.

Pupils have access to a wide range of carefully chosen resources such as materials from Walk Tall and Stay Safe to support their learning. They have participated in valuable trips outside of the classroom. Further learning activities in their local community and town would benefit the pupils. The school tours focus on many aspects of SPHE and are used to make meaningful connections between learning in Geography and SPHE. Pupils’ project work on different European countries and the guest speaker accessed through Heritage in Schools supports them in developing citizenship. Further work is required to support the pupils in exploring diversity locally and nationally.

Teaching is highly effective. Teachers engage diligently in a range of continuing professional development courses relevant to pupils’ learning. They have high expectations of pupils and involve them in formulating the class contract. They captivate the pupils’ attention through the use of ICT, presentations, visual stimuli, activities and talk and discussion. They integrate the curriculum in SPHE very effectively with other subject areas. They plan thoroughly for their lessons. They respond highly effectively to the needs of individual pupils and implement appropriate programmes to progress and support pupils’ learning. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is taught appropriately in consultation with parents and guardians.

Pupils record learning in journals and learning logs and this is very good practice. Teachers’ anecdotal notes on pupils’ worksheets are very valuable records which support planning for future learning. Teachers’ questioning is excellent and teachers affirm the pupils in their learning.
3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS’ LEARNING IN SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

The effectiveness of school planning is very good. The whole-school plan for SPHE is designed as a two-year programme which informs teachers’ practice. Resources are readily accessible as materials in all subject areas are catalogued and stored appropriately. The list of suitable resources in the policy is highly commendable. In further development of this very good work, staff should document the skills and the subject-specific literacy to be taught in each strand and strand unit. Additionally, teachers should consider posting key vocabulary taught beside the relevant displays in classrooms and corridors.

SPHE was the subject chosen as the next area for development as part of school’s self-evaluation (SSE) process. The recommendations in this report and advice given during feedback will support the school in developing SPHE further.
Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

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

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

The Board is delighted that the appropriate recognition is given to the positive and valuable work that is taking place in the school.

The school will implement the key recommendations with the support of the Board of Management.

The report will greatly help to guide the school in the years ahead.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Very good</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>Good</td>
<td>Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Satisfactory</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>Fair</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>Weak</td>
<td>Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;</td>
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Published Dec 2016