An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills  

Curriculum Evaluation  
Music  

REPORT  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Bilboa National School</th>
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| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Bilboa  
|                              | Cappamore  
|                              | County Limerick |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number   | 15692Q |

Date of inspection: 20 April 2018
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 Music 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 on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

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

Date of inspection  19 - 20 April 2018

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<th>Inspection activities undertaken</th>
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<td>Discussion with principal and teachers</td>
<td>Observation of teaching and learning</td>
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<td>Review of relevant documents</td>
<td>Examination of pupils’ work</td>
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<td>Pupil focus-group interview</td>
<td>Interaction with pupils</td>
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<td>Individual feedback to teachers</td>
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<td>Feedback to principal</td>
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SCHOOL CONTEXT

Bilboa National School (Scoil Chríost Rí) is a co-educational primary school, located in Bilboa, County Limerick, approximately two miles from the village of Cappamore. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Cashel and Emly. The school staff consists of five mainstream class teachers, including the teaching principal. The school avails of support from three special education teaching (SET) posts. At the time of the evaluation, there were 115 pupils enrolled in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils’ learning in Music is very good.
- The quality of the learning experiences provided for pupils in Music, overall, is of a very high standard.
- The teaching of Music is of a very good standard.
- The school has developed commendable practices in relation to assessing pupil achievement in Music.
- Whole-school planning in Music is effective; aspects of the school’s curricular policy in Music would benefit from further development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Further guidance regarding the systematic progression of the curricular strands, at each class level, should be provided in the school’s curricular policy in Music.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING

The overall quality of pupils’ learning in Music is very good. Pupil learning outcomes in Music is of a very high standard.

Pupils display a highly commendable understanding of musical concepts through their participation in listening and responding, song singing and composition activities. They demonstrate very good levels of comprehension in musical literacy, through their confidence and competence in reading graphic symbols and standard notation. They also display an ability to recognise and use rhythmic and pitch notation.
During the evaluation, a very good standard of pupil performance, in a range of instruments, was observed. It is commendable that pupils develop their instrumental skills, from junior class level to senior class level, through their learning of the tin whistle. Pupils, in all classes, were very successful in singing a wide range of songs, in Irish and English, across a variety of genres.

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

The quality of the learning experiences provided for pupils in Music, overall, is of a very high standard.

Pupils present as very well behaved, attentive and interested learners. In all class settings, pupils demonstrated very positive attitudes to learning in Music. During the pupil focus-group interview, pupils stated that they enjoyed learning the subject. They made reference to how their learning experiences in Music were enhanced through their participation in school Christmas concerts; community events, including Grandparents’ Day; and sacramental ceremonies. In addition, they displayed very good knowledge of how to integrate different aspects of their learning in Music with other curricular areas, including: English, History, Physical Education (PE) and Drama.

Pupils’ knowledge, skills and understanding of Music are being developed to a very good standard. Supportive learning atmospheres are cultivated in all settings. Pupils engage purposefully in music lessons and complete assigned learning tasks in a meaningful manner. Pupils are enabled to make music and to create instrumental and body-percussion compositions, both individually and collectively. Performance in Music is a regular feature of classroom and school life.

The overall quality of teaching in Music is very good. Lessons are structured very clearly and very effective methodologies are implemented in all settings. All teachers ensure that musical concepts are explored effectively. Commendable emphasis is placed on ensuring a balance of musical learning activities across the strands of the music curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are supported through team-teaching musical activities, which are implemented during Music through Yoga sessions in PE lessons. During the evaluation, teachers’ skill, competence and active interest in the teaching of Music was reported and observed.

Teachers’ planning and preparation facilitates effective practice for music teaching and learning. All teachers provide very high quality plans for their individual programmes of work in Music.

The overall provision, management and use of school resources in Music is very good. The productive use of the school’s resources in information and communications technology (ICT), including interactive whiteboards and tablets, supports effective lesson presentation and the assessment of pupils’ musical learning. Pupils have regular access to musical instruments. Organised wall and noticeboard displays, including topic-specific language in Music, musical equipment and materials, are presented attractively in classroom environments.

The school has developed commendable practices in relation to assessing pupil achievement in Music. A range of assessment strategies is implemented, including: individual pupil assessment folders, teacher-designed checklists and pupil self-assessment activities. As part of its internal review process, the school has identified the need to extend the range and frequency of assessment strategies to evaluate pupil progress in Music.
3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS’ LEARNING

The quality of whole-school planning in Music is commendable. The whole-school plan for Music is a comprehensive document, which was developed and ratified in May 2012.

The document outlines a broad programme for curricular planning of the strands and strand units in Music. To ensure that good guidance and useful support is provided to teachers in preparing their work, aspects of the school’s curricular policy in Music would benefit from further refinement. In this regard, it would be beneficial to document clearly, at each class level, the incremental development of the programme taught in Music. Further guidance regarding the systematic progression of the curricular strands should also be provided in the school’s policy in Music.
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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