Curriculum Evaluation

History

REPORT

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<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Scoil Naoimh Pio</th>
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| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Knockcommon  
Beauparc  
Co Meath |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number | 16549Q |

Date of inspection: 11-06-2019
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 evaluated learning and teaching in History 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

Date of inspection 11-06-2019

Inspection activities undertaken
- Discussion with principal and teachers
- Review of relevant documents
- Pupil focus-group interview
- Observation of teaching and learning
- Examination of pupils’ work
- Interaction with pupils
- Post-inspection feedback meeting with principal

SCHOOL CONTEXT
Scoil Naoimh Pio is a co-educational rural primary school under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Meath. There are four mainstream class teachers, one full-time special education teacher and one special education teacher who is shared with another local school. At the time of the evaluation, eighty-one pupils were enrolled.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
- The quality of pupils’ learning in History is very good with pupils displaying great knowledge and understanding of the historical heritage of their local area.
- The learning experiences provided for the pupils are very good with an extensive range of artefacts and resources used purposefully to stimulate and enrich pupils’ learning.
- The quality of teaching observed during lessons was very good; teachers use a broad range of questions very skilfully to extend pupils’ learning.
- The quality of assessment is good overall; however, the ongoing monitoring of pupils’ incremental skill development has not yet commenced.
- The quality of school planning is very good; the spiral nature of the History curriculum is carefully monitored and reviewed regularly.

RECOMMENDATION
- Further emphasis should be placed on the assessment and monitoring of the incremental development of skills in History as pupils’ progress through the school.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
The overall quality of pupils’ learning in History is very good. Pupils demonstrate a deep understanding of time and chronology, empathy and continuity and change. They show a commendable knowledge of notable people from both Irish and international history. Pupils enjoy their learning in history and this is reflected in their very high levels of engagement and motivation. Examples of commendable learning include pupils in the junior classes engaging in research within their family context to collect stories from the past and also in sharing artefacts from their own personal history. Pupils in the middle and senior classes regularly work as historians and reflect on their research with considerable insight and understanding. During the focus group discussion conducted during the evaluation, pupils spoke with enthusiasm of their learning through project work and also about sharing these projects with others in the school community. History is integrated well into other subjects in the curriculum with pupils speaking about their enjoyment of creating historical objects in Visual Arts lessons. In the lessons observed, pupils were actively
engaged in their learning and were using a range of resources to compare school and community life in the past to the present day.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE
The quality of learner experiences provided for pupils is very good. Pupils speak with confidence about their learning in History. Throughout their time in school, pupils undertake field trips to a number of local sites of historical and geographical importance. Pupils have opportunities to work both collaboratively and independently as historians. Teachers provide pupils with a range of collaborative learning experiences and pupils are given opportunities to present their research to others.

The overall quality of teaching is very good. Teachers prepare bright, engaging learning environments that are supportive of pupils’ learning. All classrooms have clear and relevant timelines reflecting the interests of the pupils and the content of the lessons. Timelines are used actively throughout lessons with artefacts added to further contextualise and enhance the learning. There are very attractive displays to be seen throughout the school in both mainstream classes and support settings using artefacts, fiction and non-fiction texts and pupils’ own work. Digital learning technologies are available throughout lessons as a tool for pupils to use in both research and presentations.

The quality of assessment is good. Teachers use a range of strategies including checklists, written tasks, projects and classroom observations. There was good practice evident during the evaluation in relation to developing pupils’ self-assessment skills. Pupils’ written work could be further developed through the use of more formative feedback. Teachers are skilful in their questioning in order to enhance and consolidate pupils’ learning. In some instances, the pupils are ably facilitated in discovering the learning intention themselves thereby enriching their learning. To further enhance assessment practices, emphasis should now be placed on the monitoring the incremental development of pupils’ skills in History as they progress from class to class throughout the school.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS’ LEARNING
The whole-school plan for history is very good. It provides clear and explicit development from class to class with the local environment reflected throughout. It supports the implementation of a broad and balanced curriculum. The whole-school plan effectively informs and guides teachers’ individual planning and classroom practice. Teachers plan for all strands of the curriculum in a comprehensive manner.

The school self-evaluation process has been used very effectively to progress pupils’ learning. A culture of collaboration and innovation is being promoted. Teachers engage effectively in professional reflection and have identified aspects of the whole-school plan for further improvement. This includes the incremental development of content in the multi-class setting. Suitable strategies have been identified to implement the improvement initiatives and to monitor impact on pupils’ learning.
**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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<td><strong>Very Good</strong></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 outstanding 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><strong>Good</strong></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 very good standard.</td>
<td>Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement</td>
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<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong></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><strong>Fair</strong></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><strong>Weak</strong></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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