Curriculum Evaluation
Visual Arts

REPORT

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<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Killala N S</th>
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<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
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<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
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Date of Evaluation: 03-05-2017
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 Visual Arts 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.
SCHOOL CONTEXT
St Joseph’s National School, under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Killala, is situated in the village of Killala, Co Mayo. The current enrolment is 118 pupils with five mainstream class teachers and one support teacher based in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
• The overall quality of learning outcomes and learning experiences in Visual Arts is very good; the school environment and the enthusiasm of the staff promote pupil enjoyment of the subject.
• The overall quality of the teaching of Visual Arts is very good; attention to the Looking and Responding strand unit is of a very good quality.
• Thematic, integrated approaches are adopted for purposeful experiences in Visual Arts.
• Pupils are provided with opportunities to engage in appropriate learning activities outside the classroom through visits to local galleries and through participation in a variety of competitions.
• The quality of assessment is good and several positive assessment practices were evident during the evaluation. There is room now for sharing existing expertise in the further development of a comprehensive assessment policy and assessment for learning (AFL) approaches across the school.
• Good quality classroom planning is supported by a school plan that outlines a varied and balanced programme of work.

RECOMMENDATIONS
• Assessment approaches in Visual Arts should be reviewed across the school to better support AFL approaches and portfolios.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING

The overall quality of the pupils’ learning outcomes in Visual Arts is very good. They are achieving particularly well in the Looking and Responding strand of the curriculum where they discuss and express their learning experiences and understandings confidently and competently and utilise the language of the artist. The pupils enjoy their learning and develop an appreciation for Visual Arts through a variety of experiences and opportunities that enable them to engage, explore and
They are eager and motivated in their approach to their activities. They build an awareness and knowledge of the skills and concepts of Visual Arts in a developmental way through the school. The school self-evaluation (SSE) focus on creating images during comprehension activities is impacting positively on pupils’ learning. Further opportunities to explore and express ideas within a range of three-dimensional media, especially in the Construction strand, would further enhance provision across the school.

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

The pupils’ learning experiences are very good. The school and the classroom learning environments support and celebrate pupils’ learning in Visual Arts with a dedicated art room and bright displays of a variety of pupils’ work. All pupils engage purposefully in collaborative learning and in independent learning in very well integrated activities. A wide range of resources, including information and communications technology (ICT), is used effectively. Pupil interest and attention is captured through the use of pictures, photographs and interactive presentations.

All pupils have opportunities to explore and experiment with different materials, tools and media. The pupils are introduced to the work of famous artists and have ample opportunity to discuss and study their designs and paintings. A variety of starting points and stimuli are used for art activities, including working from pupils’ curiosity and imagination and exposure to the work of artists and crafts people. Further emphasis on art elements such as line, shape, colour and texture would enhance pupil provision with an emphasis on the process as well as the product. Pupils could explore and imagine, design and build through the incorporation of the Construction strand and other strands in Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework in the infant classroom.

The overall quality of teachers’ practice is very good. Teachers use curriculum-appropriate teaching and learning methodologies, including curriculum exemplars. In examples of best practice noted, teachers referenced prior learning experiences, emphasised discrete Visual Art terminology and highlighted key design elements when looking at the work of other artists. Structured talk and discussion in responding to Visual Arts experiences is featured throughout the school. Pupils have opportunities to engage in appropriate learning activities outside the classroom through visits to local galleries and through participation in a variety of competitions.

The overall quality of assessment is good. Teacher observation, pupil discussion and reflection and two stars and a wish are the main approaches used. The use of a pupil self-assessment rubric is very good practice. Pupil portfolios could be introduced in all classrooms to retain records of pupils’ progress in Visual Arts. These could be further developed and used to identify current learning and to facilitate the systematic evaluation of the pupils’ understanding and application of the key concepts and skills in the Visual Arts in order to plan future learning activities. This work would be enhanced if approaches to assessment were included in teachers’ short-term planning.

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

The quality of school planning, including SSE, is very good. The whole-school plan for Visual Arts facilitates effective practice for teaching and learning, informing and reflecting the practice in the school. Teachers’ individual preparation and their work in classrooms is underpinned by reference to the curriculum and provides adequately for the teaching of the key concepts and skills of the subject. Literacy and numeracy skills that are necessary to develop the pupils’ learning in the subject are highlighted in lessons.
A broad and balanced Visual Arts programme is provided throughout the year, in art making and in looking at and responding to the visual environment and to the work of artists. The overall attainment of the pupils is at a high standard in accordance with the learning outcomes of the Primary School Curriculum (1999).
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 of Management is delighted that the high quality of teaching and learning in Visual Arts throughout the school has been recognised and affirmed.

We welcome the Inspectors advice for further development which will ensure that the overall attainment of the pupils continues to be of a high standard.

Recommendations:
We will share existing expertise in the school to further development in Visual Arts and to better support AFL approaches and portfolios.
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 the school’s provision of each area.

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<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<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 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>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 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>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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