

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Physical Education

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Boher N S
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Boher Streamstown Co Westmeath
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	17236A

Date of Evaluation: 04-04-2017



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 Physical Education 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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

Curriculum Evaluation

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Date of inspection	04-04-2017
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal and teacher• Review of relevant documents• Pupil focus-group interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal and teacher

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Boher National School is a two-teacher school located approximately nine kilometres from the village of Horseleap, County Westmeath. It caters for pupils from junior infants to sixth class, and at the time of the evaluation there were thirty-one pupils enrolled.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning in Physical Education (PE) is good and the overall attainment of the pupils is of a high standard.
- While pupils enjoy their learning experiences and engage positively during the lessons, there is scope to differentiate the learning activities provided to ensure adequate levels of challenge for the range of pupils in each multi-grade class setting.
- Pupils and teachers demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the importance of physical education activities and this is reflected in the school environment.
- While planning for PE creates a framework that reflects the breadth and balance of the curriculum, planning for assessment and differentiation needs further development.
- Assessment practices are satisfactory but need further development so as to target the differentiated learning needs of the pupils effectively.
- Pupils are gaining competence in the games and athletics strands of the PE curriculum; further opportunities to teach the remaining strands of the curriculum exist.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that all strands of the PE curriculum be taught consistently to provide further opportunities for pupils to widen their skills base.
- Assessment strategies and assessment criteria should reflect the targeted learning needs of pupils and the data gathered should be used to inform the provision of differentiated learning activities.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING IN SUBJECT

The overall quality of pupils' learning in PE is good. Engagement levels in the lessons observed were high. Pupils demonstrate an ability to reflect on various aspects of their learning during lessons.

This is supported through the regular sharing of teacher observations of pupils' performance and the facilitation of pupil self-reflection on skills' development during and after activities. It is evident that pupils enjoy working in groups and are supportive of each other as they cooperate in the activities provided. Pupils enjoy their learning in the subject and are motivated to learn. While progression in learning outcomes from class to class is evident, differentiation of learning tasks in both multi-grade settings is advised to ensure appropriate challenge for all pupils as they develop their skills. Learning outcomes in the games and athletics strands of the curriculum are particularly good. The school should now ensure that pupils' learning is progressed systematically across all strands of the PE curriculum. It was clear from engagement during the focus-group interview that pupils understand and appreciate the role of physical activity in maintaining good health. The school supports this through the provision and use of year-round indoor and outdoor play and sport facilities.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS' LEARNING IN SUBJECT: LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS' PRACTICE

The positive attitude of the teachers and their enthusiastic teaching of the subject underpins the school's provision of high quality learning experiences. During the lessons observed, effective and well-organised learning activities were utilised to ensure high levels of pupil participation. Nevertheless, in the context of the multi-grade setting of each classroom, there is scope to further enhance the learning activities provided to ensure adequate levels of challenge for the range of pupils in each class setting. Evidence from observation of pupil-teacher interactions indicates an integrated learning approach with other areas of the curriculum, particularly Mathematics, with aspects of the strands of number, shape and space, and measures actively explored during the lessons. Teachers ensure that lesson content articulated in short-term planning is effectively taught. The skills targeted in the learning objectives are, overall, satisfactorily supported in the course of the lessons. Pupils are offered a range of co-curriculum and extra-curriculum physical activities. Parents actively engage with the school in providing positive support for the range of extra-curriculum activities provided.

The quality of assessment in PE is satisfactory. While there is evidence of emerging good practice in recording pupils' achievement by means of checklists, this form of assessment should be more objectives-based and closely linked to the further development of pupils' skills. The data gathered should serve both to enable the teachers to articulate more clearly their comprehensive knowledge of pupils' abilities and to inform a differentiated approach to their planning and teaching. The resources necessary to support the implementation of the curriculum are in place and are very well managed by the school.

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

A whole-school plan for PE is in place and provides useful support for teachers' short-term planning. The whole-school plan covers the breadth and balance of the curriculum adequately. PE has been identified by the school as an area of priority for school self-evaluation and review. The newly reviewed whole-school plan should ensure clear articulation of the school's approaches to the assessment of PE including further development of checklists in relation to pupil learning outcomes. In addition, the plan should detail how the school caters for the differentiated learning needs of pupils in each multi-grade class. Agreed strategies for the further development of provision across the dance, gymnastics, and outdoor and adventure strands of the curriculum should be incorporated in the plan.

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.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	Very good 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.	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
Good	Good 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 <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	Satisfactory 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.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	Fair 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.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils’ learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	Weak 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.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;