### Curriculum Evaluation

#### Geography

**REPORT**

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<tr>
<th>Aímn na scoile / School name</th>
<th>S N Iomair Naofa</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Seoladh na scoile / School address</strong></td>
<td>Brackloon Cill Tulcha</td>
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<td>Beal Atha An Riogh</td>
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<td>Co Na Gaillimhe</td>
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<td><strong>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</strong></td>
<td>17529P</td>
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**Date of Evaluation: 08-06-2017**
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 Geography 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.
INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Date of inspection  08-06-2017

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
- Feedback to principal and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT
S N Iomair Naofa is a rural two-teacher school operating under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Clonfert. At the time of the evaluation there were forty pupils on roll and pupils are taught in two multi-grade settings.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
- The overall quality of pupils’ learning in Geography is satisfactory; while pupils at some class levels enjoy their learning and are appropriately challenged, the emphasis at other class levels on the content of textbooks, rather than using and applying geographic skills, impacts negatively on pupils’ learning.
- The overall quality and range of learning experiences provided for pupils is fair.
- The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and all teachers have the requisite subject knowledge. However, while significant strengths were observed in teaching at some class levels, elsewhere there was considerable scope for development in the selection and use of teaching approaches and resources.
- The effectiveness of whole-school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils’ learning, is fair; there is inconsistency across the school in the breadth and level of challenge in the programme taught.
- While short-term planning at some class levels facilitates purposeful learning, action is required at whole-school level to improve individual teacher planning, assessment and recording of pupil progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- The whole-school plan for Geography should be revised to include a cyclical programme to cater for teaching and learning in the multi-grade setting.
- Teacher planning and practice should ensure there is continuity and progression both in the content taught and the range of skills developed as pupils move from class level to class level and in accordance with the objectives and skills of the Primary School Curriculum.
- Planning for the teaching of specific literacy and numeracy skills necessary to develop pupils’ learning in Geography should be extended to all class levels.
- A comprehensive supply of appropriate materials should be made available to support teaching and learning across all strands of the curriculum, and collaborative learning activities
should be provided both inside and outside the classroom to enable pupils at all class levels
develop an understanding of the world through direct experience and activity.

- Accurate and clear records of progress should be maintained of pupils' geographic knowledge and skills; constructive oral and written feedback should be provided and pupils should be enabled to monitor their own progress through self-assessment and peer-assessment.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING

The overall quality of pupils’ learning is satisfactory. While some pupils have good knowledge of the content taught, overall pupil attainment in accordance with the objectives and skills of the Primary School Curriculum in Geography is fair. Greater progression is required in pupils’ learning outcomes as they move from class level to class level. It is recommended that greater use be made of field trips, outside speakers, and collaborative group work to enhance pupil motivation, particularly at senior class level. Greater use should also be made of collaborative research, maps, globes, and photographs of various environments.

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

The overall quality of teachers’ practice is satisfactory and action is required to improve the learning experiences provided for pupils. The structure, content and pace of lessons taught ranged from fair to very good. Very good preparation for teaching was observed at some class levels with lesson structure and content being pitched appropriately for pupils in the multi-grade setting within a developmental programme, and long-term and short-term planning was closely aligned to the structure and content of the geography curriculum. This very good practice should now be replicated throughout the school so that the shortcomings identified in the selection and use of teaching approaches, in the breadth and level of challenge in the programme taught, and in the use of resources to support teaching and learning, are addressed. The quality of pupils’ learning experiences should be enhanced through the provision of opportunities to engage in appropriate learning activities outside the classroom. Pupils should be enabled to report on, present, and explain the process and outcome of their learning and should demonstrate high levels of motivation to learn.

The quality of assessment is fair and the range of assessment approaches in use is limited, in the main, to teacher observation, oral questioning, and occasional written tests. While copybooks and worksheets are used to record pupil work, the standard of written work presented by many pupils is poor. Data on the quality of pupils’ learning is not routinely gathered. Teachers should plan for assessing pupils’ progress using both assessment of learning and assessment for learning. Geographic skills as well as content knowledge should also be assessed and constructive oral and written feedback should be provided so pupils are enabled to assess their own learning through self-assessment and peer-assessment. Furthermore, accurate and clear records of progress should be maintained and shared, as appropriate.

The range of resources used in lessons observed ranged from fair to good. It is recommended that a comprehensive supply of appropriate materials be made available as a matter of priority to support teaching and learning across all strands of the curriculum at all class levels.
3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS’ LEARNING

The quality of whole-school planning for Geography is fair. While there is a school plan in place, it is generic in nature, it is not linked sufficiently to the local area, and it does not cater for continuity and progression across all strands and class levels. A comprehensive, whole-school plan should be in place to guide individual teacher practice, to ensure there is continuity and progression both in the content taught and the range of skills developed, and to address the specific needs of pupils in the multi-grade setting.
Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

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

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

We have begun to act on the recommendations.

We have bought and received 20 laptops for the children in order to improve the quality of their learning.

We are currently buying geography equipment in order to develop the scientific approach.

We are revising our school plan and school planning in order to make our plans more specific to class levels and our school.

We will be looking to invite in a guest speaker to inform the children about our school environment.
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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<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</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 <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 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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