Curriculum Evaluation

History

REPORT

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<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Scoil Naomh Proinnseas</th>
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| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Magherabeg  
                                                Manorcunningham  
                                                Letterkenny  
                                                County Donegal |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number   | 17729A                 |

Date of inspection: 16-04-2018
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(s) 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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

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: 16-04-2018

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

Scoil Naomh Proinseas is a rural, co-educational school under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Raphoe. The school participates in the Delivering of Equality of Opportunities in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. There are 130 pupils enrolled across five classrooms.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
- The quality of learning in History is very good with pupils demonstrating a very good knowledge and understanding of historical concepts.
- The learning experiences provided for pupils are very good with History being integrated very effectively across other subjects in all classrooms.
- The quality of teaching is very good overall in the subject and teachers employ a number of very successful teaching methodologies.
- The quality of assessment is good; there is scope to review current whole-school assessment procedures including the provision of more consistent opportunities for pupil self-assessment during lessons.
- Overall, the quality of whole-school planning, SSE and individual classroom planning is good; there is too much variance in how individual teachers’ plan for the development of vocabulary specific to History.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- The skills acquired by pupils, including pupil self-assessment, should be monitored from class to class to better enable whole-school tracking of learning across the subject.
- A whole-school approach to planning for language development relevant to the subject should be agreed and used to guide teachers’ individual planning so as to provide for optimum continuity and progression for all pupils.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
The quality of pupils’ learning in History is very good. They enjoy their learning and are highly motivated to engage in highly appropriate and contextualised learning activities. In the lessons observed, the pupils demonstrated a very good knowledge and understanding of the concepts time and chronology, ancient societies and change and continuity. They demonstrated a very good understanding of the history of the school and were confident in their ability to work as historians. Pupils in the senior rooms have researched, interpreted and organised historical information collaboratively, based on topics taught in the strands of eras of change, conflict and politics and early
people and ancient societies. Local history is developed very well through exploration of local sites of historical significance, and interaction with the school community and the local historical society. In a focus group interview, pupils reported that they enjoy their lessons and learning. They were of the view that they learn best through the use of visual resources and activity-based learning. They enjoy regular history trips, project-work, investigations and linking their learning with other subjects. They spoke with pride about having their work published in a local community-based initiative focusing on the history of the local area.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE
The quality of learning experiences provided for pupils in History is very good. Classroom displays promote and support learning very well. The school entrance area is used very effectively to promote an awareness of topics from the strands of change and continuity and local studies. History is integrated very effectively across other subjects in all classrooms. Pupils have opportunity to use information and communications technology (ICT) during project-work and learning activities.

The quality of teaching is very good overall. In the lessons observed, teachers demonstrated a flexible use of appropriate teaching approaches and the lessons were structured and paced very well. They made use of good-quality ICT resources during lessons. Very effective linkage to previous learning was evident and new learning intentions and success criteria were shared with pupils. Teachers facilitated highly engaging and appropriately challenging discussion between pupils. They used very good questioning strategies to elicit and extend good-quality pupil responses.

The quality of assessment is good. Teachers use a range of formative and summative assessment procedures. Pupils maintain good-quality portfolios of work, of which they are proud; the use of port-folio could be further enhanced by including an improvement focus to better reflect self-assessment principles. Individual teachers monitor progression of skills regularly in each classroom; it would be of benefit to develop a whole-school approach to this in order to record pupil progress from class to class.

The overall quality of planning for the subject is good. The whole-school plan provides teachers with appropriate guidance in the programme to be taught; an audit of local areas of historical significance and local artefacts would enhance this plan further. Teachers plan for all the strands of the history curriculum appropriately. Some teachers provide for the development of subject-specific vocabulary specific very well in their planning; this very good practice should be developed to a whole-school level so as to provide for optimum continuity and progression in pupils’ learning.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS’ LEARNING
The quality of school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE), is good overall. The principal fosters a culture of collaboration and improvement. A greater emphasis on planning for oral language development in the subject would further support current literacy targets in the DEIS plan.

Teachers, in effective collaboration, arrange experiences for pupils that enhance their learning such as field trips with historical experts as well as museum and theatre visits.
Appendix

School response to the report

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

The board of management of Scoil Phroinnseas Naofa welcomes the many positive findings contained in this evaluation report which both affirms and commends the teaching and learning of History in the school.

We are pleased that the high quality of teaching and learning has been recognised and that the commendation attributed to the children for their participation in the local Historical Society’s activities and recent publication has been acknowledged.

We welcome the recognition given to the various methodologies utilised by the teachers to enhance the teaching and learning of History, through collaborative tasks, use of ICT, project work, classroom and public area displays and effective relevant field trips which contribute significantly to enabling the children to work effectively as historians.

The board of management recognises that the report is a true reflection of the high quality of teaching and learning in our school.

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 whole staff intends to implement the recommendations of the report.

Language Development
A whole-school approach to planning for language development specific to the subject will be discussed and developed to a whole-school level which in turn will further support current literacy targets in the DEIS plan.

Assessment
The use of portfolios by the pupils will be further enhanced by including an improvement focus to better reflect the principles of pupil self-assessment in History and across all subject areas.

The good practice by teachers of monitoring children’s progress will be further enriched by utilising a whole-school approach of class to class progression in their checklists and record keeping.

Local History
An audit of local historical sites and artefacts will be further developed in conjunction with the Local Raymochy Historical Society.
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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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>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 <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>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 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>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.</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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<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>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.</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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<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;</td>
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