An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Music

REPORT

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<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Glebe National School</th>
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| Seoladh na scoile / School address | The Glebe
Donegal Town
County Donegal |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number | 17831O |

Date of Evaluation: 14-03-2017
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 Music 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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.
SCHOOL CONTEXT
Glebe National School is under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Bishop of Derry and Raphoe. At the time of the evaluation, there were four mainstream class teachers on the staff each teaching two mainstream classes and two support teachers, one of whom was based in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils’ learning outcomes and learning experiences in Music is very good.
- There is very good progression and development of each strand of the music curriculum.
- The overall quality of teaching observed was of a very high standard.
- The classrooms and school environment promote and celebrate music.
- Teachers monitor pupils’ understanding and application of musical concepts at regular intervals, through observation and questioning; there is room to develop assessment in Music across the school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Assessment practices should be developed to facilitate the systematic monitoring and recording of pupils’ understanding and application of musical concepts and skills at regular intervals in order to inform future music learning experiences for the pupils.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING IN MUSIC

The quality of pupils’ learning outcomes is very good. Pupils are achieving at very good levels in the performing strand and respond to music in a variety of ways through discussion, drama, art and movement. They receive regular performance opportunities, which are very well integrated with other curriculum areas, and all pupils participate in a school musical production every second year. They are very confident in their musical ability.

Pupils participate actively in lessons and can sing a wide range of nursery rhymes and songs across a variety of genres. Pupils read, perform and compose rhythmic patterns at each class level and the
tasks completed in the *composing* and *performing* strands, as observed during this evaluation, were of a very high quality. In one of the lessons observed, pupils very ably discussed, compared and contrasted two pieces of Irish traditional music. They have created their own percussion instruments and are provided with regular opportunities to play and sing along to music using a variety of percussive and melodic instruments. Pupils in the middle and senior classes can identify families of instruments in music from different genres and they can read and sing intervals of the pentatonic scale and use associated hand signals. Pupils’ use of graphic symbols and standard notation, as was observed in the middle classes, could be extended to all classes.

Overall, there is evidence of good mastery of musical concepts throughout the school. In the focus group interview with a selection of pupils, they expressed great satisfaction about their learning in the subject.

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

Pupils’ learning experiences in Music are very good and they were observed to enjoy their learning. The classrooms and school environment promote and celebrate music. Pupils are afforded many opportunities to work individually and collaboratively during music lessons. They are exposed to a wide variety of co-curricular and extra-curricular experiences, including annual trips to the theatre, and have access to a wide range of musical instruments and resources including samba drumming equipment. The engagement of the school in whole-school musical productions, outdoor musical and singing performances in the local community, and local church services serve to enhance pupils’ learning.

The overall quality of teaching in Music is very good. The lessons observed during the evaluation were very effective. They were structured carefully to extend the pupils’ learning, to allow them to participate in discussion and to demonstrate their mastery of new musical skills. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very effectively to support learning; pupils record their performances and share their musical compositions with other classes. Pupils keep records of and reflections on tasks undertaken in Music in their self-assessment learning folders. While teachers monitor pupils’ understanding and application of musical concepts at regular intervals, through observation and questioning, there is room to develop assessment in the subject across the school. The maintenance of records of learning in specific strands and strand units, and in respect of pupils’ understanding of concepts, should be more consistent from class to class; this would help to guide whole-school progress in learning and further inform future planning and teaching.

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

School planning for Music is very effective. The whole-school plan covers all three strands: *listening and responding*, *performing* and *composing*. It also guides teachers’ individual practice in the classrooms and provides for the teaching of musical concepts. Detail with regard to the teaching of musical literacy, to include graphic notation, should be included in the whole-school plan. As part of their own school self-review, teachers have prioritised the teaching of a musical instrument as an area for development; this would be a worthwhile initiative. The existing good practice in assessment of Music should be discussed and shared across the school. Arising from this, consistent approaches to assessment should be developed to inform planning and to facilitate the systematic monitoring and recording of pupils’ understanding and application of musical concepts and skills at each class level.
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 Glebe National School finds the report very positive and affirming of the standard of the teaching and learning of Music in the school. The board is pleased that so many of the school’s strengths were highlighted and we appreciate the guidance on how we can further develop the high standard of Music provision in the 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

Assessment practices will be developed in order to inform planning and to facilitate systematic monitoring and recording of pupils understanding and application of musical concepts and skills at each class level.
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>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<td><strong>Very Good</strong></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 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>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><strong>Satisfactory</strong></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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<td><strong>Fair</strong></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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<td><strong>Weak</strong></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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