An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation  
Physical Education

REPORT

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<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Scoil Náisiúnta Aindreí Naofa</th>
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| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Curraha  
                                      Ashbourne  
                                      County Meath |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number   | 17857J                         |

Date of Evaluation: 01-12-2016
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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.
INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

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<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>01-12-2016</th>
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| Inspection activities undertaken | • Observation of teaching and learning  
  • Examination of pupils’ work  
  • Interaction with pupils  
  • Feedback to principal and teachers |

• Discussion with principal and teachers  
• Review of relevant documents  
• Pupil focus-group interview

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Náisiúnta Aindreis is a vertical co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Meath. Currently, there are four mainstream classrooms in the school, catering for 114 pupils from infants to sixth classes.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

• Pupils enjoy their lessons in Physical Education (PE) and their learning and achievements in athletics and games are very good.
• The school environment facilitates physical activity and pupils’ achievements are celebrated at school assemblies and on the school website.
• Teaching observed in PE was of a very high standard.
• A whole-school approach to the recording of pupils’ progress in PE is implemented; there is scope to develop pupil self-assessment further.
• Whole-school planning guides teaching and learning effectively in PE.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• Assessment for learning approaches, including pupil peer and self-assessment, should be developed and pupils enabled to identify specific personal goals in PE.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The overall quality of pupils’ learning in PE is commendable. Very good learning was evident in the Athletics and Games strands of the curriculum. There is scope to further develop pupils’ learning and achievements in the gymnastics strand of the PE curriculum. Teachers have established an action plan in this regard. Pupils, both in the focus-group interview and during interactions in their classrooms, reported that they enjoy their learning and that lessons are fun. They have a strong sense of making progress and are motivated through having attainable yet challenging learning activities. Pupils demonstrate very high levels of competency in games skills and have a good understanding of the importance of fitness, healthy eating and healthy lifestyle. They have a good knowledge of famous
local, national and international sports people; occasionally, some visit the school to discuss their sporting achievements with the pupils.

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

The overall quality of support for pupils’ learning is very good. Teachers provide very good learning experiences in PE for the pupils. The school environment facilitates physical activity and pupils’ achievements are celebrated regularly at school assemblies and on the school website. Pupils are provided with a very broad range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. They are enabled to develop their understanding of team spirit and fair play very well through participation in sporting activities. A balanced programme of competitive, non-competitive, contact and non-contact sports is provided for all pupils. Commendably, school teams are entered in intra- and inter-school activities including equestrian, Gaelic football, camogie, hurling, soccer, cross-country athletics and school-hall athletics competitions. Where appropriate, PE is integrated effectively through the work in other subject areas. Regularly, literacy and numeracy skills are developed during physical activities. During yard play, pupils are provided with equipment to encourage physical activity. The school has a good variety of resources to support most aspects of teaching and learning in PE; there is scope to provide further resources for gymnastics and athletics.

Observed teaching in Physical Education was of a very high standard. Teachers prepared well-structured, active and challenging lessons. They employed a wide range of appropriate teaching methodologies and lessons were clearly focussed on developing skills, self-esteem and confidence. Teachers effectively supported pupils who have special educational needs or difficulty with movement. There was an appropriate focus on pupil safety during lessons. An examination of teachers’ timetables indicates that the time allocated to PE is in line with curricular guidelines.

The quality of assessment is good. A whole-school approach to the recording of pupils’ progress in PE is implemented in all classrooms. Teachers use a variety of strategies to assess pupils’ learning, including observations and checklists based on curriculum objectives. While pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own learning and skill development in PE, there is scope to develop pupil peer and self-assessment further and to enable pupils to set specific goals for themselves.

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

The quality of the whole-school planning for PE is very good. A contextual, whole-school plan guides the progress of pupils learning effectively. During the last school year, the staff identified areas for development in the provision of PE in the school. The school plan was reviewed and content delineated for each class group to ensure a programme of learning across all the strands of the curriculum; the programme is broad and balanced and well suited to the context of the school. A whole-school approach to assessment of learning was introduced for PE and is being implemented to good effect. Appropriately, all teachers now use the updated school plan to inform their classroom planning. All teachers prepare a plan of work for PE and, in most instances, these plans outline clear and measurable learning objectives. Some planning requires clarity in respect of objectives and monthly progress records could beneficially include teacher reflections on teaching and learning. The
school has identified the need to purchase further resources for gymnastics and to organise professional development for teachers in the gymnastics strand of the curriculum.
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 St Andrew’s N.S. Curragha believes this to be a very fair and thorough report on the delivery of the Physical Education curriculum throughout the school. The Board is pleased with the findings of the evaluation and believes it is an accurate reflection of the professionalism, hard work and dedication of the staff.

This evaluation has been a positive exercise for the staff, illustrating the commitment of the staff to the achievement of excellence in both curricular and extra-curricular areas. As it is the overall goal of the staff that all children in St Andrew’s N.S. would achieve their potential in all areas of the curriculum, this evaluation will guide future planning in the subject.

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 staff of the school have already begun to focus their attention on the areas identified for improvement. Plans are in place for the purchase of additional gymnastics equipment to complement the equipment currently in the school. The staff have also reviewed the gymnastics lessons currently in place and have modified them to maximise use of the new gymnastics resources.

Also, as recommended in the evaluation, templates for self-assessment have been devised and will be implemented to enable pupils to identify specific personal goals in the area of P.E. These templates will also serve as a record for the pupils of their own learning and skill development within the subject.

As identified in the report, pupils in the school demonstrated a good understanding of the importance of fitness, healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle. The staff aim to build upon this knowledge to further promote a culture of healthy eating throughout the school.
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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<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td><em>Very good</em> 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 <em>outstanding</em> 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><em>Good</em> 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><em>Satisfactory</em> applies where the quality of provision is adequate. Overall, learners have access to a basic level of provision. 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><em>Fair</em> 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><em>Weak</em> 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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