An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation

History

REPORT

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Coole N.S,</th>
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<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Garradice, Kilcock, Co. Kildare.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>18051Q</td>
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Date of inspection: 26-04-2018
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 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.

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.

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.
**SCHOOL CONTEXT**
Coole NS is a rural school located in the parish of Summerhill and is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Meath. The school has five mainstream class teachers and also has the services of a full-time support teacher and a shared support teacher. At the time of the evaluation, there were 139 pupils enrolled.

**SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**FINDINGS**
- The quality of pupils’ learning in History is good
- Pupils’ knowledge of their local History requires further development
- The quality of teaching in History is good with some very good teaching observed
- Timelines are displayed in classrooms, but they do not adequately support the development of the pupils’ sense of time and chronology
- The quality of assessment in History is good

**RECOMMENDATIONS**
- There is a need to develop the pupils’ knowledge of the history of the local area and to address the Local Studies strand much more thoroughly in the middle and senior classes
- Timelines in all classrooms could be expanded upon to develop the pupils’ sense of time and chronology in an age-appropriate manner
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
The quality of the pupils’ learning in History is good. Pupils are motivated to learn. They demonstrate a positive approach to their classwork, and in the focus group, they reported that they enjoy their learning in History, particularly when the subject is integrated with other curricular areas.

In all classes, pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of many areas of the History curriculum and of historically significant events, people and concepts. In the infant and junior classes they can speak knowledgeably about themselves and their family histories. In the middle and senior classes the pupils have studied a range of topics, and demonstrate good recall of their learning. They are enabled to use and interpret evidence and to empathise with historical characters. They record their learning in History using a variety of techniques including project work, the construction of models and the creation of PowerPoint presentations as well as through drama and writing. Their collaborative working skills are suitably developed during these activities and they have opportunities to share their learning with other classes and to display their work on the corridors and in the school hall.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE
The quality of support for pupils’ learning in History is good. They understand and can explain the purpose of the tasks they are engaged in and are enabled to work both independently and collaboratively in a purposeful manner. The school environment promotes an appreciation of the past, and there are some displays of artefacts in the entrance hall.

Story is used in all classes to foster historical development and to develop the skill of time and chronology. When choosing stories, particularly in the infant and junior classes, teachers should try to include some which are more directly linked to the content of the History curriculum.

Opportunities are provided for pupils to visit places of historical interest, and pupils report that they enjoy these trips. The school recently celebrated its sixtieth anniversary and pupils demonstrate a good awareness of the history of the school and the old school building. However, there is a need to develop their knowledge of the history of the local area and to address the Local Studies strand much more thoroughly in the middle and senior classes.

The quality of teaching is good, with some very good teaching observed. Teachers’ planning is informed by the inclusion of curriculum objectives, and they use curriculum-appropriate teaching and learning methodologies. A variety of organisational strategies is used, including individual and paired tasks, cooperative group work and whole-class teaching. Timelines were observed in classrooms, although in all cases, they do not adequately support the development of the pupils’ sense of time and chronology. These could be expanded upon in an age-appropriate manner.

The quality of assessment in History is good. A range of strategies, both formal and informal, is used to assess pupils’ progress. Pupils’ efforts are well monitored and supported throughout the lessons. Support is available in-class for pupils with additional learning needs.
3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS’ LEARNING

The quality of whole-school planning for History shows some areas for improvement. Given the fact that the school’s population is a growing one, and that the reality of split classes is an ever-present one, the whole-school plan needs to be such that it can ensure that there are no gaps and that there is no repetition in the pupils’ learning. This poses an on-going challenge for the school and needs to be addressed in the whole-school plan as its pupil population continues to evolve. The inclusion in the whole-school plan of a specific programme of local studies for pupils in the middle and senior classes is also recommended.
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 in each area.

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<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 <strong>very good</strong> 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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Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management
Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of Coole NS welcomes the findings of this positive and constructive report which recognises and affirms the standard of teaching and learning of history in our school. We are pleased that the report commends the quality of teachers’ practice, the variety of techniques and organisational strategies used by teachers to support pupils’ learning and the range of assessment strategies used in our classrooms. Our school environment promotes an appreciation of the past and our pupils are motivated to learn, and we are pleased that this is reflected in the report from the Inspectorate. The Board welcomes the acknowledgement of the supportive learning environment in the school where collaborative working skills are suitably developed, where opportunities are provided to visit places of historical interest and where children are encouraged to share their learning.

Area 2  Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

The Board of Management accepts the recommendations of this report, some of which have been addressed. Timelines will be expanded on and developed in all classrooms. The school plan for history will be reviewed with the inclusion of a specific programme of local studies for middle and senior classes. We will also endeavour to demonstrate in our school plan how repetition and gaps in pupils’ learning will be avoided as we deal with the ever-present reality of split classes. A request has been made to the Inspectorate for school support in this area as part of the School Self Evaluation process.