Curriculum Evaluation
Drama

REPORT

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<tr>
<th>Aínm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Scoil Náisiúnta Mhuire Gan Smál</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Ardara</td>
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<td></td>
<td>County Donegal</td>
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<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>18131O</td>
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Date of Evaluation: 07-12-2016
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 Drama 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>07-12-2016</th>
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<tr>
<td>Inspection activities undertaken</td>
<td>Observation of teaching and learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion with principal and teacher</td>
<td>Examination of pupils’ work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review of relevant documents</td>
<td>Interaction with pupils</td>
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<td>Pupil focus-group interview</td>
<td>Feedback to principal and teacher</td>
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SCHOOL CONTEXT
Scoil Náisiúnta Mhuire Gan Smál is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Raphoe. Currently, there are fifty pupils, from infants to sixth class, enrolled in two mainstream classrooms.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
- Pupils’ learning, particularly in the strand units of exploring and making drama and co-operating and communicating in making drama, is very good.
- The school and classroom environments promote very effectively an appreciation of Drama.
- Teaching in the subject is of a very high standard.
- The whole-school plan is contextualised very well for the two multi-grade classes.
- A variety of effective assessment of learning and assessment for learning strategies is used to assess pupils’ work; however, records of pupil progress based on the learning objectives are not maintained.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- It is recommended that records of pupils’ progress based on learning objectives are maintained to plan for pupils’ learning in Drama.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING IN DRAMA

The quality of learning in Drama is very good overall. The pupil’s learning is particularly successful in the strand units exploring and making drama and co-operating and communicating in making drama. They enjoy their learning and are motivated to co-operate, communicate and perform with others in role in order to shape a drama. During the evaluation, pupils from both classrooms participated in a performance of two Christmas plays on stage in a local sports hall. The pupils were enabled to enter into role and character very effectively and used the stage and appropriate resources, including costumes, to deepen the drama context and to add to its reality. They demonstrated a good understanding of the function of tension in drama. The senior pupils’ presentation and communication skills are being developed consistently and pupils explore, reflect upon and discuss through drama
useful skills for decision-making strategies. Pupils in the junior classes are enabled to engage in pretend, socio-dramatic, make-believe, role and fantasy play. During the evaluation, all pupils were actively involved in the learning experiences. In the group discussion with the senior pupils, they indicated that learning in Drama is interesting and enjoyable. In particular, they liked the group-work opportunities, the confidence-building aspect of drama and the newness of the themes explored through the drama lessons.

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

Support for the subject is very effective. A stimulating and well-resourced learning environment is provided. The teachers’ timetables reflect the minimum timeframe for the weekly implementation of Drama. They give careful consideration to the prerequisites for learning in Drama. They prepare purposeful and challenging learning activities for each strand of the drama curriculum to give pupils as rich an experience as possible, consistent with their stages of development. Provision is made, through additional visual resources, to support pupils with particular language needs. Information and communication technology was observed to be used very effectively to support learning in Drama. Other curricular areas are integrated very well with the learning activities. The parental support observed during the evaluation—such as assisting with sound, microphones and music for the performances—was commendable. Literacy, including subject-specific language, is very well taught in both classrooms.

The quality of assessment in Drama is good overall. A variety of assessment of learning and assessment for learning strategies is used to assess pupils’ work. However, teachers should record pupil progression based on learning objectives to better inform learning in Drama.

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

The quality of the whole-school plan for Drama is very good. It is contextualised very well to cater for the multi-grade classes in both settings. It informs and reflects the school’s practice very effectively, including teacher’s individual preparation and work in classrooms. It provides for the integration of Drama with other areas of the curriculum very successfully. There is very good progression and development in the programme taught.
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 and staff of Scoil Náisiúnta Mhuire Gan Smál welcome the findings of the CEM inspection report. The very high standard of teaching of drama and very good quality of learning which was observed reflects the school’s high level of commitment to the teaching of drama and contextualised planning for a multi-grade setting.

The board is very pleased with the affirmation that qualities such as the provision of challenging learning activities and well-resourced learning environment give the pupils as rich an experience as possible.

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 board of management and staff acknowledge and endorse the recommendations of the CEM inspection report to maintain records of the pupils’ progress in drama based on learning objectives. A ‘drama assessment profile’ for the pupils’ IEPs and assessment files is currently being devised and its implementation will have a positive impact on informing and assisting with long-term planning for the pupils’ learning in drama – both at whole-school level and for individual classroom planning.
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>Very good applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The 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>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. 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>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>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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*Published Feb 2017*