

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Science

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil Náisiúnta Buirgheas
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Nenagh County Tipperary
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	18164G

Date of inspection: 17-10-2019



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agus Scileanna**
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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 Science in the school.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated learning and teaching in Science 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 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.

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	17-10-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal and teachers• Review of relevant documents• Pupil focus-group interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Náisiúnta Buirgheas is a rural co-educational primary school, with three mainstream teachers and one special education teacher (SET). A second SET, based in another school, comes here on a part-time basis. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Killaloe and has an enrolment of sixty-eight pupils.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- Learning in Science is very good and pupils show great enthusiasm for the subject.
- Learner experiences in Science are very good, with scope to increase designing and making opportunities.
- Teaching is very good, with a variety of approaches and effective use of group work evident in all classes.
- Assessment practice is commendable; some adaptation of monthly progress records would be useful.
- School planning is very effective and informs teachers' individual planning appropriately.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school should ensure that all pupils have regular opportunities to engage in *Designing and making*.
- All teachers should use the same format for their monthly progress records with a view to making these records easier to interpret and share.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The overall quality of learning in Science is very good. During the evaluation, the pupils were very engaged, and highly motivated to learn and investigate. They have an active role in lessons and work effectively as members of a group. There is a successful whole-school approach to *Working scientifically*. During the inspection, pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the concept of a fair test. They were able to discuss the trails around the school, the biodiversity areas on the school grounds, and visitors and field trips relevant to their learning in Science.

The pupils have experience of using procedural writing in Science and readily make connections between learning in the subject and in other curricular areas. They share their learning with other classes regularly. Pupils also demonstrate an appreciation of how their learning in Science enables

them to make more informed responses to issues in their wider environment. The school should ensure that all pupils have regular opportunities to engage in *Designing and making*.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS' LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS' PRACTICE

The pupils enjoy learner experiences in Science that are of a very good standard. Group work is a feature of these experiences, which fosters the development of skills and attitudes that support collaboration. Digital learning technologies are used to enrich pupils' learning.

The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers' classroom plans reflect the breadth of the curriculum. They share the intended learner outcomes of lessons with pupils and various and suitable approaches are used to identify the pupils' existing ideas. Teachers differentiate lessons effectively to ensure full inclusion of pupils with different needs. Subject-specific language is taught very effectively and discussion is a key feature of all lessons. Teachers' collaborative practice has resulted in very effective development of the skills of *Working scientifically* from junior infants to sixth class. The school should now place a similar emphasis on the development of the skills of *Designing and making*.

Assessment practice is commendable. Assessment approaches include teacher observation, teacher reflection, teacher-designed tasks and portfolios of pupils' work. Going forward, the school should also explore the possibility of keeping digital portfolios. All teachers should use the same format for their monthly progress records, with a view to making these records easier to interpret and share.

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

School planning for Science is very effective. Science has been identified as an area of focus for school self-evaluation (SSE). The principal leads the SSE process very ably. She promotes and supports a culture of innovation. The teachers have reviewed teaching and learning in Science in the school and are actively collaborating on a school plan for the subject. School resources for learning are managed very effectively.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

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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, teaching staff and auxiliary staff of Burgess National School welcome and are very pleased with the CEM report from the DES. It is wonderful for all involved in our school to have our efforts to provide children with an inclusive and supportive learning environment affirmed. In light of the recommendation to provide children with more opportunity to engage in designing and making, teachers are providing a more focused approach to the designing and making element. Station teaching of Science for one day a term is also being rolled out with a view to providing more opportunity to engage in the process of designing and making.

Teachers' monthly reports will take on a more uniform format going forward making reading and sharing of same easier for all.

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.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	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.	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
Good	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 <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	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.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	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.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	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.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;