Curriculum Evaluation

History

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Scoil Naomh Ioseph</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Clinstown Jenkinstown Co Kilkenny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>18607O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date of inspection: 16-01-2019
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(s) evaluated learning and teaching in [Subject] 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.
Curriculum Evaluation

Date of inspection
16-01-2019

Inspection activities undertaken
- Discussion with principal and teachers
- Review of relevant documents
- Pupil focus-group interview
- Observation of teaching and learning
- Examination of pupils’ work
- Interaction with pupils
- Feedback to principal and teachers

CONTEXT
Scoil Naomh Ioseph, Clinstown is a rural, co-educational, vertical primary school with four mainstream classes and a class for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It is located in the Diocese of Ossory. There are currently 91 pupils attending the school, with the fourth mainstream teacher having been employed in September 2018.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
- Pupils’ learning in History is very good with pupils in all settings showing confidence and competence in the discussion of their learning.
- Pupils’ learning experiences in History are very good and they engage very meaningfully in high quality learning activities.
- The quality of teaching is of a very high standard with teachers creating positive classroom environments which support teaching and learning in History.
- Teachers employ a range of effective assessment strategies and record the skills development of pupils in some areas.
- The quality of whole-school planning in History is highly commendable with the school plan for History providing a broad and balanced programme of work.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- The recording of pupils’ skills development needs to be broadened to include the specific skills associated with each of the strands.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
Pupils’ learning in History is very good. In their interactions, both in the classrooms and during the pupil focus group discussion, pupils indicated that they enjoy learning History and that they find it interesting and fun. They report that they can apply their learning in History to learning in other curriculum areas. Pupils in the middle and senior classes are highly motivated and particularly enjoy working as historians in gathering evidence for project work and when researching their family trees. In the junior classes the interested and enthusiastic pupils enjoy bringing in artefacts from their own personal history and engaging with stories of people from the past. The pupils with ASD are encouraged and supported to develop their interests in History and suitable approaches are employed.
In all settings pupils are able to discuss their learning experiences in History with competence and confidence and they demonstrate appropriate understanding of historical knowledge and skills. They can also give a good account of the places of historical interest in the locality.

Pupils are afforded opportunities to engage actively in their learning and to participate in group and collaborative work. Learning environments are print rich and support an appreciation of History. Timelines are used very effectively in promoting pupils’ understanding of time and chronology.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE
The quality of the learning experiences provided for pupils is very good. Teachers employ a wide range of strategies to support pupils’ learning of historical topics and to reinforce their knowledge and skills. These include oral discussion, story, personal and family history, artefacts, pictures and photographs, drama and role-play which make the lessons very engaging. Pupils report very positively on grandparents’ day and the opportunity it provides to discuss school and life when their grandparents were children. History is successfully integrated with other curriculum areas, particularly English and Visual Arts. The literacy relevant to History is emphasised in all classrooms and the selection of appropriate historical novels for literacy is particularly noteworthy.

The quality of teaching is of a very high standard. All observed lessons were very well structured, paced and presented while teacher questioning was very clear and included both lower and higher-order questions. Effective linkage with previous learning was evident and new learning intentions were shared with the pupils. Each teacher creates a positive classroom climate that supports effective teaching and learning in History.

Teachers use a range of effective assessment strategies. These strategies include oral questioning, written tests and tasks, work samples, checklists, quizzes, projects and classroom observation. Pupils are also encouraged to evaluate their own learning. While there is an emphasis on recording skills development in some areas this needs to be broadened to include the specific skills associated with each of the strands to enable tracking of learning across the subject.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS’ LEARNING
The quality of whole-school planning in History is highly commendable. The plan is contextualised to the needs of the school and provides a broad and balanced programme of work. Teachers plan for all the strands in the history curriculum in a comprehensive manner. To ensure continuity and progression the Inclusion of success criteria for the different age groups in project work is advised,
Appendix

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. Joseph’s National School accepts and welcomes the very positive report of the recent Curriculum Evaluation undertaken in our school. We feel it reflects accurately the quality of learning in History in St. Joseph’s National School.

We are very pleased to note that the quality of pupils learning and learner experiences are very high with high quality learning activities provided to students.

We are also pleased to note that teachers’ practice and whole school collaborative planning are of a high quality and are effective in progressing pupils’ learning.

This report reflects the commitment of the teachers to teaching History in St. Joseph’s National 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.

We will continue to place an emphasis on the monitoring of skills development in History as pupils progress through the school and endeavour to broaden the specific skills associated with each strand.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<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 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>
</tr>
<tr>
<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 very good standard.</td>
<td>Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>