An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Science

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Scoil Naomh Eoin Báiste</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Kilbrin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kanturk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co Cork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>19342J</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date of inspection: 29-05-2019
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 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 checks 1 and 3 In relation to check 2, a Child Safeguarding Statement including risk assessment has been ratified by the board, however an annual review has not yet been completed.
Curriculum Evaluation

Date of inspection | 29-05-2019
---|---
Inspection activities undertaken
- Discussion with acting 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

SCHOOL CONTEXT
Scoll Naomh Eoin Baiste is a co-educational, mainstream school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cloyne. The school has a staff of four mainstream teachers catering for pupils from infants to sixth class. One part-time education support teacher, shared with another school, provides support for pupils with learning difficulties. At the time of the evaluation, 75 pupils were enrolled in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
- The quality of pupils’ learning in Science is very good overall; pupils display a strong appreciation for their locality and actively participate in its conservation and enhancement.
- The quality of support for pupil learning is very high and learners engage meaningfully in a range of valuable learning experiences and initiatives; more frequent opportunities for pupils to engage in designing and making activities would enhance their learning.
- Cross-curricular integration of Science with other subject areas is a key strength of school practice.
- The quality of teaching is high with teachers planning comprehensively for child-centred, active, lessons.
- Teachers use a variety of assessment methods to good and very good effect in profiling pupils’ attainment in Science; there is a need to consider how the range of pupils’ learning can be appropriately captured and monitored.
- The quality of school planning is good; individual teacher planning is of a high quality but the whole-school plan would benefit from review.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- There should be further engagement in designing and making tasks for pupils across the strands of the Science curriculum with opportunities to share, assess and review their designs.
- A systematic approach to the recording of pupil learning should be adopted in order to facilitate pupils in reflecting on their learning and teachers in monitoring pupil progress.
- The whole-school plan should be reviewed to ensure that there is a spiral approach to curriculum coverage and balance is achieved in the teaching of strands and skills.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING

The quality of pupils’ learning in Science is very good overall. Pupils enjoy their learning and engage enthusiastically in Science tasks. They are developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to their class level. Pupils have participated in a range of experiments and can capably recall the key learning from these activities. They have a very strong knowledge of the strands Living things and Environmental awareness and care. They competently describe complex concepts and terminology associated with these areas of learning. Across the school, pupils’ appreciation for their local area and their active involvement in its preservation and enhancement is highly commended. Their participation in nature walks in the junior classes has greatly influenced their appreciation of their locality. In a focus group conducted as part of the evaluation, pupils described the benefit and learning they acquire from visiting guest speakers. Some of the work pupils have completed is recorded in workbooks and copies. Further consideration should be given to exploring ways of recording their work so pupils can effectively reflect on, talk about and discuss their learning.

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

The quality of learner experiences is very high. Pupils are provided with a wide range of worthwhile, purposeful learning experiences. Teachers promote Science as an enjoyable and challenging subject. Pupils’ prior knowledge and ideas are actively sought and teachers regularly encourage them to reflect on and refine these ideas. Their learning is effectively integrated with other subjects and pupils enjoy opportunities to sing and recite songs and poems to support their learning in Science. In senior classes, bespoke study guides have been created to enable pupils to master lesson content. This practice assists pupils to develop valuable study skills that they can transfer to other subject areas. The school is commended for its meaningful engagement in the Green Schools programme. Pupils have a deep sense of their responsibilities as citizens in relation to environmental awareness and care. In classroom interactions, many pupils spoke proudly of how they personally contributed to attainment of the schools’ Green Flag.

Teaching is of a high standard. Teachers’ planning and preparation ensures provision of worthwhile learning tasks for pupils. In lessons observed, these tasks facilitated active, collaborative learning where pupils were provided with insightful formative feedback from teachers. The modelling of topic specific vocabulary and the use of high quality visuals to support pupil learning were a consistent feature of practice across the school. In examples of highly effective practice, teachers shared clear learning intentions with pupils and communicated high expectations of pupils’ participation. All teachers demonstrated very successful classroom management skills and pupils’ behaviour was excellent during the evaluation. Interactions with and between pupils were highly respectful. All teachers provide high quality planning documents. These give good detail on lesson content and learner outcomes. There is a need to ensure that use of text-books is more judicious as currently it is leading to an imbalance in curriculum coverage and limiting the development of the skills of designing and making.

Teachers use a variety of techniques to ensure learners’ interest is captured and acted upon. Of particular merit is the use of playful learning methodologies, drama and story in creating child-led learning experiences that provide captivating contexts for learning. Teachers successfully adapt their teaching to meet the needs of all learners. A strong emphasis exists across the school on ensuring pupils can connect the relevance of their learning in Science with real life.
Teachers utilise various assessment methods to monitor pupil attainment and progress. Comprehensive teacher-designed assessments along with skills’ checklists and samples of pupils’ work are effectively used to profile pupils’ attainment in Science. There is scope to share very good practice in assessment so that it becomes a consistent feature of practice across the school. While samples of pupils’ work are collected, there is a need to create more robust ways of collating pupils’ work. This will ensure pupils’ records of their learning in Science reflect the progression and range of their learning.

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

The quality of whole-school planning for Science is good. A detailed whole-school plan has been developed which gives an outline of the delivery of a broad Science programme. Teachers report that they use the plan to guide their practice at individual classroom level. The plan emphasizes the teaching of key concepts and skills as well as the development of positive dispositions towards learning in Science. The plan’s identification of themes facilitates the integration of scientific knowledge and skills across a range of topics. Scope exists to refine the whole-school plan so that it allows for a more balanced, spiral approach to the coverage of curriculum content. While it makes some reference to equipment available, there is a need to conduct a comprehensive audit to detail the resources available to support learning in each of the science strands.
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>
Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management
Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board fully accepts the report and is greatly satisfied with the school’s high performance and high standard achieved.

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 has conducted an annual review of the Child Safeguarding Statement at the most recent Board of Management meeting.