

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
History

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Our Lady's Girls' National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Ballinteer Avenue Ballinteer Dublin 16
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	19396J

Date of Evaluation: 25-05-2017



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 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; a response was not received from the board.

Curriculum Evaluation

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Date of inspection	25-05-2017
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

Our Lady's Girls' National School operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and caters for pupils from junior infants to sixth class. At the time of the evaluation there were 317 pupils enrolled.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- School leadership is praised for the high quality planning for History; the whole school plan informs the practice in the school and is clearly reflected in teachers' individual planning and in their work in classrooms.
- The quality of pupils' learning in History is very good; pupils demonstrate deep understanding of concepts in History, empathy with figures from the past and can discuss various topics in History with confidence and enthusiasm.
- There is high quality teaching in the school with some excellent practice observed.
- While there is some good assessment of pupils' learning in History there is scope to develop structures and procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' progress in History in a deeper and more meaningful way.
- There is excellent use of the environment to support learning in History both inside and outside the school and support for pupils' learning is very good.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should further develop assessment strategies for History that monitor the extent to which pupils have retained their learning in History and the extent to which they can utilise their historical skills independently.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The quality of pupils' learning in History is very good. Pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of concepts such as time and chronology and change and continuity. They were also able to talk confidently about topics previously covered in History including the history of their locality, myths and legends and eras of change and conflict. Pupils display empathy with figures of the past and demonstrate positive attitudes and enthusiasm towards History. In their

interactions both in the classroom and during the pupil focus group discussion, pupils reported very positively that they enjoy learning History and find it interesting. Pupils, in the focus-group discussion, indicated that they enjoy the range of approaches used in History, particularly drama, role play and Information and Communications Technology (ICT). They particularly like the way History is made meaningful to them through project work, ICT, practical work in the Visual Arts and trips to places of historical interest.

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

There is high quality teaching in the school; with some excellent practice observed. The pupils are provided with a good quality learning programme that contains a range of topics from local, national and international contexts, a wide range of human experiences and a selection of myths and legends. There is excellent use of the environment to support learning in History both inside and outside the school, and classrooms are very well resourced to enhance the learning experience of the pupils. Time-lines are well used in all classes to place lesson material in its historical context. Local studies are integral to pupils' learning experiences and all teachers afford very good attention to developing literacy relevant to History. Teachers utilise a range of curriculum-appropriate approaches including the use of artefacts, pictures and photographs and Information and Communications Technology (ICT). All observed lessons were very well structured, teacher questioning was very clear and included both lower and higher-order questions and ample opportunities were provided for pupils to work as historians both collectively and independently. As part of the school's approach to assessment, teachers use teacher observation and work samples to monitor progress in History and there is some use of pupils' self-assessment. Further work now needs to be done to develop assessment strategies that assess the extent to which pupils have retained their learning in History and the extent to which they can utilise their historical skills independently. Assessment data should also be used by teachers to plan for pupils' future learning. There is very good support in place for pupils with additional learning needs to enable them to engage well and experience success in activities in lessons in History.

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

School leadership is praised for the high quality planning for History. A highly collaborative approach has been adopted to the development of the plan and it is evident that the plan informs the practice in the school and is clearly reflected in teachers individual planning and in their work in classrooms. The school plan for history delineates strand units and local history topics for each class over a two-year cycle. All teachers use the school plan to prepare work in their classrooms. Novels and reading material are chosen to integrate literacy with history. High quality short-term planning was evident in all classrooms during the evaluation. Teachers do not rely on textbooks for the teaching of history. Plans outline clear learning objectives, specific differentiation and assessment strategies.

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 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;