

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Visual Arts

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	St Patrick's Cathedral Choir School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	St Patrick's Close Dublin 8
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	19480V

Date of inspection: 28-01-2020



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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 subject in the school.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated learning and teaching in Visual Arts 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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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	28-01-2020
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal and teacher• 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 teacher

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Saint Patrick's Cathedral Choir School is a co-educational school under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough. It provides education to pupils from third class to sixth class. The staff comprises a teaching principal, one mainstream class teacher, and a special education teacher. At the time of the evaluation, there were thirty-four pupils enrolled and their attendance levels are very good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning in Visual Arts is very good with very high pupil engagement levels; some pupils can use suitably descriptive language in responding to visual arts experiences.
- The quality of support for pupils' learning experiences is very good.
- Very good teaching was observed in both settings during visual arts lessons.
- The quality of school planning for Visual Arts is good overall, with some scope for further development.
- While the staff has identified strategies for assessment in Visual Arts, assessment consists mainly of undocumented teacher observations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The ability to describe works of art and creative processes using appropriate visual arts language should be a learning outcome for all pupils.
- The whole-school plan for Visual Arts should fully document the school's provision for Visual Arts and provide comprehensive guidance for all aspects of teachers' practice.
- The agreed whole-school assessment strategies for Visual Arts should be implemented and their impact on pupils' learning should be regularly monitored.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The quality of pupils' learning in Visual Arts is very good. Their enjoyment in learning is evident and they demonstrate a sense of making progress and achievement. Pupils' very high levels of engagement during their learning in Visual Arts is contributing to their overall sense of well-being. Evidence from observations of lessons and from a review of previously-completed work

indicates that pupils are highly-motivated learners. Through the learning experiences provided, pupils are facilitated to explore and express feelings and ideas across a range of two and three-dimensional media, including drawing, paint and colour, print, clay, construction, and fabric and fibre. Pupils work imaginatively and in structured ways with a wide range of suitable art materials. A noted aspect of their learning is how they apply skills and techniques effectively to the visual elements in their work.

The pupils' progression in learning Visual Arts is evident through the school. All pupils are provided with regular opportunities to look and respond to their own and to each other's work. They engage in this aspect of their learning with enthusiasm and respect. Some pupils demonstrate an ability to use appropriate and subject-specific language in responding to visual arts experiences. Teachers should ensure that the ability to describe works of art and creative processes using appropriate visual arts' language will be a learning outcome for all pupils.

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

The quality of the learner experiences in Visual Arts is very good. All pupils have access to a wide range of visual arts resources. They are facilitated in exploring and experimenting with different materials, tools and media. During the focus-group interview, pupils spoke about how they are encouraged to express their feelings through Visual Arts, and how they are inspired to do their own art by the works of particular great artists. Pupils also reported that they greatly enjoy their learning when Visual Arts is integrated with other curriculum subjects; they would like this to be a stronger feature of their overall learning experience.

Teachers makes very good use of the rich local environment in providing pupils with a wide range of valuable learning experiences, many of which are used as stimuli for pupils' engagement in learning Visual Arts. Pupils in the focus-group cited many examples of these and described articulately how they used them as starting points in the creative process. Very good use is made of digital technology to access the work of great artists for pupils.

Pupils consistently receive opportunities to present their learning achievements in an atmosphere of mutual respect. They work independently and collaboratively as appropriate to the lesson content. While samples of pupils' art are visible in the classrooms, there is scope to enhance this aspect of practice to ensure that all pupils can see their own work and the work of their peers displayed on a systematic and regular basis.

Teaching in the lessons observed was of a very high quality. Each lesson was marked by a very good sense of structure and pace. Teachers, through the use of very effective whole-class teaching and the efficient provision of resources, promoted very high levels of sustained pupil engagement in creating art. A noted feature of the practice was the level of successful differentiated teaching provided, ensuring that all pupils were fully engaged in their learning. Teachers also explicitly reference the elements of Visual Arts during the course of the lessons. They should now ensure pupils' use of subject-specific visual arts language when looking and responding to art is progressively scaffolded through the programmes provided. A high level of collaborative practice is evident in the school with the effective sharing of expertise and resources noted. Each teacher provides a yearly planning framework for Visual Arts designed to ensure comprehensive coverage of the curriculum. In addition, teachers undertake short-term

planning to inform their teaching. The development of an agreed, consistent approach to short-term planning is advised.

Assessment of pupils' learning in Visual Arts consists mainly of undocumented teacher observations. A wide range of pupils' past work in Visual Arts is stored in the classrooms or sent home with the pupils. Teachers have recently identified and agreed a number of assessment strategies to appraise and celebrate pupils' learning achievements in Visual Arts. The implementation and monitoring of these agreed strategies should now be prioritised.

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

The effectiveness of school planning in progressing pupils' learning is good overall. The whole-school plan for Visual Arts has been recently revised and is currently in its final draft. The draft plan gives good overall organisational guidance regarding the school's provision for Visual Arts. It includes practical tips in relation to supporting pupils' ability to respond to and discuss works of art. Consideration should now be given to including all aspects of the schools' provision, including specific information regarding school trips and how these are used to support learning in Visual Arts; lesson exemplars relating to each stand of the curriculum, along with photographs of successful practice; and a list of local artists and craftspeople who might visit the school.

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;