

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Curriculum Evaluation**  
**Music**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Saint Joseph's Mixed National School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	East Wall Road Dublin 3 D03 HF24
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	19774P

**Date of inspection: 10-10-2017**



## **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(s) evaluated learning and teaching in Music 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.

## Curriculum Evaluation

<b>Date of inspection</b>	10-10-2017
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Pupil focus-group interview</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Saint Joseph's Mixed National School is a vertical co-educational school for pupils from junior infants to sixth class. In addition, the school provides a preparatory infant year which precedes the normal two-year infant cycle. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and participates in Band 2 of the school support programme for Delivering Equality of Opportunity to Schools (DEIS). There are 205 pupils enrolled currently.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- Pupils are achieving at good levels in the performing strand and respond to music in a variety of ways through discussion, drama, art and movement; the development of pupils' music literacy is fair overall.
- Although pupils receive some opportunities to compose music, their learning experiences in this strand have scope for development.
- Almost all pupils demonstrate a very good sense of pulse and they read and perform a broad range of rhythmic patterns at each class level; however, in a few settings, pupils do not demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of the other musical concepts.
- The overall quality of teaching in Music is good; in the majority of settings, lessons were appropriately structured and teachers facilitated gainful, active and collaborative learning in Music.
- The whole-school plan is not adequately informing teachers' practice in all aspects of the curriculum and is not giving sufficient guidance on how pupils' core skills and competencies in Music will be developed in a progressive manner.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is scope to adopt a more systematic approach to the development of pupils' understanding of the musical concepts on a whole-school basis.
- A greater emphasis should be placed on the progressive development of music literacy throughout the school so that pupils in the middle and senior classes can read music with appropriate confidence and fluency.
- There is a need for teachers to provide more purposeful activities in composition to take account of the musical elements, various techniques and styles.
- To ensure that pupil learning across all strands of the music curriculum is progressive, the whole-school music plan requires review to outline core curricular content and skill development at each class level.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING**

The quality of pupils' learning outcomes in Music is good overall. Pupils enjoy their learning and are confident in their musical ability. Pupils are achieving at good levels in the performing strand and respond to music in a variety of ways through discussion, drama, art and movement. A greater emphasis should be placed on responding playfully to music in the infant classes. Pupils can sing a range of unison songs, across a variety of genres, clearly and with appropriate expression, individually and collectively. Although the majority of pupils sing tunefully, teachers are advised to give a clear starting note before singing. In a small number of classes, greater care should be taken to ensure that all songs selected lie within the pupils' appropriate vocal range.

Almost all pupils demonstrate a very good sense of pulse and they read and perform a variety of increasingly complex rhythmic patterns at each class level. In a few settings, pupils do not demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of the other musical concepts. There is scope to adopt a more systematic approach to the development of the musical concepts on a whole-school basis. Although pupils in a few settings are introduced to graphic and stick notation, pupils' knowledge of music literacy shows scope for development overall. During the evaluation, there were good-quality instrumental performances by the senior pupils on the tin-whistle; consideration should be given to extending the opportunity to learn a musical instrument to other pupils in the school.

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

Pupils' learning experiences in Music are good. The participation of the school in singing performances in the local community serves to provide pupils with a broad experience in Music. External facilitators, funded through the School Completion Programme, enhance pupils' experiences of all the elements of Music. The development of pupils' music literacy is fair; a greater emphasis needs to be placed on the progressive development of music literacy throughout the school so that pupils in the middle and senior classes can read music with appropriate confidence and fluency. In particular, all pupils would benefit from seeing printed music while singing and listening to music.

There were some very good examples of pupils demonstrating their understanding of the musical concepts through movement. Pupils experience a wide range of musical styles and traditions through the listening and responding strand and discuss their learning in this strand with commendable confidence. Although pupils receive some opportunities to compose music, their learning experiences in this strand have scope for development; there is a need for teachers to clearly outline a progressive range of learning objectives in composing activities that take account of the musical elements, various techniques and styles.

The overall quality of teaching in Music is good. The majority of lessons observed were well paced and appropriately structured, and teachers facilitated gainful, active and collaborative learning in Music. In a minority of lessons, teaching was of a very good standard. In examples of best practice, teachers provided rich, differentiated learning experiences, where the musical concepts and pupils' subject-specific vocabulary were explicitly developed. In a few instances, an inadequate emphasis

was placed on the development of the musical concepts and more able pupils were not sufficiently challenged in their learning.

Care should be taken to ensure that there is continuity in the teaching of the instrumental music programme in the school; teachers should seek to integrate skills, concepts and understanding previously acquired by pupils. There were some very effective examples of digital technologies being used to provide a stimulus for learning in music. There is scope to develop the school environment further to ensure that Music is promoted and celebrated on a whole-school basis. Some very good formative assessment practices in Music, including pupil self-assessment, were observed during the evaluation and this very effective practice should be extended across the school.

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

The school reported that it is not engaging currently in the school self-evaluation (SSE) process due to ongoing industrial action. The overall effectiveness of school planning for Music is satisfactory. The majority of teachers plan effectively on a long and short-term basis, and the subject receives an appropriate time allocation on classroom timetables. The whole-school plan is not adequately informing teachers' practice on all aspects of the curriculum. To ensure that pupils' learning across all strands of the music curriculum is progressive, the whole-school music plan requires review to outline core curricular content and skill development at each class level. There is also need to clarify at a whole-school level how pupil progress in music will be observed, recorded and communicated.

### **4. CHILD PROTECTION**

The following aspects of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools* were checked during the evaluation:

1. Teachers' access to a copy of the school's child protection policy
2. The prominent display of the name of designated liaison person near the main entrance

The school was fully compliant with both aspects.

## 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
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;