

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

**Curriculum Evaluation**  
**Visual Arts**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	North Bay Educate Together National School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Greendale Avenue Kilbarrack Dublin 5 D05 K744
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	19954R

**Date of inspection: 03-04-2019**



## **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 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, 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 each of the checks above.

## Curriculum Evaluation

<b>Date of inspection</b>	03-04-2019
<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

North Bay Educate Together National School is an urban, co-educational primary school under the patronage of Educate Together. The school enrolls pupils from junior infants to sixth class and the current enrolment is 216 pupils. School staffing includes an administrative principal, eight mainstream class teachers and four special education positions.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning is very good with highly commendable progression in learning evident in the art work produced by pupils and excellent work noted in the strands of clay and print.
- Pupils enjoy presenting their work in Visual Arts although they displayed a lack of confidence in using the language of the visual elements independently.
- Learner experiences are of a very good quality and pupils' learning is affirmed and celebrated throughout the school.
- Teaching is good overall; the short-term planning presented by a significant minority of the teachers observed during the evaluation does not meet the requirements of Rule 126 of the *Rules for National Schools*.
- Assessment practices are satisfactory overall; while pupil portfolios are maintained in most classrooms, there are inconsistencies in how these are used to systematically monitor continuity and progression in pupils' work.
- School planning is good overall and clearly delineates the specific concepts and skills to be covered at each class level.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pupils should be consistently encouraged to use the language of the visual elements in looking and responding to their own work and to the work of others.
- All teachers should prepare short-term plans in accordance with Rule 126 of the *Rules for National Schools*.
- There is a need for the consistent implementation of agreed approaches to the use of art portfolios for pupils.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

The quality of pupils' learning is very good. Their enjoyment in learning is very evident and they are highly motivated. In inspectorate interactions with pupils during the evaluation and in the focus group discussion, pupils spoke very positively about their learning in Visual Arts. They described their lessons as relaxing, challenging and varied, and highlighted the opportunities provided for them to develop their creativity and self-expression. Very good progression in learning is evident in the quality of work produced by pupils across the breadth of the curriculum with excellent art work noted in the strands of clay and print. While it is evident that pupils enjoy presenting their work in Visual Arts, they displayed a lack of confidence in using the language of the visual elements to describe their work and to respond to the work of their peers and that of artists. A greater focus should be placed on ensuring that pupils can use this language independently to critically discuss their own work and that of others. Pupils show a very good familiarity overall with the work of a range of local, national and international artists, particularly painters, and have a commendable understanding of the work of local craftspersons. There is potential for school planning in this area to have more of an impact in ensuring that pupils' knowledge of these artists is incrementally developed from year to year. A more consistent emphasis should be placed on ensuring that women artists are adequately represented in the programme.

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

Learner experiences are of a very good quality. All pupils have access to a wide range of visual arts resources and are enabled to explore and experiment with different materials, tools and media. The enjoyment of the Visual Arts is promoted and there is evidence of very respectful interactions between teachers and pupils. Pupils receive first-hand experiences of art through visits to art galleries and very good links have been established with the community and with local artists. Pupils' learning is affirmed and celebrated in attractive displays throughout the school. These displays would be enriched by the inclusion of the learning focus and topic-specific vocabulary to support pupils' active and meaningful engagement with the language of the visual elements. Pupils' learning in the Visual Arts is linked and integrated with other curricular areas in a very effective manner. During the evaluation, some pupils spoke very positively about how they had received opportunities to make and explore art using digital technologies. There is potential for the school to develop a shared vision of how digital technologies can be used to support pupils' creativity and innovation, enriching learning experiences in the Visual Arts for all pupils.

The overall quality of teaching in Visual Arts is good. Teachers create encouraging and supportive classroom environments for pupils to foster positive attitudes towards Visual Arts. Lessons are paced and structured appropriately and a good range of collaborative approaches including pair work and group work is used by teachers. Well-structured discussion and stimuli are usefully employed to stimulate pupils' activity. In a few instances, teachers should have taken greater account of pupils' prior knowledge of artistic styles and their mastery of the various artistic techniques, and used this knowledge formatively to set more challenging lesson objectives. While all teachers were well prepared for the lessons observed during the evaluation, there are significant variations in the quality of written planning documents prepared by teachers. All teachers provide long-term plans

but short-term plans were not presented for review in all settings. There were also examples where teachers' short-term planning delineated content on a monthly rather than fortnightly basis. Short-term plans should be produced on a fortnightly basis in compliance with Rule 126 of the *Rules for National Schools*. It is highly commendable that the school culture promotes collaboration and that teachers build whole-staff capacity by sharing their expertise.

The quality of assessment is satisfactory overall. A broad range of whole-school approaches to assessment has been agreed and included in the whole-school plan but these are not implemented consistently at individual class level. All teachers assess pupils' learning through teacher observation and retain some samples of work in a variety of strands. Where best practice is evident, teachers provide formative feedback to promote improvement, peer-assessment strategies are used effectively and teachers maintain useful notes describing successes and problems experienced by pupils in their work. A skills checklist is used in all settings; where this is most useful, it is annotated to include information on pupils' attitudes and dispositions and this information is used to inform teachers' subsequent planning and practice. While pupil portfolios are maintained in most classrooms, there are inconsistencies in how these are used to systematically monitor continuity and progression in pupils' work. There is potential to develop the use of portfolios to provide opportunities for more structured self-reflection on pupils' own progression and development in Visual Arts. There is also a need to ensure consistent practice in terms of how these portfolios are kept as an ongoing record of pupils' creative and aesthetic development.

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

The whole-school plan for Visual Arts is good. It provides useful guidance to teachers on effective approaches to the teaching of Visual Arts. Very useful advice is provided to scaffold pupils' responses in looking at and responding to art and this should be reflected in teachers' planning and practice. Although the plan clearly delineates the specific concepts and skills to be covered, it would be enhanced by the inclusion of the specific language to be taught at each class level and a core list of artists to be explored as pupils progress through the school. To further develop pupils' learning, the full implementation of agreed approaches to planning and assessment detailed in the school's policy should be ensured in all settings.

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

### **Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Principal and Staff have examined the Visual Arts Evaluation Report and are satisfied with its content. We acknowledge with appreciation the recognition given to the high quality of pupils' learning and learning experiences. Also, the reference to the excellent work observed in the Clay and Print strands, and the school's commitment to affirming and celebrating pupils' work.

### **Part B: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection**

Language: We acknowledge the comments made regarding the use of language of the visual elements in pupils' Looking and Responding to their own work and that of their peers. This is an area we will continue to focus on in the next academic year.

Assessment Portfolios: We will discuss implementing a more consistent approach school wide. The use of digital portfolios is an area we will investigate.

There are currently differences in how portfolios are presented and maintained within the school, this is based on class level.

Artists covered: We will incorporate into our Visual Arts School Plan the artists which will be covered at each class level. This will include a range of artistic styles and genres as well as a balance of gender.

Planning: As a staff we will discuss our planning templates to ensure that there is consistency school wide with regard to long and short-term planning.

## 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;