An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Physical Education

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>St. Manchan’s N.S.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Mohill Co. Leitrim</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>20203C</td>
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Date of inspection: 21-05-2019
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 Physical Education 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection activities undertaken</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion with principal and teachers</td>
<td>Observation of teaching and learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review of relevant documents</td>
<td>Examination of pupils' work</td>
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<td>Pupil focus-group interview</td>
<td>Interaction with pupils</td>
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<td>Post-inspection feedback with principal and leaders of learning from staff and the in-school management team</td>
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## SCHOOL CONTEXT

St. Manchan’s N.S is a co-educational primary school located in Mohill, Co. Leitrim which operates under the patronage of the Catholic bishop of Ardagh. The school has 203 pupils distributed across nine mainstream classes. The school staff consists of an administrative principal, seven mainstream teachers, one full-time special education teacher and another special education teacher who is shared with a neighbouring school. The school participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion.

## SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

### FINDINGS

- Pupils demonstrate very good learning outcomes overall, although progression in their learning from class to class has not yet been fully realised across the strands of the Physical Education (PE) curriculum.
- The overall quality of pupils’ learning experiences is very good; they enjoy regular and diverse opportunities to be physically active and demonstrate a commendable sense of fair play, teamwork and positivity towards PE.
- The quality of teaching is very good overall with all teachers demonstrating commendable enthusiasm and competency to optimise pupils’ participation in PE; the promotion of subject-specific language and the provision of systematic opportunities for pupils to reflect on techniques and strategies under development in lessons has not yet been embedded in practice on a whole-school basis.
- The quality of assessment is very good overall with potential to enhance the monitoring of pupils’ incremental development across the eight years of their primary school experience.
- The school indoor and outdoor environments have been very well developed and equipped to support pupils’ physical activity during recreational periods and lessons.
- A commendable culture of review and ongoing improvement has been successfully nurtured among staff; whole-school engagement in DEIS planning and participation in the Active Schools Flag programme has impacted positively on pupils’ learning and development in PE.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- In order to maximise the progression in pupils’ learning from class to class, the content of curricular plans and assessment rubrics should be delineated in greater detail to reflect the desired incremental development in pupils’ knowledge, dispositions, skills and understanding.
The very good practice of providing pupils with subject-specific language and regular opportunities to reflect on the techniques and strategies under development in lessons should be extended on a whole-school basis.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
The overall quality of pupils’ learning is very good; they enjoy regular and diverse opportunities to be physically active and can articulate clearly the benefits of having regular movement breaks and exercise and how this contributes to their positive well-being. They demonstrate a commendable sense of fair play, teamwork and positivity towards PE. Pupils have opportunity to develop specific skills within each classroom context, although progression and continuity in their learning from class to class has not yet been fully realised across the strands of the PE curriculum. The delineation of content in curricular plans and an assessment rubric that reflects the desired progression in pupils’ learning would further augment pupils’ learning outcomes.

Pupils demonstrated very high levels of motivation and engagement in the well-planned lessons observed during the evaluation. It is evident that the pupils enjoy their PE lessons and the opportunities to work collaboratively with their peers as well as working individually to practise specific skills and routines. Pupils demonstrate great perseverance and patience during their engagement with physical activities. During the focus group discussion conducted with the pupils, they highlighted the wide range of activities which they have experienced and in particular, volleyball, hurling, cycling and mini-games. Pupils in most classes could discuss their experiences of swimming and demonstrated a very good understanding of water safety. Pupils in all classes spoke about the benefits of doing the daily mile on the school grounds as part of their Active Flag programme.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE
The quality of support for pupils’ learning in PE is very good. The teachers demonstrate commendable enthusiasm towards PE. Many of them have availed of opportunities to engage in continuing professional development (CPD) and they use this training very effectively to inform their practices and this has impacted positively on the very high quality of pupils’ learning experiences. School leaders have also availed of the services of a number of local bodies, such as the Gaelic Athletic Association, the athletics club and the sport partnerships to augment the tuition provided for the pupils for periods of time during the school year. Teachers report that the periodic input from external tutors makes a valuable contribution to their ongoing professional development, in addition to complementing the range of activities provided to ensure the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils. The pupils in middle and senior classes recently had opportunities to participate in workshops on cycling in addition to regular opportunity to avail of coaching on Gaelic games of football and hurling. Pupils are provided with opportunity to participate in a wide range of competitive and non-competitive curricular and co-curricular activities.

Teachers integrate PE very effectively with other curricular areas, such as Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Languages, and Mathematics. In particular, games are used very purposefully to build relationships between pupils and to facilitate their understanding of the importance of creating inclusive learning environments where social, cultural and individual diversity are respected. A whole-school emphasis on promoting creativity permeates provision for pupils in PE; they are provided with
regular opportunities to design new games, practise drills and explore different patterns of movement through the strands of gymnastics and dance. The Active School Flag programme has been adopted by teachers on a whole-school basis; it is evident that the range of measures adopted on a daily and monthly basis has contributed immensely to pupils’ high levels of motivation towards PE along with enhanced regular physical activity. It is also evident that participation in this programme has fostered valuable links with the parent community, supporting continuity in pupils’ learning experiences between home and school through ‘active homework’.

During the evaluation, it was evident that individual teachers facilitate well-ordered and suitably structured and paced lessons to support high levels of pupil participation with appropriate levels of challenge for pupils of varying strengths and abilities. Teachers demonstrate great skill and pedagogical understanding as they interact with pupils during lessons to develop their skills, confidence and positive sporting dispositions. Exemplary practice was observed in a small number of contexts where pupils were enabled to use subject-specific language to reflect on their use and mastery of a particular technique or strategy that was being developed during the lesson. Developing this practice on a whole-school basis is now recommended to further develop the very good quality of teaching and learning. The school indoor and outdoor learning environments have been well-developed and equipped with a wide range of resources and these are used purposefully by the staff to support high quality teaching and positive learning experiences for pupils.

The quality of assessment is very good overall; teachers use a range of assessment approaches within the context of their individual classrooms to monitor and support pupils’ learning. They provide pupils with very good formative feedback during lessons and maintain checklists that record pupil attainment across the various strands. Teachers have recently introduced pupil self-assessment to enable pupils reflect on their learning experiences in PE. Further collaboration by teachers on the content of the assessment rubrics used by them in their individual classes would facilitate the monitoring of pupils’ incremental development across the eight years of their primary school experience.

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

The quality of school planning, and in particular school self-evaluation, is highly commendable. A commendable culture of review and ongoing improvement has been successfully nurtured among staff; whole-school engagement in DEIS planning and participation in the Active Schools Flag programme have impacted positively on pupils’ learning and development in PE.

The staff in the school has developed a comprehensive school improvement plan which includes focused interventions to enhance pupils’ well-being including initiatives in physical education. Parents and pupils have been involved in reviewing provision for physical activity through surveys and focus group discussions with clear success criteria identified to support improvements in pupils’ learning. The school leadership team has also devised a one page, ‘At a Glance’, summary document for each curricular area, including PE, to ensure maximum clarity and sustained focus on prioritised actions and improvement targets throughout the year. The post-holder for PE and the co-ordinators of the Active School Flag programme collaborate with staff to monitor the implementation of agreed improvement initiatives and their impact on pupils’ learning. The principal reviews teachers’ monthly progress records on a regular basis to ascertain provision across the strands of the PE curriculum. According as teachers seek to better delineate content across class levels, progression in provision for learning should become the focus of any review conducted by the principal and leaders of learning in PE.
Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

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

The Board of Management of St. Manchan’s N.S. Mohill would like to acknowledge this positive curriculum evaluation. We are pleased at the recognition of the school’s many strengths and particularly the high standards achieved in the curricular area of Physical Education. We believe this Curriculum Evaluation reflects the school’s commitment to promoting a culture of improvement, innovation and creativity. The Board notes that the work undertaken by the school community to develop and implement a whole school approach to the teaching of Physical Education has been a great success. The report recognises the teaching and dedicated work of our staff and pupils. We wish our pupils, teachers, parents and all those who form part of our enthusiastic and inspiring school community continued success and further curricular excellence.

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 school team will work further to delineate the content of curricular plans and assessment rubrics to maximise pupil incremental development.

We are currently working to extend the current good practice of providing pupils with subject specific language and reflection opportunities in the area of Physical Education.
**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>
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<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 <strong>outstanding</strong> 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>
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<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>
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<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>
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<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>
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