An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige
Department of Education and Youth

Curriculum Evaluation: Music
REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil Chóca Naofa
Seoladh na scoile/School address	2 Church Street Commons East Kilcock
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	11976K
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	02/12/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	11/02/2026

What is a curriculum evaluation?

Curriculum evaluations currently report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects and curriculum areas of the Primary School Curriculum (1999), and the redeveloped Primary Curriculum (2025). They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of the subject or curriculum area 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 outcomes
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.

Included in this curriculum evaluation report is a student-friendly page that provides information for the children/young people in your school about the inspection that occurred recently. It outlines for them some of the main findings and recommendations.

The board of management of the school 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.

Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and tackle bullying

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Child Protection</td><td>Bí Cineálta</td></tr>
<tr><td>1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) are prominently displayed near the main door of the school / in the reception area. Following the school's adoption of the updated procedures 2025, it is also required to display a student-friendly version incorporating the name of the DLP beside the CSS.
2. The school's child safeguarding statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited were aware of who to go to if they had a child protection concern.</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy using Appendix A of Bí Cineálta, it is reviewed annually (or earlier if required) and includes a student/pupil friendly version that is displayed where students/pupils and the school community can see it.
2. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, staff, parents and students/pupils.
3. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides an update to the board at each ordinary board meeting that meets the requirements of Bí Cineálta</td></tr>
</table>

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Curriculum evaluation

Date of inspection	02/12/2025
Inspection activities undertaken • Discussion with principal and teachers • Review of relevant documents • Pupil focus-group interview	• Observation of teaching and learning • Examination of pupils' work • Interaction with pupils • Feedback to principal and teachers

School context

Scoil Chóca Naofa is a large, urban co-educational primary school located in Kilcock, County Kildare. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. The school had an administrative principal, nineteen mainstream teaching posts and eight special education teaching posts. The school had one autism class. There were 472 pupils enrolled in the school at the time of the evaluation

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning in Music was highly commendable. Pupils demonstrated very good standards in performing, composing and listening, and responding to music.
- Pupils' learning experiences were of a very good quality. These experiences were inclusive, engaging and creative.
- The quality of teaching was highly commendable. Teachers' collective practice reflected high levels of pedagogical knowledge and the sharing of expertise and resources.
- Teachers employed a varied range of assessment approaches which comprised observation, questioning, checklists and work samples.
- The quality of the processes for whole-school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE), was very good.

Recommendations

- Teachers should adopt an agreed approach to assessment, including records of learning, to support pupil reflection and self-assessment, and to inform the next steps in learning.
- Pupils should be enabled to deepen their awareness and appreciation of Irish music as a genre as teachers make stronger connections between pupils' experiences in music, dance and cultural awareness.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The quality of pupils' learning outcomes was highly commendable. Pupils were positively engaged and motivated. They achieved very high standards in performing, composing and listening and responding to music. The quality of pupils' singing and playing the recorder was very good. Pupils sang a wide selection of songs with expression and enjoyment, and with increasing pitch,, accuracy and control. The pupils' confident use of formal notation was highly commendable. There was notable progression from the infants 'early learning in using visual symbols and drawings to represent musical ideas. Pupils capably played rhythmic and melodic patterns of increasing complexity and could use musical notation to record short rhythmic and melodic phrases. At all class levels, pupils explored sound using voice, body, and instruments to create increasingly complex soundscapes and layered compositions.

Pupils were enabled to listen and respond to a wide range of musical pieces. Where practice was most effective, pupils were enabled to respond to music with confident application of the musical elements, identification of instruments and genres, and individual interpretation. Teachers should ensure that all pupils are enabled to describe their responses to music in terms of the musical elements and genres with assurance. In many settings, pupils confidently described their favourite composers and musical pieces. They regularly explored the playing of both percussion and melodic instruments. While pupils engaged in ongoing Irish dancing experiences, they were less confident in their knowledge of Irish music, its characteristics and cultural components. It is recommended that teachers enable pupils to deepen their awareness and appreciation of Irish music as a genre and make stronger connections between their experiences in music, dance and cultural awareness.

2. Supporting pupils' learning outcomes through learning experiences and teachers' practice

Learning experiences were of a very good quality. Pupils participated in a rich and balanced range of musical activities which were inclusive, creative, and affirming. Very high levels of pupil engagement and participation were achieved. The use by some teachers of *Lámh* and adapted resources and instruments ensured the full participation and support for progression of all learners. Teachers fostered sustained effort and enjoyment by pupils in an atmosphere of respect. They provided diverse experiences in music through co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and the enrichment of musical appreciation through integration across the curriculum in meaningful ways. Pupils were enabled to learn through ensemble practice and performance, play, improvisation, movement, and games. Middle and senior classes created class compositions which they performed and recorded. Many opportunities for cooperative work were observed. This merits further extension during lessons to promote pupil choice and encourage decision-making and creativity.

A particular feature of the pupils' rich musical experiences was the variety of opportunities pupils had to perform and showcase their learning at religious ceremonies and events, concerts, recitals, assemblies, themed weeks, and ensemble performances. All pupils had ongoing opportunities to play instruments, including the recorder from first class upwards. The school has an excellent stock of percussion instruments which teachers used to enhance pupils' learning experiences. School leaders should consider how pupils could best use digital technologies to foster their music-making capacity in creative ways.

During the focus group discussion, the pupils praised their teachers for their enjoyable and stimulating music lessons. They appreciated the opportunities they had to read and compose music, and to play the recorder and sing a wide repertoire of songs. They expressed a desire to use digital technologies and to play additional musical instruments.

The quality of teaching was highly commendable. Teachers' collective practice reflected high pedagogical knowledge and the sharing of expertise and resources. Working in close cooperation with an external music specialist, teachers delivered a progressive music programme. This specialist complemented teachers' provision of lessons. Key features of the school's pedagogy included opportunities for pupils to make and read music, play instruments, and participate in ensemble performance. In the sample of lessons observed, teachers were well prepared and were skilful communicators. They shared their learning intentions. Teachers engaged in explicit teaching of new content and language, with good explanation, modelling and appropriate challenge. In the most effective lessons, teachers engaged pupils in warm-up exercises and provided an appropriate starting note. In some settings, there was scope for teachers to enhance the preparation and use of classroom displays and visual supports to consolidate current learning.

Teachers employed a good range of assessment approaches which comprised observation, questioning, checklists and work samples. There were opportunities to extend these approaches to monitor the pupils' learning more closely in key areas, for example, new language, the musical elements, and genres, and to enable the pupils to record and reflect on their learning thus far. To this end, teachers should adopt an agreed approach to assessment,

including records of learning, to support pupil reflection and self-assessment, and to inform the next steps of progression in learning.

3. The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning

The impact of whole school planning processes, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning in Music was very good. The school's engagement in the SSE process was of a very high standard, characterised by focused evidence gathering, meaningful consultation and communication, and clear target setting. The opinions of pupils, parents and staff were central to the process. The school plan for Music was complemented by planning prepared by the music specialist. It provided good detail on progressive programmes of learning. It is now opportune to review planning documents to provide a single, comprehensive plan that provides clear direction to teachers on all relevant areas, including, for example, music genres with a focus on Irish music and culture, composers, digital technologies and agreed assessment approaches. School leaders are praised for their promotion of an inclusive school culture centred on positive, supportive relationships and achievement in learning for all.

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Department of Education and Youth

For the pupils of Scoil Chóca Naofa about their learning in Music
Date of inspection: 02/12/2025

Introduction

Your school had an inspection of Music recently. This page for pupils describes what the inspectors found and gives ideas about what the school should do to make learning better.

What did the inspectors do during the visit?

The inspectors visited classrooms and talked to teachers and pupils about the work they were doing. The inspectors also met with a focus group of pupils to talk to them about their learning.

What did the inspectors find?

Here are some of the main things:

- The pupils were very good at playing, making and reading music.
- They had lots of opportunities to perform for the school, their families and the community.
- They were wonderful, joyful singers and they played the recorder very well.

What the inspectors said the school should do to make learning better

- The pupils should learn more about Irish music.
- Teachers should help the pupils to think and talk about their progress in learning music.
- Pupils would benefit from opportunities to use digital technologies to be creative in making music.

Thank you for taking the time to read this page.
A special thank you to pupils who took part in the focus group.

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	Examples of descriptive terms
Excellent	**Provision that is excellent** is exemplary in meeting the needs of learners. This provision provides an example for other schools and settings of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Excellent; exemplary; outstanding; exceptionally high standard; with very significant strengths
Very good	**Provision that is very good** is very effective in meeting the needs of learners and is of a very high standard. There is potential to build on existing strengths to achieve an excellent standard.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful
Good	**Provision that is good** is effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to build on existing strengths in order to address the aspects to be developed and achieve a very good standard.	Good; of good quality; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; strengths outweigh the shortcomings; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist
Requires improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard** is not sufficiently effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is good or better.	Fair; less than effective; less than sufficient; evident weaknesses that are impacting on learning; experiencing difficulty; shortcomings outweigh strengths; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard** is not meeting the needs of learners. There is immediate need for significant action to address the areas of concern.	Weak; poor; ineffective; insufficient; unacceptable; experiencing significant difficulties; serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated; requiring significant change, development and improvement to be effective

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of Scoil Chóca Naofa welcomes the very positive findings of the Music Evaluation. It affirms the high standard of teaching and learning in the school. The Board is pleased that so many of the school's strengths are highlighted. It appreciates the recommendation on how the high standard of music provision in the school may be further enhanced.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

The report includes a recommendation to adopt an agreed approach to assessment, including records of learning, to support pupil reflection and self-assessment, and to inform the next steps in learning. Currently, assessment approaches are being reviewed in line with this recommendation. The school will enhance its current Music Plan to ensure a clear & progressive focus on Irish music across all class levels, with explicit links to Irish dance, movement and cultural heritage. Further opportunities for pupils to engage with a broad range of Irish music styles will be strengthened and contextualised within wider cultural learning.

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