An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: Music
Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Rathcoyle National School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Rathcoyle Upper Rathdangan Kiltegan
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	18434J
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	23/10/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	16/12/2024

What is a curriculum evaluation?

Curriculum evaluations report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects of the *Primary School Curriculum (1999)* and the *Primary Language Curriculum (2019).* 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 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 on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

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>Anti-bullying</td></tr>
<tr><td>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.</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013) or Bí Cineálta (2024) and this policy is reviewed annually.
2. The school's current anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils.</td></tr>
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Curriculum evaluation

Date of inspection	22/10/2024-23/10/2024
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

Rathcoyle National School is a rural, co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. At the time of the evaluation, there were sixty pupils enrolled in the school. The staff comprised three mainstream class teachers, of whom one was a teaching principal, and a special education teacher (SET).

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning in Music was good; pupils were engaged and motivated learners.
- The quality of pupils' learning experiences was good; teachers were commended on enabling all pupils from first class onwards to learn a musical instrument.
- The quality of teaching was good.
- The quality of assessment was of a good standard.
- The quality of whole-school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning was good.

Recommendations

- To further support pupils' learning in the curriculum strands *Performing* and *Composing*, teachers should provide pupils with consistent opportunities to compose and perform their own pieces of music.
- School leaders should further develop the whole-school plan for Music so that it makes greater provision for continuity and progression in pupils' learning.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The quality of pupils' learning outcomes was good. Pupils were engaged and motivated learners. During lessons observed, they demonstrated their knowledge in the strand *Exploring sounds* by identifying, describing and making a variety of sounds, using items in the classroom environment. Pupils sang a good range of songs with enthusiasm and expression. To further develop pupils' singing, teachers were advised to introduce part singing, for example through rounds and two-part songs. In infant classes, pupils responded to music imaginatively through movement and also displayed a growing awareness of the musical concepts: pulse and tempo. In more senior classes, they described music in various styles and genres, including country and rock, giving their personal preferences. When listening and responding to music, senior pupils were less secure about identifying its different sections and recognising timing, including two-beat, three-beat and six-eight time. Most pupils also had limited engagement in the composing strand and in musical literacy during lessons observed. Almost all pupils were learning to play a musical instrument following chord names rather than learning how to read music and engage in the related subject-specific terminology. It was timely for teachers to

enable pupils to further develop their musical knowledge and ability in composing and reading music.

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

The quality of pupils' learning experiences was good. The school provided pupils with a good range of learning experiences, including performing Christmas carols as a whole school in the village each year. Teachers were commended on enabling all pupils from first class onwards to learn how to play at least one musical instrument. During the pupil focus group discussion and interactions in the classrooms, pupils reported that they enjoyed their learning in Music. In some lessons observed, pupils were provided with opportunities to work together in pairs and in groups to identify and record a selection of sounds in the environment. This enabled them to discuss their learning and work collaboratively.

The quality of teaching was good. Teachers created positive, calm, productive and inclusive learning environments for pupils. In lessons observed, teachers provided pupils with clear and well-structured lessons. In general, teachers' lesson preparation did not build sufficiently on pupils' prior learning. It was timely for teachers to make greater provision for continuity and progression in pupils' learning in Music. Teachers made links between pupils' learning in Music and in other curriculum areas, including singing songs in Irish. They should extend this good practice and enable pupils to make further links between their learning in Music and with areas across the breadth of the curriculum, for example between musical literacy and their learning in Mathematics.

The quality of assessment was good. Teachers used an appropriate range of assessment tools to assess pupils' learning in Music, including teacher observation and questioning, teacher designed tasks and samples of pupils' work. To enhance pupils' learning experiences, teachers should make greater use of the assessment information gathered to differentiate activities in line with the range of musical abilities within the classrooms.

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

The quality of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning was good. The whole-school plan, which was due for review, provided useful information for teachers including the curriculum strands and strand units at each class level, and a list of resources available in the school. The plan did not clearly outline the school's approach to the teaching and learning of musical concepts, the learning of musical literacy or the development of pupils' learning in *Composing*. When reviewing the plan, school leaders should refine it further and document clearly the incremental development for pupils' learning across all strands of the music curriculum.

The school had engaged positively in the process of SSE and had most recently prioritised pupils' Wellbeing as an area for school improvement.

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For the pupils of Rathcoyle N S about their learning in Music

Date of inspection: 23/10/2024

Introduction

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

Meeting with pupils

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

What did the inspector find?

Here are some of the main things:

- Pupils enjoyed their music lessons.
- Pupils from 1st class onwards learned at least one musical instrument in school.
- Teachers created caring and friendly classrooms for pupils.

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

- Teachers should help pupils to learn how to read music.
- Teachers should give pupils opportunities to compose their own pieces of music.
- School leaders should decide how to improve pupils' learning in Music, step-by-step, as they progress through the classes.

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