An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: History
Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	S N Cill Cae
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Castledermot Athy Co. Kildare
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	17714K
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	08-12-2023
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	06/03/2024

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(s) evaluated learning and teaching in History under the following headings:

1. Quality of pupils' learning outcomes
2. Supporting pupils' learning through learner experiences and teachers' practice
3. The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning

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.

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.

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) and this policy is reviewed annually.
2. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides a report to the board at least once a term on the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template provided in the Procedures) since the previous report to the board.
3. The school's 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	08-12-2023
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

SN Cill Cae is a co-educational rural primary school located in Kilkea, Co. Kildare. It operates under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin. Staff comprised three mainstream teachers and one special education teacher. At the time of the evaluation, there were sixty pupils enrolled in the school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning outcomes was very good. Pupils demonstrated deep knowledge, skills and enjoyment in their learning in History.
- Learner experiences were very good. Pupils had a range of meaningful opportunities to develop their skills and work purposefully as historians.
- The quality of teaching was highly commendable.
- School planning was very effective. The whole-school plan provided comprehensive guidance on the delivery of a rich and balanced history curriculum.

Recommendations

- To build on the very good learning in History, teachers should consider how best to further develop pupils' critical thinking skills through examining perspectives that challenge the norm and explore under-represented voices.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The quality of pupils' learning was very good. Pupils demonstrated deep knowledge, skills and enjoyment in their learning in History. They had commendable levels of understanding of natural, human, cultural and social dimensions of their local and wider environment. In all settings, pupils identified and discussed local sites, ruins, buildings of historical significance and landmarks, such as Kilkea Castle, the old school building, stone arches and monuments dedicated to the past. All pupils competently explained local legends and the meaning of family crests of arms. Senior pupils identified and described national monuments and buildings, and linked them to significant events from the past, such as rebellions.

Pupils demonstrated excellent understanding, appropriate to their age and beyond, of time and chronology, change and continuity, and cause and effect. Pupils from second class onwards explained the difference between primary and secondary sources and confidently justified their answers using subject-specific language and examples, citing photographs and documents.

Pupils had commendable opportunities to develop their digital skillset to support and share their learning in History. They conducted research, created presentations, films and books, and used digital platforms to complete quizzes.

Pupils demonstrated very good understanding of past international conflicts, such as world wars and revolutions, and competently discussed the timeline of events and some perspectives of those involved. To build on the very good learning in History, teachers should consider how best to further develop pupils' critical literacy skills through examining perspectives that challenge the norm and explore underrepresented voices. Pupils sequenced past events accurately through the use of drama, song and the creation of timelines.

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

The quality of learner experiences was very good. Pupils had a range of valuable opportunities to develop their investigation skills and work purposefully as historians. They used evidence, for example, photographs, stories, artefacts, diary entries, audio clips, videos, letters and interviews to explore historical contexts and to identify similarities and differences between the past and the present. Pupils accessed the local environment to support their learning in History, for example, by doing history trails in the local castle, the old school and the local graveyard.

Pupils shared their learning in History through project work, recordings of interviews, presentations, the creation of scripts and their participation in readers' theatre. During the pupil focus group, pupils reported that they enjoyed their learning in History and liked learning about the past. In particular, they shared their enjoyment of learning local history and demonstrated a deep connection to and understanding of the local historical context. Pupils had valuable opportunities to contribute to local projects and published books on the history of their local area.

The quality of teaching was highly commendable. In all settings, teachers demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting the significance of History and the development of skills. Teachers provided valuable opportunities for pupils to work together to examine artefacts, share their views and to justify their answers. In the majority of settings, teachers used play-based approaches very effectively and encouraged pupils to explore History with curiosity and imagination. This very good practice should be extended across all settings. Teachers used questioning very skilfully to revise prior content and extend learning opportunities. They encouraged pupils to make connections between their learning in History and other subjects, and real-life situations.

Teachers provided pupils with purposeful opportunities to engage in activity-based learning tasks. In some instances, there was scope to add visual structure to the learning activities to ensure that all pupils understood the sequence of tasks and were enabled to participate fully in them. Teachers gathered very useful assessment data from a variety of sources, such as quizzes, rubrics, checklists, copies and work samples. They interpreted and used this data effectively to monitor progress and to identify next steps in learning.

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

The quality of school planning for History, including school self-evaluation (SSE) was very good. School leaders promoted a culture of collaboration and improvement that was evident in the teaching and learning of History. The school had identified assessment-for-learning as a priority and it was evident that the targets and actions were impacting positively on learning. The whole-school plan provided comprehensive guidance on the delivery of a rich and balanced history curriculum. Teachers had commenced the process of compiling a bank of historical artefacts which were aligned to the whole-school plan. The whole-school plan for History was commendably contextualised to the local and wider geographical areas.

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
Very Good	*Very good* 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 *outstanding* 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
Good	*Good* 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.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	*Satisfactory* 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
Fair	*Fair* 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
Weak	*Weak* 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;