An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: Visual Arts
Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Kingstown National School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Kingstown Clifden Co. Galway
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	12095G
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	12/12/2024

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 Visual Arts 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 school self-evaluation (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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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	12/12/2024
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

Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Antoine (Kingstown National School) is a co-educational primary school situated in Kingstown, near Clifden, Co. Galway. The Catholic Archbishop of Tuam is the patron of the school. There are two mainstream teachers, including the principal, and one special education teacher (SET), in the school.

There have been significant changes in the teaching staff since September 2024. There has also been high mobility in the pupil population in recent years, with the current pupils coming from diverse backgrounds. There were sixteen pupils enrolled at the time of the evaluation.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of pupils' learning outcomes in the Visual Arts was good.
- The quality of pupils' learning experiences was good.
- Teachers' practice was good overall, with some aspects being very good, and some aspects requiring improvement.
- School planning for the Visual Arts was good, with a recent review of the school's art programme being very beneficial.

Recommendations

- The teachers should place more emphasis on explaining and demonstrating, and should give more attention to teaching specific art terminology.
- Each teacher should provide more opportunities for the pupils to look at and respond to art, especially the works of great artists.
- Art materials should be readily available at all times in each classroom, to facilitate and encourage pupils to make art during the school day.
- The school staff should implement a more effective system of assessing and recording pupils' progress in Visual Arts.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The overall quality of pupils' learning outcomes was good. All of the pupils were well-motivated. They engaged very willingly in the activities organised and the tasks they were set. The pupils' behaviour, and their attitude to learning, was very good across the school. Positive relationships were evident between the pupils and their teachers, and among the pupils themselves.

Almost all of the pupils were articulate and confident when talking about their artwork, notwithstanding the fact that English was an additional language for a majority of them. There was a need, because of this, to give more attention to specifically teaching the language the

pupils needed to participate even more fully in the lessons observed. This should help to enhance the awareness of shape, form and texture demonstrated by some of the pupils. It should also further enhance the development of the pupils' artistic skills.

The pupils in the senior classes clearly enjoyed learning about the lives and works of famous artists. A lesson on impressionism and pointillism, which explored the works of Seurat and Signac, was observed in the senior classroom on the day of the evaluation. Despite the limitations of some pupils' spoken English, all of them found this lesson interesting and stimulating. It would be worthwhile, therefore, making looking at and responding to art a more regular feature of Visual Arts lessons at all class levels.

There were many samples of the pupils' artwork on display in each classroom and in public areas of the school. These samples indicated that a good range of work had been completed across the six strands of the curriculum. Pupils' very good 3-d artwork in *Construction* and *Fabric and fibre,* for example, was attractively displayed in the junior classroom. There were several beautiful samples of work in *Paint and colour* and *Print* on display in the senior classroom. Most of the artwork on display throughout the school had a Christmas or a winter theme.

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

The support for pupils' learning outcomes, through the learning experiences provided, and the teachers' individual practice, was good. A variety of experiences was provided for the pupils at each class level, with an appropriate emphasis on making art.

A good range of art materials was available for the pupils to use during the lessons observed on the day of the evaluation. It is recommended, however, that art materials be more readily accessible to pupils at all times. The pupils in both classrooms should be encouraged to engage in art activities whenever possible, for example when they have finished their other work, or have the option to choose what to do. This should give the pupils the opportunity to express themselves freely through art, and could act as a form of therapy for pupils who have had traumatic experiences.

Teachers' individual practice was good overall. Some of the teaching observed was very good. Every teacher in the school demonstrated a commitment and desire to enhance the pupils' learning experiences and learning outcomes. There were elements in some of the teachers' practice, however, that required improvement. There was a need, for example, for teachers to spend more time demonstrating and modelling each step in the process of making art, while also encouraging the pupils' freedom of expression through art. More opportunities should be given to the pupils to work together in every class. Consideration should be given, for example, to organising regular group art projects, where each pupil could contribute to the creation of a joint work of art, which could then be displayed in the school.

There were some good aspects to the assessment of Visual Arts in the school. The use of the Artist's Chair, for example, whereby pupils were asked questions about their artwork by their classmates, worked very well. Some very good oral feedback on their artwork was given to the pupils in the junior classes. Overall, however, assessment processes required improvement. It is recommended that a school-wide approach to assessing the pupils' progress be agreed. It would be worthwhile, for example, maintaining a selection of samples of the pupils' work in portfolios. These could then be used to record the pupils' progress from junior infants to sixth class.

In the focus group meeting, all of the pupils said that they liked their lessons and activities in Visual Arts. They stated that they enjoyed drawing with crayons and colouring pencils, and they very much enjoyed painting. They felt that learning how to make art was easiest when it was explained clearly, starting with the basics. They said it was best when they had lots of time to practise new skills. The pupils described how they collected flowers outside the school, which they then used as models for drawing.

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

The effectiveness of school planning in progressing pupils' learning in the Visual Arts was good. The whole school plan for the Visual Arts was recently reviewed and updated. This revised plan set out a broad and balanced programme for Visual Arts, with appropriate emphasis on the six strands of the curriculum, on developing the pupils' skills, and enhancing their awareness of the elements of art.

While assessment approaches were set out in the school plan, the school leadership needs to ensure that these, as well as the other aspects of the curriculum, will be continually and consistently implemented in the future.

Credit is due to the principal and to the board of management, as well as to the class teachers and other members of staff, for their focus on providing a happy, safe and secure learning environment for all of the pupils under their care.

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

For the pupils of Kingstown National School about their learning in Visual Arts
Date of inspection: 12/12/2024

Introduction

Your school had an inspection of Visual Arts (Art) 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:

- The pupils' learning in Art was good overall.
- The pupils enjoyed their Art lessons.
- The teachers taught Art well. Some things were very good; some things could be better.
- The school put together a good programme for Art.

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

- Teachers should spend more time showing pupils how to do things in art lessons, and they should explain what new words mean.
- More time should be given to looking at and talking about great artworks.
- Art materials should always be available for pupils to use at school.
- Samples of every pupil's art should be kept by their teachers.

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