An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: History
Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	S N Naomh Ioseph
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Halverstown Kilcullen Co. Kildare
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	18378C
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	13/11/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	05/02/2025

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 History 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

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.

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.

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	12/11/2024 - 13/11/2024
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

S N Naomh Ioseph is a rural co-educational primary school located in Halverstown, Kilcullen, Co. Kildare. The school caters for boys and girls from junior infants to sixth class. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. At the time of the evaluation, the school had an administrative principal, three mainstream class teachers and three special education teachers (SETs), one of whom was shared with another school. The school had two special class teachers for pupils with autism. There were 49 pupils enrolled in the school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning in History was very good. Pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the content and skills outlined in the History curriculum.
- Pupils were provided with learning experiences that were of a very high quality; they displayed high levels of interest in the learning activities presented.
- The quality of teaching was highly commendable; teachers used a broad range of teaching approaches and methodologies to meet the learning needs and abilities of all pupils.
- The quality of assessment practices was good, teachers effectively monitored pupils' work and provided constructive feedback on how to progress their learning.
- The process of whole-school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE), to develop pupils' learning was very effective.

Recommendations

- Teachers and school leaders should extend assessment practices in History by developing an agreed approach to the systematic recording of pupils' learning progress as they advance through the school.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The quality of pupils' learning in History was very good. Pupils were motivated to learn and eagerly participated in all learning activities. In the lessons observed, they demonstrated a positive attitude towards History and a keen interest in learning about the past. They had a very good understanding of the content of the curriculum relative to their class level. During class discussions, pupils confidently shared their knowledge, thoughts and opinions on a range of topics of historical interest. They effectively used investigation and communication skills to explore topics. Throughout the school, timelines were a constant point of reference as work was completed on local, national and international history. Items were included on the class timeline

as work began on each period or era. At the commencement of lessons, pupils' attention was drawn to the timeline and to what came before the period under study and to what came later.

In junior classes, pupils illustrated their ability to gather evidence by conducting interviews with their grandparents and by completing appropriate surveys. They demonstrated their understanding of the concept of change over time by comparing games their grandparents played with games they play now. In middle classes, pupils exhibited their understanding of time and chronology when ordering pictures to record the sequence of events in stories about the Fianna. In addition, they were able to recount the changes that had taken place in the school since it was founded as they had recently celebrated the 65th anniversary of the opening of the school. In senior classes, pupils consolidated their understanding of early people and ancient societies during lessons on Ancient China. They used appropriate timelines to record the relative position of the events being studied to support their overall understanding. They were particularly interested in learning about Chinese philosophers such as Confucius, Tao and Buddha.

During the focus group discussion with inspectors, pupils reported that they enjoyed learning about the past and about famous people from long ago. They particularly enjoyed completing projects and reported that they would like more opportunities to do this in History. They found that their learning in History helped them to develop a better understanding of other subject areas such as English, Geography and Science.

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

The quality of pupils' learning experiences in History was very good. Teachers created positive learning environments in their classrooms and there were respectful interactions between pupils and teachers and between pupils and their peers in all classes. Attractive displays in classrooms and in circulation areas supported learning in History and celebrated pupils' work. There was effective use of age-appropriate timelines on display throughout the school to reinforce pupils' interest in History. The pictorial timeline in the school foyer was particularly effective in appealing to pupils' imagination. A broad range of teaching and learning resources was available in all classes and included pictures, photographs, artefacts and digital resources. These were used effectively to stimulate pupils' interest in investigating events from the past.

The quality of teaching was highly commendable. Teachers demonstrated highly effective classroom management skills. They presented good quality planning documents and were well prepared for lessons. Teachers shared learning intentions with pupils at the commencement of lessons and provided openings for pupils to recall prior knowledge on historical topics. Lesson presentations were well structured and adapted to suit both the delivery of content and the needs of pupils. Pupils were able to share their ideas in History lessons after they observed, managed, examined, questioned, compared, made deductions and drew conclusions about evidence they had handled. Commendably, learning outcomes were consolidated at the end of lessons.

Teachers used a broad range of teaching approaches and methodologies, such as story, the use of evidence and digital technologies to stimulate pupils' interest. They used skilful questioning techniques and pupils had opportunities to work as historians both independently and collaboratively. Teachers adopted inclusive strategies during lessons to ensure that all pupils were meaningfully engaged in History activities. Pupils demonstrated an interest in *Local Studies* and spoke about the local round tower and other sites of historical interest in their local environment. Local historians had visited the school to talk to the pupils about the history of the locality. There is scope for the pupils to have more opportunities to explore the local environment in more depth in order to contribute to their sense of local identity.

During lessons, teachers promoted the use of subject-specific language in History and encouraged pupils to use the new language learned when responding to questions. There is scope for this practice to become more embedded in classroom practice.

The quality of assessment was good. Teachers used a range of assessment methods, such as observation, monitoring of written work and teacher-designed tasks. Teachers provided constructive feedback to pupils on how to improve their learning. To extend assessment practices in the school, teachers and school leaders should adopt and implement an agreed approach to recording and reporting on pupils' progression in historical skills as well as their understanding of content as they advance through the school.

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

The practice of school planning, including SSE in progressing pupils' learning was very effective. The whole-school plan for History was developed collaboratively by teachers and school leaders. It set out the school's vision and provided guidance for teachers on the implementation of a whole-school approach to the teaching of History and on the presentation of the History curriculum at each class level. To enhance the effectiveness of the school plan, school leaders and teachers were advised to include guidance on how the development of pupils' historical skills and concepts can be assessed and recorded at each class level as they progress through the school. The SSE process was progressing very well. This process was used to develop the school improvement plan and to identify priorities for development.

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For the pupils of S N Naomh Ioseph about their learning in History
Date of inspection: 13/11/2024

Introduction

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

Meeting with pupils

The inspectors 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' learning in History was very good.
- Pupils had very good learning experiences.
- Teaching was very good.

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

- The school should keep a record of pupils' learning as they progress from class to class.

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