An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation

Visual Arts

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil Niocláis
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Frankfield Grange Cork
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	20106E

Date of inspection: 30-11-2017

AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS AGUS SCILEANNA | DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS

WHAT IS A CURRICULUM EVALUATION?

Curriculum Evaluations report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects of the *Primary School Curriculum* (1999). 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 inspectors evaluated learning and teaching in Visual Arts under the following headings:

1. Quality of pupils' learning
2. Supporting pupils' learning through learner 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. The board of management 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.

Curriculum Evaluation

Date of inspection	30-11-2017
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 Niocláis is a Catholic, co-educational, mainstream primary school situated in Frankfield, Grange, Cork. The school has a staffing of thirty-two mainstream teachers, fifteen teachers for pupils with special educational needs and an administrative deputy principal and principal. At the time of the evaluation, there were 855 pupils enrolled in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning in the Visual Arts is of a high standard and school displays reflect the very high quality of the work which pupils have completed.
- High quality learning experiences are provided to pupils in the Visual Arts and they enjoy and learn from the art activities organised.
- The quality of teaching of the Visual Arts is good but would benefit from the placing of increased focus on the process of making art.
- While the quality of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning is good, the whole-school Visual Arts plan should give guidance to teachers on the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum in which strategies to ensure continuity and development of pupils' knowledge and skills are outlined.
- The school has identified the assessment of pupil progress in art as an area for development and good work has commenced in collaboratively addressing this priority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A focus should be placed in lessons on the process of making art and on facilitating pupils to respond individually and creatively to art stimuli.
- The whole-school plan should be reviewed to ensure that a broad and balanced visual arts programme is delivered in which continuity and progression is pupils' learning is addressed.
- The school should further develop its approach to the assessment of art building on its current worthwhile work in identifying indicators of pupils' progress.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The quality of pupils' learning in the Visual Arts is of a high standard. In all lessons observed, pupils displayed high levels of motivation and they engaged enthusiastically in the planned activities. Pupils' achievements are celebrated and recognised through the regular updating of displays and designated exhibition areas. These displays bear testament to the very high quality of the work which pupils have completed. In the course of their lessons, most pupils are introduced to and made aware of the elements of line, shape, form, colour and tone, pattern and rhythm, texture, and spatial organisation. Teachers model the language of the artist but emphasis needs to be placed on the provision of opportunities for pupils to use this language when describing their work. Pupils, in the course of a focus-group interview, spoke eloquently of their achievements, of their input into whole-school art displays, their engagement in art competitions and of the opportunities they are afforded to showcase their work. They demonstrate an awareness of the value of the Visual Arts in promoting imagination and creativity. Pupils would, however, welcome increased opportunities to work collaboratively and to have more opportunities to design and make three-dimensional art. Appropriate opportunities are provided to pupils to look and respond to artistic works in each of the six strand units. They display a good knowledge of international artists, particularly painters, but there remains a need to ensure that community and national artists and crafts persons are exploited further to enrich pupils' experiences of art. All pupils are facilitated to explore and experiment with a wide range of materials, tools and techniques. Pupils are also facilitated to engage with and respond to visual art forms of different styles, periods and cultures.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS' LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS' PRACTICE

High quality learning experiences are provided for pupils in the Visual Arts. Talk and discussion featured strongly in the lessons observed. Pupils were commendably supported to explore, interpret, enjoy and learn from art activities organised. The very effective use of integrated approaches enabled pupils to learn through as well as about art and to relate their learning to other areas of the curriculum. Constructive affirmation, guided practice and peer co-operation all served to encourage and develop the pupils' forms of expression.

The quality of teaching in the Visual Arts is of a high standard. Teachers prepare long and short-term plans in preparation for their work. Increased focus on the identification of specific learning outcomes and on the element and technique to be promoted in the art lesson would enhance provision. Teachers who have attended continuous professional development opportunities in the arts are commendably facilitated to share their learning with colleagues. Opportunities for teachers to plan collaboratively are provided. These opportunities should be further exploited to ensure that there is continuity and progression in the skills and techniques that pupils develop as they progress from class to class. Teachers placed commendable emphasis on a stimulus, activity and evaluation approach to lessons. Very good use was made of information and communications technology (ICT) in eliciting pupils' responses to art; however, the increased use of ICT by pupils as a feature of their art learning is recommended. Careful explanations and demonstrations were seen to enable the development of skills in most lessons. However, in the majority of lessons observed, a balance needs

to be struck between the process of making art and the product of the lesson. It is recommended therefore that a focus be placed in lessons on the process of making art and enabling pupils to design and make personal responses to art stimuli.

Teacher assessment of pupil progress is of a satisfactory standard. Currently, teacher observation and the maintenance of individual portfolios of pupils' work are the strategies used to assess pupil attainment. The school has identified this area as being in need of development and is currently working collaboratively to identify key indicators of pupils' progress in the Visual Arts.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS' LEARNING

The quality of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning is good. While the school is not currently engaging in SSE since the embargo of April 2016, it continues to identify priorities for development and to plan strategically to effect improvement in these identified areas. The implementation of the whole-school Visual Arts plan is successfully overseen by the appointed post-holder who is ably assisted by the school's art committee. The plan was reviewed in March 2017. There remains a need, however, to ensure that this plan gives clear guidance to teachers on the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum in which continuity and progression in pupil learning is ensured. The plan should also outline the importance of promoting pupils' creativity and their ability to make a personal response to art stimuli.

4. CHILD PROTECTION

The following aspects of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools* were checked during the evaluation:

1. Teachers' access to a copy of the school's Child Protection policy
2. The prominent display of the name of Designated Liaison Person near the main entrance

The school was fully compliant with both aspects.

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;

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 Niocláis welcomes the findings of the curriculum evaluation report in the area of Visual Arts.

We are delighted that the quality of the pupils' learning in the Visual Arts had been recognised as being of a high standard.

The acknowledgement of our very effective use of integrated approaches and collaborative planning, in addition to the high standard of our school displays is a true reflection of the valuable work that is taking place in Scoil Niocláis.

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 whole school plan will be reviewed in line with the recommendations;

1. We are exploring strategies to ensure continuity and development in delivering a broad and balanced Visual Arts Curriculum.

2. We will further develop our school planning for Visual Arts by placing greater emphasis on the process of making art and on facilitating pupils to respond individually and creatively to art stimuli.

3. We have already commenced the development of further assessment approaches.