An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: Visual Arts
Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	St Patrick's NS
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Dromard Moyne Co. Longford
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	19353O
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	05/02/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	30/04/2025

What is a curriculum evaluation?

Curriculum evaluations report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects of the *Primary School Curriculum (1999),* the *Primary Language Curriculum (2019)* and the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum.* 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 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 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 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.

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	05/02/2025
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

St. Patrick's National School, is a co-educational primary school, located in Dromard near Moyne, in County Longford. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois. At the time of the evaluation, there were five mainstream classroom teachers. The school had three special education teachers, one of whom was based in another school. There were 118 pupils enrolled from infants to sixth class.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning outcomes was good overall; pupils engaged with enthusiasm and creativity in Visual Arts lessons and demonstrated confidence in discussing their work.
- Overall, learner experiences were good; pupils' learning experiences were rich and engaging, with well-structured lessons that encouraged imaginative expression.
- The quality of teaching was good; teachers demonstrated high levels of preparation and subject knowledge.
- The overall quality of assessment was good.
- Whole-school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE), was of a good quality.

Recommendations

- Pupils' learning outcomes should be enhanced in the strands of *Fabric and Fibre* and *Print* to support optimal progression of learning.
- Teachers should use digital technologies to promote pupils' self-assessment and monitor progression in learning while also enriching pupils' learning experiences.
- Teachers should place explicit emphasis on subject-specific vocabulary during lessons to support pupils in discussing artistic processes and techniques.
- School leaders should review and update the whole-school plan to provide additional guidance to teachers, with a focus on promoting pupils' conceptual, skills and language development.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The quality of pupils' learning outcomes in Visual Arts was good. Pupils engaged enthusiastically with lessons and demonstrated curiosity and creativity when exploring materials and techniques. Pupils responded well to guided exploration, using different media to experiment with artistic processes and develop their creative expression.

Pupils had regular opportunities to engage with a broad range of strands, with strong emphasis placed on *Drawing, Paint* and *Colour*, and *Construction*. Where best practice was observed, pupils experimented with materials, applied techniques with precision, and responded to multimedia stimuli to deepen their understanding of artistic processes. Pupils' looking and responding skills were suitably developed, with pupils engaging in meaningful discussions about artists' work, their own creations and the work of their peers.

During the focus-group discussion, pupils spoke positively about the subject, highlighting the variety of lessons and opportunities for creative expression. They valued collaborative projects, enjoyed exploring the work of artists, and expressed a desire to share their work more widely. Pupils welcomed the idea of touring art galleries virtually and suggested they would like more opportunities for group work and increased engagement in Visual Arts lessons.

While pupils engaged confidently in a range of artistic strands, *Fabric and Fibre* and *Print* were less developed in comparison to other areas. In some classes, pupils had fewer opportunities to progress their concepts and skills or to experiment with diverse materials in these strands. Teachers should strengthen pupils' progression in learning in these strands to enable pupils to develop a broader range of creative techniques and deepen their artistic expression.

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

The quality of pupils' learning experiences was good. Pupils participated in engaging, hands-on activities that fostered individual and collaborative learning. Lessons were designed to encourage creativity and imaginative expression, with open-ended tasks allowing pupils to experiment and explore artistic techniques independently.

Classroom environments were visually rich and stimulating, with pupils' artwork prominently displayed, reinforcing the value placed on creative expression. Pupils had opportunities to engage with local and national art competitions, further enriching their artistic learning experiences.

Pupils engaged actively in artistic discussions; however, structured opportunities for self-assessment were limited. Teachers should integrate digital technologies, such as digital portfolios and virtual gallery visits, to provide pupils with opportunities to document their learning, track their progress, and explore a wider range of artistic styles.

The quality of teachers' practice was good. Teachers demonstrated strong subject knowledge and high levels of preparation, ensuring that lessons were well-structured and effectively resourced. Pupils had regular opportunities to explore the work of artists, with teachers integrating international influences into their teaching. In many instances, pupils had opportunities to engage in open-ended tasks, fostering autonomy and creativity. Where very good practice was observed, pupils were encouraged to experiment, explore, and apply techniques independently, deepening their artistic expression.

Teachers used effective questioning strategies to prompt pupils to describe and evaluate their artistic choices. In almost all lessons, there was scope to further exploit opportunities to explicitly develop pupils' understanding and awareness of subject-specific vocabulary. Teachers should place greater emphasis on structured language development to support pupils in articulating artistic processes, skills, and techniques with clarity and confidence.

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

Whole-school planning was effective in progressing pupils' learning. The school has engaged in ongoing cycles of self-evaluation and has reviewed a number of areas as part of its SSE process with a current focus on Wellbeing.

The school had satisfactory guidance in place for Visual Arts, ensuring broad curriculum coverage. While the whole-school plan provided general direction for teachers, it did not include sufficient detail on how pupils' conceptual, skill, and language development should be progressed over time. School leaders and teachers should ensure that the whole-school plan for Visual Arts incorporates specific planning for pupils' conceptual, skill, and language development to enhance continuity and depth in learning.

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

For the pupils of St Patrick's NS about their learning in Visual Arts
Date of inspection: 05/02/2025

Introduction

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

What did the inspector (inspectors) do during the visit ?

The inspector(s) 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(s) find?

Here are some of the main things:

- Pupils' learning in Visual Arts was good; pupils took part in lots of creative and fun activities.
- Pupils were confident when talking about their artwork and enjoyed looking at the work of different artists.
- Overall, teaching was good. Teachers gave pupils opportunities to explore different materials and techniques.
- The way that teachers checked on pupils' learning was good.

What the inspector(s) said the school should do to make learning better

- Teachers should help pupils explore more techniques in *Fabric and Fibre* and *Print* to develop their creative skills further.
- Pupils should have more chances to use digital tools to share their work, track their progress, and learn about different artists.
- Teachers should focus more on helping pupils use the right art vocabulary to describe and explain their creative work.

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

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 are pleased to welcome this report from the Inspectorate. It affirms the high-quality teaching and learning which is happening at the moment. The recognition of everyone's efforts is much appreciated. We wholeheartedly welcome the recommendations to further improve teaching and learning in the school.

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 Board of Management and teaching staff are committed to the implementation of the recommendations as outlined in the report. The Principal and in-school management team will update the current whole school plan to include subject specific language for each class level. Digital technology will be integrated into self-assessment and the assessment of progress and learning in Visual Arts throughout the school. Finally, the whole school plan will be updated to ensure progression in all strands of the Visual Arts curriculum.