An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige
Department of Education and Youth

Curriculum Evaluation: Science

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil Naomh Mhuire
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Grahormack Tagoat Co. Wexford
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	17769M
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	06/11/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	12/01/2026

What is a curriculum evaluation?

Curriculum evaluations currently report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects and curriculum areas of the Primary School Curriculum (1999), and the redeveloped Primary Curriculum (2025). They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of the subject or curriculum area in the school.

How to read this report

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated learning and teaching in Science 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 on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

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>Bí Cineálta</td></tr>
<tr><td>1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) are prominently displayed near the main door of the school / in the reception area.
2. The school's child safeguarding statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited were aware of who to go to if they had a child protection concern.</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy using Appendix A of Bí Cineálta. It is reviewed annually (or earlier if required) and includes a student/pupil friendly version that is displayed where students/pupils and the school community can see it.
2. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, staff, parents and students/pupils.
3. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides an update to the board at each ordinary board meeting that meets the requirements of Bí Cineálta</td></tr>
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Curriculum evaluation

Date of inspection	05/11/2025 - 06/11/2025
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

Scoil Naomh Mhuire is a rural primary school in Tagoat, Co. Wexford, under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ferns. It participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Youth for educational inclusion. At the time of the evaluation, there were 64 pupils enrolled in the school. There were three mainstream class teachers, of whom one was also the principal. There was one full-time and one part-time special education teacher based in the school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning outcomes in Science was good; pupils were enthusiastic learners and displayed a positive disposition towards their learning in Science.
- The overall quality of pupils' learning experiences was good, with very good whole-school initiatives further supporting pupils' learning at various times during the school year.
- The overall quality of teaching was good, with very good teaching also observed.
- Teachers used an appropriate range of assessment approaches to record pupils' learning in Science.
- Whole-school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE), in progressing pupils' learning was good; the whole school plan included a very helpful guide for an integrated, thematic approach to the teaching of Science.

Recommendations

- To promote the development of pupils' scientific investigation skills, teachers were advised to make further provision for them to explore, investigate and discover solutions to scientific questions more independently during science lessons.
- To further enable pupils to engage meaningfully in focused talk and discussion activities and describe their learning, teachers should ensure that they teach the related subject-specific terminology explicitly.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The overall quality of pupils' learning in Science was good. Pupils were enthusiastic learners and displayed a positive disposition towards science. They recalled their previous learning well, particularly in relation to their project work and outdoor learning experiences. They spoke confidently about their learning in the strand units *Plant and animal life* and *Environmental awareness*. Their knowledge in these areas was particularly noteworthy. They also demonstrated a growing understanding of food and nutrition. In other areas of the curriculum, they were less confident in discussing their learning and were unsure of key scientific terminology related to these areas. Teachers were advised to further ensure that pupils were taught, and were provided with opportunities to use, key terminology related to all topics being

learned. Pupils worked well in pairs and groups, and made good use of digital technology to support their learning in Science. They demonstrated good designing and making skills in preparation for Science Week showcases and presentations.

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

The overall quality of pupils' learning experiences was good. Teachers had created calm and affirming learning environments for pupils, and praised, displayed and celebrated pupils' achievements in Science. Leaders and teachers enhanced pupils' learning in Science by enabling them to participate in a broad range of whole-school initiatives during the school year. For example, they enabled pupils to prepare and present projects for display during a science week celebration. They also promoted partnerships with parents, guardians and the local community when hosting science events. Teachers made very good use of local visitor centres and gardens, including nearby Yola Park and Orchard Park public gardens, to promote outdoor learning. Pupils had planted seeds, flowers and fruits, and they demonstrated a growing interest in biodiversity and care for the environment. Teachers also involved pupils in a 'Tagland Project' which encouraged them to design, plan for, and be involved in the ongoing development of a wet area. Pupils' engagement in the Discover Primary Science and Mathematics Award and the Green Flag Award also enhanced their learning in Science.

The overall quality of teacher's practice in supporting pupils' learning was good, with very good teaching also observed. Teachers were diligent and worked collaboratively to promote science across the school. They prepared and taught clear, well-structured lessons and used teacher questioning skilfully to elicit pupils' prior knowledge. They demonstrated very good subject knowledge, and their classroom management skills were also very good. While teachers engaged pupils in hands-on activities, these learning experiences were generally quite teacher-directed and pupils followed steps to complete experiments with pre-determined outcomes. There was scope for teachers to make greater provision for pupils to explore, investigate and find solutions to scientific questions more independently. This would serve to deepen pupils' understanding and further enable them to apply their learning practically.

During interactions with pupils in their classes and during a focus group discussion, pupils shared that they enjoyed their learning in Science. They reported particularly enjoying being able to research and present their own projects, and engaging in outdoor learning. They explained that they learned better by carrying out their own investigations and experiments than by completing a given task.

Teachers used an appropriate range of assessment practices, including checklists, teacher observation and pupils' work samples to record pupils' learning in Science. They were encouraged to keep observational notes on pupils while they engaged in focused talk and discussion activities and active discovery learning and to use this information to inform the next steps in teaching and learning.

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

The quality of school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE), in progressing pupils' learning was good. The whole-school plan included a very good guide for an integrated, thematic approach to the teaching of Science; it listed a scientific theme for each month and promoted links with other curriculum areas including Visual arts, Mathematics and English. It also linked learning in classrooms with whole-school initiatives, school trips and invited guests. Leaders and teachers were advised to further monitor the implementation of the guide across the school, and continue to adapt it according to the changing priorities of the school and the needs of the pupils.

As a DEIS school, leaders and teachers collaborated very effectively to gather meaningful evidence to inform the school improvement plan. The plan was detailed with clear, evidence-

based targets based on the school's identified priorities. As part of the plan, one of the priorities was to continue to use resources in the locality to enhance the teaching and learning of Science. A further priority was to arrange more visitors to promote pupils' learning in Science.

An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige
Department of Education and Youth

For the pupils of Scoil Naomh Mhuire about their learning in Science
Date of inspection: 05/11/2025 - 06/11/2025

Introduction

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

What did the inspector do during the visit ?

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:

- Pupils enjoyed learning Science.
- Pupils enjoyed researching and presenting their own projects during science week.
- Teachers were very good at bringing pupils to nearby parks and gardens and teaching them about plant and animal life and caring for the environment.

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

- Teachers should give pupils more opportunities to investigate and experiment themselves so that they have a better understanding of what they are learning.
- Teachers should teach pupils the scientific words linked to a topic in Science so that they are able to describe and discuss what they are learning.

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