

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Visual Arts

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil Mhuire Naofa
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Carrigtwohill Co Cork
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	18000W

Date of inspection: 22-02-2018



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 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.

Curriculum Evaluation

Date of inspection	22-02-2018
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal and teachers• Review of relevant documents• Pupil focus-group interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Mhuire Naofa is a co-educational primary school situated in the village of Carrigtwohill in East Cork. Pupil numbers in the school have grown rapidly in recent years. Enrolment at the time of the evaluation was 485 pupils. The school has seventeen mainstream class teachers and eleven support teachers.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is good, with some very good learning observed during the evaluation.
- High quality learning experiences are provided to pupils in the Visual Arts; the involvement of parents and the wider community in supporting the Visual Arts programme has added considerably to the quality of these experiences.
- The overall quality of teaching is good with teachers utilising the classroom and school environment effectively.
- There is a need to develop specific, age-appropriate language for pupils, to enable them to respond constructively to visual arts experiences and to describe some of the creative processes in which they engage.
- While teachers prepare purposeful learning activities for each strand of the Visual Arts, classroom planning would be enhanced by identifying specific learning outcomes for pupils and through the identification of whole-school approaches to classroom-based assessment.
- The overall quality of whole-school planning and school self-evaluation (SSE) is good and would benefit further from the documenting of the many good practices observed and discussed during the evaluation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pupils' age-appropriate language should be developed in a systematic manner to enable them to respond constructively to a range of visual art experiences.
- A clear and consistent whole-school approach to objective-based classroom planning and to the assessment of pupil progress should be developed.
- Future reviews of the school plan for the Visual Arts, supported by the SSE process, should clearly identify, consolidate and promote the many good practices in place throughout the school.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is good with some very good learning observed during the evaluation. They are facilitated to experience a broad and balanced Visual Arts programme as they progress through the school. The pupils are motivated and enjoy their art experiences which is evident in the observation of lessons and in pupils' engagement in the focus-group discussion. They have regular opportunities to explore and experiment within a range of two and some three-dimensional media. Pupils are facilitated to explore a variety of art styles that include the work of famous artists. Their engagement in design, in film and in robotics has added considerably to the quality of their learning. The junior pupils work with open-ended materials to promote creativity and to facilitate their engagement with the theme of *'Exploring and Thinking' through Aistear*.

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

- High quality learning experiences are provided for pupils. During the evaluation, the pupils were extremely well behaved and were managed by teachers in a caring and effective manner. The Visual Arts is integrated successfully with a range of other curriculum areas including Social Environmental and Scientific Education and literacy and numeracy. Management has welcomed the involvement of parents and the wider community in supporting the school's Visual Arts programme and their input has added to the quality of pupils' learning experiences. The playing of music during art activities makes for a relaxed and productive learning atmosphere. The pupils are facilitated to make art individually and collaboratively. They are provided with opportunities to present their work, to discuss the creative process, techniques, challenges and successes. This is praiseworthy practice. A good balance is achieved between making art and looking and responding exercises. In many lessons observed, an agreed template was utilised by pupils when looking and responding to the work of their peers and to the work of artists.
- The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers utilise the classroom and school environment effectively to promote and celebrate pupils' work in the Visual Arts. Lessons were well-organised and the pupils were active in the learning process. Teachers have access to a wide range of art materials that enable them to support and encourage the pupils' art development. Information and communications technology is utilised productively to explore and to research art. Teachers use a variety of stimuli as the starting point for art lessons that includes pupils' own ideas and experiences. Age-appropriate language should now be developed for pupils in a systematic manner, to enable them to respond constructively to visual art experiences, to identify important design elements and to describe some of the creative processes involved as they progress through the school.
- The overall quality of assessment in the school is satisfactory. There was evidence of effective practices in the assessment of and for learning in a minority of classrooms. A clear and consistent whole-school approach to classroom-based assessment in the Visual Arts should now be developed and implemented by all teachers.

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

- The overall quality of whole-school planning and SSE is good. The whole-school policy for the Visual Arts contains valuable guidance which informs classroom practice. However, the aspects of very good practice which featured in the teaching of the Visual Arts and which was documented in the school information form should now be reflected in the whole-school policy.

- The overall quality of classroom planning in progressing pupils' learning ranges is satisfactory. Some effective planning was in evidence in a minority of classrooms. Teacher's planning and preparation is devised collaboratively at each class level and facilitates a progression for the teaching and learning of the Visual Arts to a certain degree. Individual teacher's plans are in the main topic or content based. In the development of further good practice in classroom planning, an objective-based approach to teachers' short-term planning is advised. This approach should clearly identify specific learning outcomes for pupils.
- While the Visual Arts has not been addressed in formal school self-evaluation processes, school leaders regularly promote a culture of improvement, innovation and creativity in teaching and learning in this curriculum area.

4. CHILD PROTECTION

During the evaluation, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The school principal is aware that revised child protection procedures for primary and post-primary schools came into effect on 11 December 2017 and arrangements are in place to begin the process of implementing these procedures.
2. The name of the designated liaison person for child protection matters was prominently displayed near the main door of the school.
3. The school has a Child Protection policy in place.
4. The principal confirmed that all teachers have been made aware that they are mandated persons and that they have responsibilities in that regard.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

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 <i>very good</i> 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;