

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Music

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	S N Sliabh A Mhadra
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Ballyduff Tralee Co Kerry
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	03132I

Date of inspection: 10-10-2017



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 inspector evaluated learning and teaching in Music 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; a response was not received from the board.

Curriculum Evaluation

Date of inspection	10th and 11th October 2017
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

Sliabh A Mhadra N.S., Ballyduff is a Catholic mainstream school situated five kilometres from the town of Ballyduff. It has a staff of six mainstream teachers and three support teachers, all of whom are based in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- Pupils' learning in Music is of a very high standard; enabling pupils to communicate their reflections and opinions of music to a greater extent would further augment their learning.
- The school very successfully ensures that pupils' experiences of learning Music are varied and of a very high standard.
- The quality of teaching in Music varies from good to outstanding and great care is taken to ensure that pupils experience a broad, balanced and relevant music curriculum.
- While the school is not currently engaging in the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) process due to industrial action, it is working collaboratively to identify a more effective means of assessing pupils' progress in Music.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To further augment pupil learning, language specific to Music should be explicitly taught and pupils should be awarded increased opportunities to describe and verbally respond to musical compositions.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of pupils' learning in Music is of a very high standard. There is clear progression in the learning outcomes of pupils as they move from class to class. In each lesson, pupils were facilitated to develop an awareness of and sensitivity to the elements of music. They are keenly aware of the range of musical genres. A very good balance is struck between their exposure to Irish music and the Music of other cultures, styles and times.
- Pupils sing a wide repertoire of songs sweetly. A variety of percussion instruments is effectively employed to facilitate pupils to respond creatively to Music and to create their own musical compositions. Pupils have a very good knowledge of musical literacy and can added read and write Music using graphic symbols and musical notation. All pupils play a musical instrument confidently. A significant number of pupils attend after-school music lessons to further develop their musical skills.

- To further augment pupil learning in Music, it is recommended that language specific to Music is explicitly taught and that pupils are awarded increased opportunities to describe and verbally respond to musical compositions.

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

- Very high quality learning experiences are provided to the pupils in Music. Pupils were observed to actively participate in all lessons observed and to derive great pleasure and enjoyment from their lessons. They are afforded ample opportunities to demonstrate growing confidence and understanding when listening and responding to music and when performing and composing music.
- Music is very effectively integrated with other subjects particularly Drama, oral English, Visual Arts and the dance strand of the Physical Education curriculum. This good practice provides pupils with opportunities to apply the knowledge they have acquired to other areas of learning.
- In the course of a focus group interview, pupils spoke with pride of the many opportunities they are afforded to perform music at community and liturgical events, in competitions and for schools concerts.
- The quality of teaching in Music varies from good to outstanding. All teachers prepare comprehensively for the delivery of high quality lessons. Care is taken to ensure that pupils, regardless of ability, are facilitated to actively engage in performing, composing and listening and responding to music. Approaches and methodologies are thoughtfully selected to enable pupils to work collaboratively and to meet the varying abilities of the pupils.
- The quality of assessment is good. Excellent practice in the assessment for learning was observed in lessons. Recordings of performances facilitate pupils to reflect on their compositions and to identify the strengths and areas for development in their recitals. Peer tutoring is encouraged to very good effect. The school has identified the assessment of learning in Music as an area for development. DVDs and CDs of pupils' musical performances are made available to the wider community and evidence the very high standards of pupil attainment in Music.

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

- A comprehensive whole-school plan effectively informs teacher planning and practice in Music. This plan is reviewed cyclically and ratified by the board of management. Minutes of staff meetings indicate that teachers work collaboratively to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning. Lists of selected tin whistle tunes are organised by class along with suggested appropriate songs to be taught. An external tutor supports pupil learning in Music and teachers plan collaboratively with this tutor to ensure that a comprehensive programme of Music is delivered. There is no charge to pupils for availing of this service.
- The school reported that it is not currently engaging in the School Self-Evaluation process due to industrial action. Evidence available from school self-evaluation work conducted prior to the industrial action shows that the school had engaged productively in the SSE process. Teachers have, however, identified the area of assessment as a whole-school priority for development and they are currently working to identify the most appropriate means of assessing pupil progress in Music.

- The significant expertise of some teachers is very effectively shared with colleagues and this good practice has resulted in the building of collective expertise and the augmentation of pupils' learning outcomes and experiences in Music.

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 <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;