



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: History Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil Mháirtín
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Kilworth County Cork
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	20204E
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	28-02-2023
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	08/05/2023

What is a curriculum evaluation?

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

Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and tackle bullying

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:	
<i>Child Protection</i>	<i>Anti-bullying</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">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.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)</i> and this policy is reviewed annually.2. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides a report to the board at least once a term on the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template provided in the <i>Procedures</i>) since the previous report to the board.3. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils.

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

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Date of inspection	27-02-2023 – 28-02-2023
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 Mháirtín, Kilworth is a co-educational school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cloyne. At the time of the evaluation, the school had a staffing of an administrative principal, twelve mainstream class teachers, five special education teachers (SETs), and one part-time SET, shared with another local school. There were 302 pupils enrolled in the school at the time of the curriculum evaluation.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of pupils' learning was good. Pupils enjoyed their learning and presented as motivated learners who participated and engaged enthusiastically in their lessons.
- The overall quality of teaching was good with some very good practices observed; teachers effectively utilised a range of curriculum appropriate approaches to support teaching and learning.
- During the focus group discussion conducted during the evaluation, pupils spoke with enthusiasm of their learning in History.
- The overall quality of learning experiences provided for pupils was good with some very good experiences observed.
- There was good assessment of pupils' progress with a range of assessment tools effectively used.
- The overall quality of school planning was good.

Recommendations

- The practice of using timelines to show chronological order should be developed in all classrooms to assist pupils in their understanding of time and chronology.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

The overall quality of pupils' learning was good. Pupils enjoyed their learning and presented as motivated learners who participated and enthusiastically engaged in their lessons. Pupils could recount a range of stories, myths and legends and demonstrated a good understanding of local History. In senior classes, pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the strands *Early people and ancient societies* and *Life, society, work and culture in the past*. During observations it was noted that pupils' historical skills such as using evidence and empathy, were being incrementally developed to enable pupils to work as historians. While pupils in most class settings were confident in their abilities to recall past historical events, they were at times less

secure about their respective timelines. In some classes, timelines were used effectively to contextualise pupils' learning. This practice should be developed in all classrooms to assist pupils in their understanding of time and chronology. It was also noted that in many class groups pupils had a good understanding of change and continuity and most pupils could recall and describe previous learning experiences using appropriate language and terminology. However, pupils in some class settings found it difficult to recall details on aspects of their learning. In order to strengthen the ability of pupils to recall their previous learning in History, the focus of learning in some lessons should be refined and in some instances the content of the lesson reduced, with regular opportunities for pupils to make connections with prior knowledge and topics.

During the focus group discussion conducted during the evaluation, pupils spoke with enthusiasm about their learning in History. They reported that they enjoyed learning, especially when engaging in class projects, group work and studies about local History. History was integrated well with other curricular areas with pupils describing novels they have read associated with particular eras in History, the creation of historical objects in visual art lessons and report writing in English. Pupils described opportunities where they have utilised digital learning technologies (DLTs) to research history projects and how they display them on classroom and corridor displays.

2. Supporting pupils' learning: Learner experiences and teachers' practice

The overall quality of learning experiences provided for pupils was good with some very good experiences observed. Classroom displays promoted history projects completed by pupils with a good emphasis on a range of primary sources relevant to the topic. Very good use was made of DLTs to support pupils in conducting research on various history projects and completing projects on word documents. All pupils were given opportunities to engage in individual and collaborative activities. Pupils have experienced visits to local historical sites within the locality, for example, Kilworth castle and the Village Arts Centre. Pupils were active in their learning in most lessons observed. There is scope, however, to further develop pupils' engagement through activity-based learning experiences in some learning settings.

The overall quality of teaching was good with some very good practices observed. During lessons observed, teachers effectively utilised a range of methodologies to support teaching and learning. These included use of story, evidence, photographs, drama and role play. Most lessons observed were well structured, paced and presented. Where teaching and learning were most successful, open and inferential questions were used with an emphasis on active engagement during the lesson. Specific topics and activities to be taught and pupils' learning objectives were identified in teachers' recorded preparation. In some learning settings there is a potential to further develop the use of specific language used in history lessons, which will further support pupils ability to communicate with others during lessons taught. Commendably, pictures of local historical sites and work completed by pupils on relevant history projects were on display both inside and outside of classrooms.

There was good assessment of pupils' progress overall. A range of assessment tools was used effectively to assess pupils' progress. These included teacher observation, teacher-designed tasks and in some classes, peer and self-assessment. The practice of peer and self-assessment should be developed in all class settings to create opportunities for pupils to develop the skill of critically assessing their own work and the work of others. Commendably the practice of identifying skills development as part of teachers' assessment criteria for lessons was observed in some learning settings. This practice should be developed at a whole-school level.

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

The overall quality of school planning was good. The whole-school plan for History provided good guidance for many aspects of teachers' planning and is currently being reviewed by the school leadership team and the teachers. The school plan identified a number of approaches for teaching and learning and clearly allocated the strand units to each class. Commendably, local historical sites to support teaching and learning at each class level have been included in the school plan. To further support the continuity and progression in pupils' learning of local historical sites, the plan would benefit from further development with a particular focus on the specific skills and knowledge to be developed from the study of each site for the different class levels.

School leaders worked to promote a learning culture in the school where professional development was encouraged and facilitated. Good quality work has been undertaken in school self-evaluation in the areas of numeracy and literacy.

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	<i>Very good</i> 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 <i>outstanding</i> 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	<i>Good</i> 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	<i>Satisfactory</i> 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	<i>Fair</i> 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	<i>Weak</i> 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;