

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Science

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil Naomh Caitriona
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Bishopstown Ave Model Farm Road Corcaigh
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	18253F

Date of inspection: 03-04-2019



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agus Scileanna**
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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(s) evaluated learning and teaching in [Subject] 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 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.

CHILD PROTECTION

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

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.

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

Curriculum Evaluation

Date of inspection	03-04-2019
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 Naomh Cairtriona is a mainstream girls' primary school located near Model Farm Road in Cork city. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross and there are currently 438 pupils on roll. Staffing consists of an administrative principal, seventeen mainstream class teachers, five special education teachers and three special needs assistants.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning in Science is very good and pupils have many opportunities to engage positively in a wide range of interesting activities.
- Pupils demonstrate very high levels of curiosity and interest in Science and they enjoy engaging in the learning experiences provided.
- The quality of teaching in Science is very good: an additional focus on the designing and making skill and a whole-school approach to assessment would further enhance provision.
- The range and management of resources for the teaching of Science is very good.
- The quality of whole-school planning in Science is very good: there is scope to provide further detail on the study of the local environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers are advised to place an additional focus on developing the pupils' skill of designing and making as they engage with the four strands of the Science curriculum.
- The school should review its whole-school approach to assessment of Science with a particular focus on monitoring pupils' attainment of learning objectives at each class as they progress through the school.
- A more structured incremental whole-school approach to the study of aspects of the immediate and local natural environment should be included in the school's Science plan.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The quality of pupils' learning in Science is very good. Pupils demonstrated an interest and curiosity in the subject. In the lessons observed, they approached their work with enthusiasm and derived enjoyment from their learning activities. Positive, affirming interactions were observed in all the classrooms visited. A wide range of scientific skills have been successfully developed including predicting, observing and recording. Pupils' understanding of the concept of a fair test is very good. Opportunities are provided to ensure that pupils engage in individual reflection, paired discussion and collaborative activities. Their knowledge of their individual roles while working collaboratively is very well developed.

The school ensures broad strand coverage of the Science curriculum although there is some scope to place additional focus on providing opportunities for pupils to design and make in each of the strand units. This should provide an opportunity for pupils to further develop the creative and imaginative aspects of the scientific process.

Pupils are confident and knowledgeable when describing the science experiments which they have undertaken. They can clearly comment on what they have learned and link their specific knowledge to everyday life. They demonstrate a good understanding of science-based employment in the adult world. The school liaises with a variety of local institutions and organisations who visit the school regularly to speak on a variety of scientific topics.

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

The quality of pupils' learning experiences in Science is very good. Pupils are actively involved in a wide range of activities which include the Green Schools initiative, Discover Primary Science, Vex Robotics and BeBots. Annual events which further enhance pupils' scientific experiences include visits to the Lifetime Lab in Cork city, the Teddy Bear Hospital and the hatching of chickens in one of the classrooms. The school garden provides a rich resource for learning activities and for studying local habitats and ecosystems.

The quality of teachers' practice is very good. Teachers displayed very good teaching skills and used a wide range of appropriate methodologies. They have high expectations of their pupils. All lessons were based on clear learner outcomes and activities were well-structured and well-paced. There was a very defined focus on language development in lessons and effective use was made of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* in the junior classes. Pupils' topic specific vocabulary in Science was highly developed in the majority of classes. Good use was made of questioning and pupil discussion. These learner-centred conversations provided pupils with appropriate opportunities to reflect collaboratively. During the evaluation, very effective integration of Science with Mathematics, literacy and Geography was noted in many settings. All teachers prepare long and short-term planning and monthly progress reports.

Teachers assess pupils' learning through teacher observation, teacher questioning and teacher-designed tasks. All teachers retain samples of pupils' work in the four strands although there is some variation in how these records are maintained. In many settings, teachers complete checklists, retain photographic records and compile pupil portfolios. In some classrooms visited, pupils have started to complete self-assessment folders. In middle and senior classes, to facilitate revision and consolidation of learning, it is recommended that pupils maintain the record of their Science

activities in a separate copy. It is also recommended that the school reviews its whole-school approach to assessment with a particular focus on monitoring pupils' attainment of learning objectives in all classrooms.

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

The quality of whole-school planning in Science is very good. The Science plan supports the implementation of a broad and balanced programme over a two-year period and includes a useful environmental audit and a comprehensive listing of Science resources. The plan provides the teaching staff with very good guidance for curriculum implementation. This high quality whole-school planning has had a direct positive impact on classroom practice. Provision in Science would be further enhanced through the outlining of a more structured incremental whole-school approach to the study of aspects of the local environment in the school's whole-school plan.

The school has engaged successfully in the school self-evaluation (SSE) process. To date, improvement initiatives have been focused on aspects of literacy and numeracy.

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;

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Caitríona is delighted that the Inspectors' report on their Science Evaluation is so positive. The Board is pleased at the recognition of the school's many strengths and particularly its successes in the area of Science.

The Board found the affirmation of the curricular evaluation report to be a positive endorsement of the school's great work. The report also confirms the many good practices in existence in our school, and especially the high standard of teaching and learning, as well as the positive relationship between staff and pupils.

Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

The Board welcomes the Inspector's recommendations and the school will take steps to address all three recommendations in the coming academic year.