



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: Social Personal Health Education (SPHE) Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Bunscoil McAuley Rice
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Kilkenny Road Callan Co. Kilkenny
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	20255V
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	29-09-2022
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	17/11/2022

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 inspector(s) evaluated learning and teaching in Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) 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 school2. 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.

Curriculum evaluation

Date of inspection	29-09-2022
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

Bunscoil McAuley Rice is a mixed, vertical primary school situated in Callan town and is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ossory. At the time of the evaluation the school comprised seventeen mainstream class teachers, six special education teachers (SET) and one administrative principal; it had an enrolment of 416 pupils.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of the pupils' learning and learning experiences was very good overall; they enjoyed their learning in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE).
- The pupils were motivated to achieve as learners and were very respectful, attentive and courteous to each other and their teachers during lessons.
- School management and teachers ensured that a very positive school climate and atmosphere was created; they carefully planned the presentation of the school building which provides an excellent, vibrant and aesthetically pleasing environment which the pupils thoroughly enjoy.
- Overall, the quality of teachers' individual and collective practice was very good; teachers prepared very well for their lessons which included high quality resources and a range of effective approaches and methodologies.
- The quality of school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE), in progressing pupils' learning in SPHE was very good.
- The leadership provided by the principal for SPHE is very effective; he has supported teachers to engage in reflection and to participate in a wide range of professional development courses and facilitated opportunities and structures for teachers to share their learning.

Recommendations

- As a means of further developing pupils' understanding and use of language in SPHE it is recommended that teachers make explicit provision for key vocabulary in planning and teaching; during the next review of the SPHE plan the in-school management team should delineate the language to be taught per year level for each topic.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

The quality of the pupils' learning was very good overall. For the most part, it was evident that the pupils enjoyed their learning in SPHE and learning in this area significantly contributed to the pupils' overall sense of wellbeing. They were motivated to achieve as learners and were very respectful, attentive and courteous to each other and their teachers during lessons. In the pupil focus-group discussion all pupils reported that they enjoy their lessons and learning. The pupils demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of key aspects of the programme commensurate with their age, ability and class level. In particular, the pupils could listen to each other and respect different points of view. A deep knowledge of themselves as unique individuals

was also in evidence during classroom visits. The pupils had a good understanding of how to remain safe within their homes, school and community and discussed a range of strategies to implement in the event of bullying. Their ability to apply their learning to other aspects of the curriculum and to real life contexts was particularly praiseworthy. In a small number of instances, some pupils showed scope for development in terms of using and understanding subject specific language for SPHE. Some high quality samples of the pupils' writing and work in the visual arts that related to themselves and the world around them were on display in classrooms and communal areas of the school.

During classroom visits the pupils displayed competence in a range of skills; they co-operated and communicated very well with each other. They appreciated and respected the diversity that exists within the school community and the positive contributions of various cultural and social groups which has been successfully supported by the school's involvement in the Schools of Sanctuary Ireland programme.

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

The quality of the pupils' learning experience was very high. School management and teachers carefully planned the presentation of the school building which provides an excellent, vibrant and aesthetically pleasing environment which the pupils thoroughly enjoy. A very positive school climate and atmosphere was evident which supported health and wellbeing, nurtured self-confidence and self-worth and promoted respectful and caring relationships throughout the school. It was evident that the pupils' experiences in SPHE were significantly enhanced by participation in very effective lessons and a wide range of programmes such as the Green Schools, Active School Flag and Friends for Life programmes. The school has fostered very good links with the local community which successfully contributed to the pupils' learning experiences; it has worked with the GAA and its Five Star Programme for developing confidence and wellbeing in pupils and the local youth service to support transitions for sixth class pupils.

Overall, teachers' individual practice was very successful. Teachers demonstrated very effective classroom management skills and created very supportive and visually-attractive learning environments for SPHE. They used a variety of methodologies including whole-class teaching, pair work, group work, information and communications technology (ICT), story and Music. Very high quality resources were evident in lessons; teachers used pictures, photographs, presentations, concrete resources and artefacts skilfully. In general, the structure and pace of lessons was very effective. In a small number of lessons there was over use of teacher-directed approaches and whole-class teaching and questioning. In these instances, some pupils became disengaged and the focus of the lesson was compromised. All teachers should promote opportunities for more active learning at regular intervals in lessons to ensure that all the pupils are actively engaged. All teachers prepared to a very high standard. Plans, which were completed on a consistent basis, included specific learning objectives and a range of methodologies. To build on this effective practice, teachers should plan specific SPHE language and make this language explicit throughout the teaching of lessons.

Teachers have worked proactively to engage in professional learning that enhances provision in SPHE. The principal has supported teachers to engage in reflection and participate in a wide range of professional development courses. He has facilitated opportunities and structures for teachers to share their learning in SPHE through discussion at staff meetings and the sharing of material on a central folder on the school's ICT system. Leadership for aspects of the SPHE programme is delegated to specific members of the school staff, each of these teachers very effectively play a crucial role in upskilling their colleagues in their specific area of responsibility.

Overall, the quality of assessment in SPHE was of a good standard. All teachers made good use of questioning techniques to check for understanding. They circulated the room throughout in-class activities to observe pupils and copybooks were carefully monitored.

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

The quality of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning in SPHE was very good. The comprehensive whole-school plan guided teachers' planning and made provision for a broad and balanced programme in SPHE. It was contextualised to the needs of the school and reflected whole school decisions for the delivery of the curriculum. It provided useful guidance to teachers in relation to the content to be taught over a two-year period including provision for the various initiatives such as *Walk Tall, Stay Safe* and *Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)*. The SPHE plan is due for review in 2022/2023. As a means of supporting teachers in the planning for, and teaching of, specific language in SPHE it is recommended that school management extends the whole school plan to make the key vocabulary and language within SPHE more explicit per topic for each class level.

At the time of the evaluation, the school had identified wellbeing as a focus for SSE and has commenced the process in this regard.

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;