



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: History Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil Dhairebhre
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Cruary Clonakilty Co. Cork
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	13125R
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	20-01-2023
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	22/03/2023

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 inspector 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.

Curriculum evaluation

Date of inspection	20-01-2023
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 Dhairbhre is a rural co-educational primary school, under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross. At the time of the inspection, there were twenty-four pupils enrolled in the school. Staffing comprised two mainstream class teachers, two special education teachers (SETs) and one special-needs assistant.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of pupils' learning in History was good; they demonstrated an age-appropriate knowledge and understanding of a range of accounts, myths and stories associated with historical events.
- The quality of teaching was good overall with some very good practice observed.
- Individual teachers' preparation was effective in guiding teaching and learning.
- The quality of assessment in History was satisfactory.

Recommendations

- Teachers should work together to develop and implement a whole-school approach to assessment in History.
- Teachers should make greater use of the classroom and the immediate school environment to provide opportunities for the pupils to create displays and timelines to reinforce key skills and concepts.
- The staff should ensure that the whole-school history plan reflects the school's multi-grade settings and informs the implementation of a broad and balanced history curriculum.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

The overall quality of pupils' learning in History was good and pupils' enjoyment in learning was evident during the evaluation. Pupils, in all classes, demonstrated an age-appropriate knowledge and understanding of a range of accounts, myths and stories associated with historical events. They had a commendable understanding of concepts such as Time and chronology, Story and *Early peoples and ancient societies*. Interactions amongst pupils themselves and with their teachers were very positive and respectful and pupils demonstrated an enquiring attitude towards themselves and those around them.

Pupils in the junior room engaged in sequencing activities to develop their chronological understanding. The strand of *Change and continuity* was explored in an effective manner through class discussion and during comparison activities using old photographs of shops in a nearby town. The pupils explored the strand *Myself and my family* by conducting interviews with

grandparents. Evidence from these was used to gain an effective appreciation and understanding of the skills of time and chronology and empathy. Senior-class pupils competently demonstrated their learning on *Early people and ancient societies* by means of mind maps in copybooks, composition of themed rhymes and collaborative group discussion. Teachers should now make greater use of the classroom and the immediate school environment to provide opportunities for the pupils to create displays and timelines to further reinforce historical skills and concepts.

During the focus group discussion, pupils in senior classes reported enjoying history lessons and that project work and excursions to local historical sites enhanced their learning. They have used digital technologies regularly for research and enjoy learning History through Drama and Art. They made commendable links between History and other subject areas and this has enabled them to gain a deeper understanding of the events studied.

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

The quality of learner experiences was good. Pupils were engaged purposefully in meaningful learning activities. History was effectively integrated with work in other curricular areas including Art, Music and, in junior classes, was frequently taught through *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. In some highly commendable lessons, pupils developed collaborative learning skills through engagement in well-structured group work. In senior classes, pupils had opportunities to engage in active and discovery-based learning about Roman civilisation. These activities helped pupils to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for their learning. Due to the close proximity of the school to areas of rich historical significance, pupils have had opportunities to study and visit some local sites. A historical trail and guided walk of the local town were being prepared by the staff. Links with local community groups were being planned and were aimed at enabling pupils to engage with and acquire an understanding of a range of perspectives of local and national history. To further complement these activities, teachers should ensure that the whole-school plan includes guidance on local areas of historical interest and details of available guest speakers and artefacts.

Teachers modelled enthusiasm for and enjoyment of History. The lessons observed had clear learning outcomes and were appropriate to individual pupils' learning needs. Teachers' individual planning and preparation informed effective practice for teaching and learning. The teaching approaches in use in classrooms included good use of story and personal and family histories and were supported by effective use of information and communications technology.

The quality of assessment in History was satisfactory. Some good examples of informal assessment strategies such as teacher questioning and self-assessment activities were observed. The staff should now agree and implement a broader range of whole-school approaches to assessment to include recording and documenting of pupil's progress.

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

The quality of planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE) was good. The principal and in-school management team have promoted a culture of improvement and collaboration in teaching and learning in History. The whole-school plan for History outlined the skills and content to be taught throughout the school. This plan should be further developed to reflect the school's multi-grade settings and inform the implementation of a broad and balanced curriculum.

The most recent focus of SSE was on wellbeing and many commendable initiatives have been embedded in school practice. The staff has prioritised the development of pupils' sense of belonging to the wider community as the next phase in the promotion of wellbeing in SSE.

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;