

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Physical Education

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil Náisiúnta an tSaileáin
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Sylane Tuam County Galway
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	06489S

Date of inspection: 29-09-2017



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 Physical Education 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	29-09-2017
Inspection activities undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal and teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal and teachers• Review of relevant documents• Pupil focus-group interview	

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Náisiúnta an tSaileáin is a co-educational primary school located in Sylane outside Tuam, County Galway. It caters for pupils from junior infants to sixth class and is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam. There are currently four mainstream teachers and two support teachers on the staff, and at the time of the evaluation there were ninety-five pupils enrolled. As the school is awaiting the building of an extension, third and fourth class are currently being taught in a portion of the hall.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of learning in Physical Education is very good, although learning in outdoor and adventure activities is not as comprehensively developed as in other strands.
- The quality of support provided to pupils through their learning experiences is very good.
- External tutors provide instruction in certain areas of the curriculum and, in some cases, the allocation of time to each strand is unbalanced as a result.
- The quality of teaching in PE is of a very high standard throughout the school.
- The quality of whole-school planning in PE is good, and teachers frequently engage with relevant professional development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The teaching staff should plan for and implement a more comprehensive programme of work for developing pupil learning in the outdoor and adventure activities strand of the PE curriculum.
- The practice whereby external tutors provide instruction to pupils in the PE curriculum should be reviewed and adapted to ensure that this instruction is appropriately time-bound and in line with the expectations of the PE curriculum in all cases.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The overall quality of pupils' learning in PE is very good. Pupil engagement in lessons and enjoyment levels are very high. Active learning is a key feature. Notably, pupil learning in all settings observed was focused on the development of relevant PE skills, and, in most settings, these skills were transferred in a highly effective manner to relevant and appropriate skills-based games. Pupils in the focus-group spoke highly of the school's emphasis on skills development, and were very positive about the impact it has on their overall achievement levels in PE. In most settings, progression in pupil learning was very evident throughout the lesson. Furthermore, pupils can describe and demonstrate key learning points across most strands of the curriculum effectively. However, records

from the last school year indicate that learning in the outdoor and adventure activities strand of the curriculum has not been developed as comprehensively as in the other strands. Consequently, pupil learning in outdoor and adventure activities should be further developed across the school.

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

The learning experiences provided for pupils in PE are very good. Notwithstanding the fact that the school is limited on teaching space for PE at present, the teachers provide highly commendable learning experiences for pupils within these constraints. Interactions between teachers and pupils are very respectful and co-operative, affirming learning environments are created. Very good quality resources are used, and displays are used very successfully to support pupil learning in one setting. The inclusion of pupils with special educational needs is highly commendable, and well-being is very well promoted through the PE programme taught. Furthermore, the level of voluntary work done by teachers in providing extra-curricular activities for pupils is highly commendable. A number of external tutors provide instruction to pupils during their allocated weekly PE time, and, in most cases, this instruction is appropriately time-bound in line with the PE curriculum. However, in some cases, the amount of time dedicated to particular areas of the curriculum by external tutors is not in line with the expectations of the *Primary School Curriculum*, and, as such, some pupils receive an unbalanced experience of the curriculum. This practice should be reviewed and adapted to ensure balance across the PE curriculum.

Pupil learning in PE is supported very effectively through teachers' practice. All teachers demonstrate very competent knowledge of the PE curriculum. The lessons observed were very well prepared and the management of pupils was of a very high quality. A range of very effective teaching approaches was noted and, where best practice was observed, pupils' learning was supported through explicit whole-class instruction and demonstration of key learning points, followed by targeted assistance for pupils needing additional support. Learning in each of the lessons observed was very effectively consolidated. The integration of literacy, numeracy and the Irish language into some lessons is highly commendable, and should be extended throughout the school.

Highly commendable assessment practices are in place for PE. Each teacher gathers very relevant assessment data to record pupil progress, using checklists, peer observations and feedback, and self-assessment tasks. Some very astute teacher observations were recorded in the assessment files. The school should now seek to further develop these strategies by incorporating relevant information and communications technology (ICT) tools into assessment.

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

The overall quality of school planning is good. The whole-school plan for PE was redrafted and ratified by the board of management in 2016, and it provides some good guidance for teaching and learning that is linked explicitly to the *Primary School Curriculum (1999)*. A whole-school approach to the timetabling of each of the strands of the curriculum is outlined, although the implementation of this across the school is varied. To ensure that all strands are developed sufficiently, the next review of the school plan should incorporate more explicit guidance around the expectations at each class level for pupil learning in each of the strands. A key feature of the school's approach to PE is the commitment to continuing professional development, and the sharing of expertise and resources within the staff. This highly commendable and collaborative approach to planning and instruction should be optimised to ensure that the delivery of the full curriculum is embedded in practice.

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;