

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills**

**Curriculum Evaluation
History**

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Carrickerry NS
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Carrickerry Athea County Limerick
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	11280T

Date of Evaluation: 14-02-2017



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 History under the following headings:

1. Quality of pupils' learning
2. Supporting pupils' learning through learning 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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

Curriculum Evaluation

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Date of inspection	14-02-2017
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal• 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

Carrickerry N.S. is a two-teacher, co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Limerick. There is also a learning support teacher based in the school and two resource teachers, not school based, work with pupils with special educational needs. Fifty-two pupils are currently enrolled in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of learning in History ranges from satisfactory to good.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of historical skills and concepts but should be facilitated to use these skills to engage in active research and project work more frequently.
- The learning experiences provided to pupils in History are good and teachers employ a range of methodologies effectively to implement the curriculum.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on developing pupils' awareness and understanding of the history of their locality.
- While the school plan for History adequately informs teachers' practice, it should be developed further to define the content to be addressed at each class level, the methodologies through which content is taught and to establish agreed criteria on which attainment is assessed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pupils should be facilitated to engage in active research and independent project work more frequently.
- An increased focus should be placed on developing pupils' awareness and understanding of local history across the school.
- The school plan for History should give greater guidance to teachers regarding the selection of content to be taught, methodologies and approaches used to implement the History programme and in the assessment of pupils' progress.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING IN SUBJECT

- The overall quality of pupils' learning in History ranges from satisfactory to good. In both learning settings pupils demonstrate a good understanding of historical skills and concepts. In junior classes pupils discuss personal timelines, significant events in their young lives, life in their grandparents' time and school games in the past with interest and enthusiasm. They recall the detail of myths,

legends and the story of national figures that they have learned about in History, well. In middle and senior classes, pupils are quick to order and sequence historical events that they have studied and they are able to discuss the cause and effect of such events with appropriate understanding. Pupils question information on historical topics and the authenticity of historical artefacts with awareness and skill. While they have studied some aspects of local history, greater emphasis should be placed on developing pupils' awareness and understanding of the history of their locality. Planned opportunities to engage pupils' in research projects and fieldwork systematically would actively develop their skills, knowledge and attitudes in History to a high level. While appropriate emphasis is placed on developing pupils' understanding of topics in History orally, pupils should also be encouraged to record their learning in a variety of ways and to communicate their learning to a variety of audiences.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS' LEARNING IN SUBJECT: LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS' PRACTICE

- Pupils' learning experiences in History are good and they presented as engaged and interested learners in both learning settings. In the focus-group discussion, pupils stated that they enjoyed the range of approaches used to teach History particularly the use of historical novels, story, poetry, music and drama. Good use is made of information and communication technologies to support teaching and learning. The school has developed a comprehensive file on local history and has recently sourced a number of interesting artefacts. Greater use should be made of these resources and local expertise to support the implementation of the History curriculum. Display areas to celebrate pupils' work in History have been created in the school.
- The quality of teachers' practice ranged from satisfactory to good. Talk and discussion was used effectively in the lessons observed to elicit pupils' prior experience of topics and previous learning. The structure and pace of lessons was good and resources were used to good effect to support learning. Good links were made between History, Geography and Social, Personal and Health Education in the lessons taught. Opportunities were provided for pupils to work collaboratively and their learning in the topics taught was effectively consolidated. Learning intentions and activities should be differentiated further however, to reflect the varying abilities of pupils in each learning setting. The displaying of timelines and key language relevant to the topics taught in History is advised.
- The overall quality of assessment is satisfactory. Teachers used a range of assessment strategies during the evaluation including teacher observation, teacher designed tasks and pupil portfolios. Pupils' progress in History is discussed at parent-teacher meetings. It is necessary to align the learning expectations of pupils more closely with assessment criteria in order to further progress pupils' learning outcomes.

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

- The quality of whole-school planning for History is satisfactory. It is commendable that the whole-school plan for History was revised in 2015 and that individual teacher planning for the teaching of History is completed consistently. While the whole-school plan informs teachers of the broad objectives of the History curriculum, teachers' individual planning is heavily reliant on commercial texts. The school plan for History should be developed further to define the specific content to be addressed at each class level and the methodologies through which this content is taught.

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 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

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The BOM of Carrickerry N.S. welcomes the recognition of the quality of the learning experiences provided to the children.

We are aware that the children enjoy History as a subject, and that the development of historical skills is ongoing in both classrooms.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

- Work has started on revising the school History plan, following the recommendation that the school moves away from using a commercial scheme. This work will be completed for the school year 2017- 2018.
- A more structured approach to the teaching of local history will enhance the work being done.
- The school will explore the possibilities for active fieldwork and for research.