



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	S N Clochar Mhuire
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Rosslare Co. Wexford
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	168790
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	20-09-2022
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	29/11/2022

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 [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 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	20-09-2022
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

Scoil Naomh Clochar Mhuire, Rosslare is a co-educational, primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ferns. Recent changes in the school community have resulted in fluctuations in enrolment. At the time of the evaluation, it had an enrolment of 188 pupils and school staff comprised one administrative principal, seven mainstream class teachers, a team of three full-time and one part-time special educational needs teachers (SETs), one part-time Home School Liaison teacher (HSCL) and one part-time English as an Additional Language (EAL) teacher. It is an English medium school and caters for pupils from junior Infants to sixth class. It was recently included in Delivering Equality of opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education for educational inclusion.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of pupils' learning in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) was very good.
- Pupils presented as enthusiastic and motivated learners who displayed well developed social and co-operative skills.
- Pupils experienced a very warm and affirming atmosphere, and a very strong sense of community was cultivated in the school.
- The teaching of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) was of a very good quality overall, with highly effective teaching evident in a number of settings.
- Teachers responded effectively to the needs of pupils and implemented a number of very beneficial programmes to progress and support pupils' learning and wellbeing.
- The overall quality of planning in SPHE was of a good standard; the school has engaged very well with the school self-evaluation (SSE) process and identified wellbeing as a specific area for focus during the next phase of its SSE process.

Recommendations

- There is a need to review and update the whole-school plan in SPHE to bring it more fully in line with current practice, the changing context of the school and relevant guidelines.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

The overall quality of pupils' learning in SPHE was very good. Pupils presented as enthusiastic and motivated learners who displayed very well-developed social and cooperative skills. They had a good understanding of healthy living and participated well in a meaningful range of activities that promoted and sustained healthy behaviour. Pupils had a well-developed understanding of safety and learn appropriate strategies and language for managing feelings and emotions. They were encouraged to listen to and

respect the views of others, develop caring relationships and be discerning about the various influences on their choices and decisions. Through their engagement in the school's Yard warden system, pupils practised their problem-solving skills as they supported younger pupils during play in the school playground. In the pupil focus-group discussion, pupils reported that they enjoy their learning in SPHE and expressed the view that learning in these lessons helps them to cope better with real-life situations. Some pupils expressed a preference for the greater use of digital technologies to support their learning in SPHE.

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

Pupils experienced a very warm and affirming school atmosphere. The positive school climate supported pupils' sense of self-worth and well-being. A very strong sense of community was cultivated through the support of parents, the local parish and community. The classrooms and environs promoted an appreciation for SPHE. Display boards celebrated pupil's work, including a collective approach to the promotion of whole-school rules, positive slogans and acts of kindness. The pupils' self-confidence was nurtured in weekly assemblies where pupils' achievements were celebrated. Pupils were provided with opportunities to partake in a broad range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities that support a healthy lifestyle. The school grounds were bright, engaging and very well-maintained. They included wildflower and sensory gardens. Interactions between staff and pupils were very respectful, reciprocal and affirmative. Teachers responded effectively to the needs of pupils and implemented a number of beneficial programmes to progress and support pupils' learning and well-being. Pupils were afforded opportunities to develop citizenship through their participation in committees, including the Student Council, Green Schools, and recently established Wellbeing and Health committee.

SPHE was delivered in discrete lessons, thematic blocks and integrated with other curriculum subjects including the Arts, English and SESE. The teaching of SPHE was of a very good quality overall, with highly effective teaching evident in a number of settings. Teachers generally prepared well-structured, purposeful lessons enabling pupils to participate actively in the learning activities. Teachers had high expectations for pupils' learning. Pupils were provided with a broad selection of resources to support their learning, including video clips, power point presentations, stories and concrete materials. Teachers engaged very diligently in a range of continuing professional development (CPD) courses relevant to pupils' learning in SPHE.

Teachers made good use of questioning techniques and teacher observation of pupils' learning. In some settings, valuable use was made of pupil self-assessment techniques, motivational feedback and baseline assessment of skills, guided by the whole-school plan for the rotation of assessment approaches.

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

The overall quality of planning in SPHE was of a good standard. The whole-school plan for SPHE, which was reviewed in 2016, was designed as a two-year programme and outlined the contexts for teaching SPHE and the strategies to be employed. Through the whole-school planning processes, pupils were provided with a programme in SPHE that typically included the three strands of the curriculum. However, there is a need to review

and update the whole-school plan in SPHE to bring it more fully in line with current practice, the changing context of the school and relevant guidelines.

The school has engaged very well with the SSE process. It has identified wellbeing as a specific area for focus during its next phase of SSE. This is noted and welcomed in light of its recent inclusion as part of the Department's DEIS action plan for educational inclusion. As part of the planning process for the delivery of the school's own DEIS plan, a particular emphasis on monitoring the effectiveness of actions and interventions is advised.

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;