

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

**Curriculum Evaluation**  
**History**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Bodyke National School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Bodyke Co Clare
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	11990E

**Date of inspection: 18-09-2017**



## **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 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 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

<b>Date of inspection</b>	18-09-2017
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion with principal</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Pupil focus-group interview</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Feedback to principal</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Bodyke National School is a co-educational school situated in Bodyke, Co. Clare. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Diocese of Killaloe. The staff consists of two mainstream class teachers and a shared support teacher. At the time of the evaluation, there were twenty-five pupils enrolled in the school.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- Overall, the quality of pupils' learning in History is good. Pupils' learning in the subject is displayed attractively at classroom level.
- Pupils are provided with very high quality learner experiences in History.
- Teachers' practice in the teaching of History is of a high quality, overall.
- The cross-curricular approach to the teaching of History is highly commendable. The use of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is supporting this process very effectively in the junior classes.
- A wide range of strategies, including pupil self-reflection, is used to assess pupils' learning in History.
- School planning is supporting pupils' learning in History effectively. However, in a few of the lessons observed the lesson content and the learning activities were not devised appropriately to provide the correct level of challenge for pupils.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- In planning for learning in History, teachers should ensure that the content, vocabulary and learning tasks for lessons are devised effectively to provide the appropriate level of challenge for all pupils.

### DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

Overall, the quality of pupils' learning in History is good. During the evaluation process, most pupils were observed to be actively and positively engaged in their learning in History. Pupils in the focus-group interview indicated that they enjoy their learning in History and are motivated to learn in the subject through engagement in a wide range of learner experiences.

In their interactions with the inspector, pupils in all settings were competent and confident in applying their knowledge in History across a range of curricular concepts. A review of the assessment data and pupils' copies at middle and senior class level indicated that the majority of pupils are making good progress in History across a range of strands. Pupils in all classes displayed a

high level of confidence in their ability to work as historians. The majority of pupils demonstrated a good understanding of time and chronology. They were able to use and interpret evidence effectively. In middle and senior classes, pupils displayed a commendable understanding of the skill of cause and effect in their learning in History.

Where learning in History was of a very high quality, pupils were engaged in meaningful and purposeful learning activities. These activities had been devised and differentiated appropriately to ensure high quality learning outcomes for all pupils. This highly effective practice should be extended at whole-school level.

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

Overall, pupils are supported in their learning in History through their engagement in very high quality learner experiences. Pupils are enabled to work independently and collaboratively as historians. Pupils' knowledge and skills in History are developed through access to a wide range of historical evidence and artefacts. These include photographs, costumes, research articles and the use of information and communications technology (ICT).

The engagement of pupils in projects such as the *Fís Film Project* is highly commendable. This engagement is supporting pupils in the synthesis of their learning in History at a local and national level. Pupils in all classes are afforded opportunities to explore History through a range of field trips, which are linked effectively to curricular strands.

Pupils' learning in History is displayed attractively at classroom level. To build on this good practice, the wider school environment should be further developed to promote an appreciation of the subject.

Teachers' practice in the teaching of History is of a high quality, overall. The whole-school emphasis on the use of higher-order vocabulary and on teaching the discrete language of History is praiseworthy. Notwithstanding this, teachers need to ensure that the vocabulary being explored by pupils in lessons is appropriate to their developmental level. The cross-curricular approach to the teaching of history and the use of story by teachers is highly effective. This practice supports pupils in forging links in their learning across a range of curricular subjects. The development of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* to support this process in junior classes is highly commendable.

Teachers outline clear objectives in their planning for lessons in History and these learning objectives are shared with the pupils. In a few of the lessons observed, the learning content and the learning activities were not targeted appropriately to support high quality learning outcomes for pupils. In their planning for History, teachers should ensure that the lesson content and the learning tasks for lessons are devised at an appropriate level for pupils.

The overall quality of assessment in History is good. Teachers use a range of strategies to assess pupils' learning in the subject, including teacher observation and teacher-designed tasks and tests. The use of ICT as an assessment tool for History is supporting pupils effectively in the junior classes, through their reflection of themselves as learners. The introduction of pupil self-assessment learning (SALF) folders for History is highly commendable. At senior class level, regular assessment of the learning concepts provides pupils with evidence of their progress in learning in History. This effective approach was noted, also, by pupils in the focus-group interview. To further develop this good

practice, assessment across a wider range of curricular strands should be implemented at all class levels.

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

Overall, school planning in History is supporting pupils' learning in History effectively. Commendably, the whole-school plan for History was recently reviewed on a collaborative basis. The plan provides very effective guidance to teachers in ensuring breadth and balance across curricular strands.

As part of this review process, it is notable that teachers identified areas for improvement in teaching and learning in History. Strategies to improve these areas are currently being implemented across the school. There was evidence during the evaluation that these improvement strategies are impacting positively on teaching and learning in History in the classroom.

### **4. 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.

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

## **Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board of Management of Bodyke N.S. welcomes this very positive report. We are very pleased that the high quality of teacher's practice has been recognised and the cross-curricular approach to the teaching of History has been highly commended, in particular the engagement of pupils in projects such as the Fís Film Project and the very effective use of Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. We are also delighted that the very high quality learner experiences the pupils are provided with in History have been affirmed, and that pupils in all settings were competent and confident in applying their knowledge in History and displayed a high level of confidence in their ability to work as historians.

## **Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection**

The staff and Board of Management of Bodyke N.S. acknowledge the findings contained in this report. As affirmed in the report, our whole-school emphasis on the use of higher-order vocabulary and on teaching the discrete language of History is praiseworthy. The teaching staff will now endeavour to ensure that the vocabulary being explored is appropriate to the pupils' developmental level and will ensure assessment across a wider range of curricular strands at all class levels going forward.

The report recognised that pupils' learning in History is displayed attractively at classroom level. To build on this good practice, we have mounted display boards at the school entrances to further develop and promote an appreciation of the subject in the wider school environment.

## 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
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;