

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Mary Mother Of Hope Junior National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Littlepace Castaheany Dublin 15
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	20309S

Date of inspection: 11-04-2018



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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 inspectors evaluated learning and teaching in SPHE 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.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

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.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Curriculum Evaluation

Date of inspection	11-04-2018
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal and teachers• Review of relevant documents	<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

Mary Mother of Hope JNS is a large, co-educational, junior school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. Situated in Littlepace, in the parish of Huntstown, the school shares a campus with its senior school. The school has 455 pupils enrolled.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- This welcoming school effectively supports the pupils' health and wellbeing, nurtures their self-confidence and promotes respectful and caring relationships among staff and pupils alike.
- The quality of the pupils' learning outcomes in SPHE is very good.
- The quality of teaching of SPHE, including support teaching, is highly commendable.
- The pupils' learning experiences are of a very high quality: they are rich and varied and are enhanced by teachers' use of excellent resources.
- The school engages in very effective collaborative planning at all levels, including action planning for school improvement.
- While assessment of pupils' learning in SPHE is undertaken by all teachers, for the most part assessment practices are teacher-led.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should extend their assessment approaches to include pupil-led assessment, whereby pupils are enabled to think about what they have learned and assess their own effort and success.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The quality of pupils' learning is very good. The pupils confidently demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding required by the SPHE curriculum. They are enthusiastic learners. The pupils exhibit excellent skills of communication, cooperation, decision-making and problem solving. Their interactions and relationships are based on kindness and respect, which are at the heart of the positive school rules. The pupils show appropriate understanding of healthy living and can make informed choices appropriate to their ages and stages of development. Many pupils speak with pride about their successful engagement in the programmes for Green Schools and the Active Flag, and they demonstrate respect and responsibility for the environment.

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

The quality of support for the pupils' learning is very good. SPHE permeates all areas of school life and staff members are praised for the manner in which they contribute to the positive school atmosphere. The school building and all classrooms are educationally stimulating and promote an appreciation of SPHE. The school actively seeks to affirm and celebrate the pupils' achievements regularly through assemblies, announcements and displays. Through engaging in well-delivered mandatory and supplementary programmes, the pupils are enabled to develop important life skills and gain an understanding of themselves and others. Pupils have opportunities to engage in the democratic process through their committee work. An integrated approach to SPHE learning is undertaken encompassing other subject areas as well as through *Aistear*, the early-childhood curriculum framework. The school fosters very good home-school links and there is a strong sense of belonging among the school community.

The quality of teaching, including support teaching, is highly commendable. Team teaching is long established in the delivery of the SPHE curriculum. Teachers skilfully use excellent resources as well as a wide range of teaching approaches including teacher-modelling, talk and discussion, and active learning. The pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively in pairs and groups. The good practice observed of sharing learning intentions with pupils, signposting these throughout lessons and revisiting at the end of lessons, merits extension throughout the school. Teachers are supported by school management to undertake professional development and share their practice. Through the effective leadership in the school, the teachers' collective practice in SPHE is at a very high standard. Assessment of SPHE is undertaken by all teachers, primarily through teacher observation and the use of anecdotal notes and portfolios. It is recommended that teachers incorporate approaches which also focus on pupil-led assessment, including pupil self-assessment and the use of assessment-for-learning strategies.

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

The quality of school planning, including action planning, is very good. A collaborative and consultative approach to whole-school planning in SPHE is undertaken. Excellent guidance is provided to all teachers on all aspects of SPHE. There is very good communication with parents regarding SPHE in general as well as the specific mandatory programmes of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) and Stay Safe. All teachers engage in collaborative planning which is carefully tailored by each teacher to the specific needs of their individual class. The school has skilfully used the school self-evaluation (SSE) process to address priority areas in the past and it is currently engaging in effective action planning to support further improvement in SPHE and to attain the status of a Health Promoting School.

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 in 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;