

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

**Curriculum Evaluation**

**Music**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Shellybanks Educate Together National School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Simmons court Road Ballsbridge Dublin 4
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	20441S

**Date of inspection: 09-05-2019**



---

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

## **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 Music 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.

## **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

<b>Date of inspection</b>	09-05-2019
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion with acting principal and acting deputy 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 acting principal, acting deputy principal and teachers</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Shellybanks Educate Together National School is a co-educational school which operates under the patronage of Educate Together. The school continues to develop and currently caters for the educational needs of pupils from junior infants to third class. There are 240 pupils enrolled and their educational needs are supported by ten mainstream class teachers and four special education teachers. At the time of the evaluation, the principal and deputy principal were carrying out their duties in an acting capacity.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning in Music is good, with pupils demonstrating high levels of enjoyment of, and engagement in their learning; pupils' repertoire of songs could be further developed.
- Teaching in Music is of a high quality overall, with scope to develop the teaching of musical literacy and composing.
- School planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE), is commendable overall; aspects of whole-school planning for Music need review.
- The school promotes and celebrates Music very positively; all pupils are effectively included in the high-quality learning experiences provided.
- Resources for Music are well managed with scope to further enhance the use of digital technologies in the area of composing.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school should ensure that pupils in each class learn an agreed repertoire of songs.
- The strand unit of literacy and the strand of composing should be systematically and progressively taught at each class level and digital technologies should be consistently used to record and assess pupils' learning achievements in composing.
- The whole-school plan for Music should be reviewed to ensure that it comprehensively guides teachers' classroom practice, and that it fully reflects all aspects of the school's provision for Music.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

The quality of pupils' learning in Music is good. Pupils demonstrate high levels of enjoyment of, and engagement in their music learning. Their active listening skills are well developed and they respond to Music in a variety of ways, including through talk and discussion, movement and art activities. Pupils have a clear sense of attainment regarding their learning outcomes in Music. During the pupil focus-group discussion, participants expressed how they enjoy identifying areas for improvement in their music learning and subsequently monitoring their progress.

Pupils in all classes sing rhythmically with a good sense of intonation. They have learned a range of songs and their singing is effectively supported through the use of audio technology and, in some cases, by instrumental accompaniment provided by individual teachers. In order to enhance their overall confidence in performing, pupils now need to acquire and consolidate a wider repertoire of songs in Irish and in English. The repertoire should also include songs that reflect the diverse nature of the school population.

Pupils achieved the intended learning outcomes in the course of the music lessons observed. Their knowledge of the musical concepts of pitch, pulse, and dynamics is very good. This good learning now needs to be extended across the other musical concepts so that their incremental understanding of duration, tempo, structure, timbre, texture, and style is systematically developed and consolidated at each class level. Pupils in the focus group indicated that they would like more time to engage with the composing strand of the curriculum in the course of their music learning.

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

The support for pupils' learning in Music is good overall, and is provided through a commendable range of learning experiences. Learning in Music takes place in very positive learning environments; interactions observed between teachers and pupils, and among pupils, were consistently positive and mutually respectful. The enjoyment of Music is promoted in the school and pupils have opportunities to perform to a range of audiences through their participation in regular school assemblies and school concerts. Teachers provide extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to learn to play an instrument.

Pupils avail of a range of resources in the course of their music lessons, including a wide variety of recently purchased percussion instruments, and the commendable use of digital technologies in some settings. Pupils in the focus group stated that they would like access to a greater variety of tuned instruments, such as ukuleles and violins. As the school develops to cater for pupils in all classes from infants to sixth class, a whole-school strategy should be devised and implemented to ensure that all pupils have an opportunity to learn to play an instrument.

Pupils are enabled to work collaboratively in the course of their lessons. They are provided with ample opportunities to explore sounds, to listen and respond to Music, and to engage in song singing, literacy activities and the playing of percussion instruments. The pupils now need more regular, structured and sustained opportunities to engage in the composing strand of the curriculum, particularly with regard to monitoring and assessing their learning through the use of digital technologies.

The teaching of Music in the school is good, overall. Teachers demonstrate enthusiasm for the teaching of Music. They deliver lessons which are well structured, paced appropriately and which succeed in motivating pupils to engage in their learning. Lesson content and activities are appropriately differentiated to ensure that all pupils are included in the learning. Resources are effectively used during lessons, including very effective use of digital technologies in some settings. Teachers prepare good quality learning tasks and activities in support of pupils' learning, particularly in the strands of listening and responding, and performing. All teachers should ensure that a tuned instrument is utilised to support pupils to commence singing in an appropriate key, and that rhythmic exercises are practised consistently with a clear sense of timing. There is scope to develop the incremental and systematic teaching of literacy in Music. A closer adherence by individual teachers to the guidance provided in the music curriculum, along with an agreed whole-school programme regarding the teaching of literacy in Music, are advised. All teachers are encouraged to make further use of digital technologies to support pupils' engagement in talking about and recording their compositions.

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

The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning in Music is good. A culture of school improvement and collaboration among teachers is evident. Guided by its knowledge and experience of SSE, the school adopted a very proactive and reflective approach to its recent review of provision for Music. Composing in Music was correctly identified as an area for development. Targets and actions have been documented, including the use of a grant from Creative Ireland to purchase musical instruments.

The whole-school plan for Music, which was ratified in 2014, is clearly laid out and accounts for all strands of the curriculum. However, the plan needs to be contextualised to the needs of this particular school and should provide comprehensive guidance for teachers' classroom practice. The plan needs to be reviewed and updated to include the modifications to the school's practice as a result of SSE. In addition, a whole-school approach for the teaching of music literacy at each class level should be devised. Furthermore, the whole-school plan should include a repertoire of songs and a suggested list of pieces of music to be taught at each class level in support of pupils' listening and responding, along with clear guidance with regard to how the programmes provided can support the systematic teaching and learning of the full range of musical concepts.

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

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

The inspection report accurately portrays the pupils' learning and the teaching of Music in Shellybanks ETNS. The report is very positive in relation to the high quality of how Music is taught in the school and the Board of Management agrees with this assessment. The report outlines that school planning including (SSE) is commendable and that our whole school planning for Music needs review. Overall the school promotes and celebrates music and resources are well managed.

A repertoire of songs will be developed by the school and each class will learn these on an annual basis. The planning must be updated and will include an emphasis on the strand units of literacy and composing. Digital technologies will be further developed to record and assess pupils' learning achievements in composing.

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

1. A wider repertoire of songs will be developed in Irish and English and songs to reflect our diverse population.
2. Pupils will have more time to engage with the composing strand of the curriculum and greater emphasis will be given to all musical concepts.
3. The school will build on the resource of musical instruments to include tuned instruments so all children have the opportunity to learn an instrument.
4. A whole-school programme focused on the development of musical literacy will be developed.
5. The school will make further use of digital technologies for assessment and composing.
6. The whole-school plan for music will be updated and will include lists of songs and pieces of music to be taught at each class level.

## 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;