An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation

English

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Naomh Guasachta N S
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Bunlahy, Ballinalee, Co. Longford.
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	12736S

Date of inspection: 02-10-2018

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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 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.

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	02-10-2018
Inspection activities undertaken • Discussion with principal and teachers • Review of relevant documents • Pupil focus-group interview	• Observation of teaching and learning • Examination of pupils' work • Interaction with pupils • Feedback to principal and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

St. Guasacht's National School is a Catholic co-educational school located in Bunlahy, County Longford and operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois. The school has two mainstream classes and a shared special education teacher (SET) who provides additional supports for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). There were 55 pupils enrolled at the time of the evaluation.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning experiences in English is good.
- The teaching of English is good; pupils would benefit from discrete oral language lessons throughout the school.
- Pupils' enjoy their learning in English and are motivated to learn.
- Support for pupils' learning in English is good with print-rich environments in all classroom settings.
- The quality of assessment of learning at whole-school level is good; there is scope to analyse and record assessment for learning data more systematically and link it to differentiated objectives that underpin the pupils' learning.
- The whole-school plan in English needs to be updated to reflect current practices in the school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Discrete oral language topics should be selected, with key vocabulary identified, in short-term planning in all settings throughout the school.
- Analysis of assessment practices and data at class level is required to inform planning and guide differentiation.
- The school plan in English should be updated to inform and reflect the current practice in the school.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The overall quality of pupils' learning in English is good. Pupils enjoy their learning experiences, are motivated to learn and engage well in lessons observed. The school promotes a range of activities to develop and encourage reading. Core texts are used in all classes, with graded supplementary readers providing pupils with opportunities to experience a wider range of books at their level of reading ability. Novels are used in the senior classes. Comprehension skills are well developed with an emphasis on higher order questioning in evidence. The majority of pupils can apply their phonic skills effectively to read new and unfamiliar words. Most pupils read fluently with good expression and understanding.

Aistear The early Childhood Curriculum Framework is being implemented in the school at infant level to support learning. Discrete oral language topics and the identification of key vocabulary would further support oral language development at whole-school level. Work in this area could be linked to the Aistear topics already identified by the school. The inclusion in short-term planning, across all settings, of specific vocabulary and language structures to be taught, would ensure a deliberate focus on oral language development.

Pupils have regular opportunities to work and learn collaboratively. Good quality written work was observed. There are regular opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills, however there is a need in the junior classes to model and create opportunities for the emergent writers to explore writing in a purposeful, meaningful way. The provision of constructive feedback and the encouragement of pupils monitoring and reflecting on their own learning and progress should be developed and encouraged as appropriate.

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

The overall quality of teaching is good. All teachers model the use of language very effectively. Well-structured, paced lessons, designed to support the integration of oral, reading and writing activities were observed across almost all class levels. Support for pupils' learning in English is very good with print-rich environments evident in all classroom settings. Pupils engage in shared reading activities and in personal reading in school and at home. Classrooms have well stocked libraries with a wide variety of books available.

Opportunities are created for pupils to work collaboratively and independently. In-class support approaches are used in both the junior and senior rooms to support learning in literacy. In the focus group, pupils spoke about enjoying their learning in English and working in groups across classes to create their own stories. They spoke about using the writing process to create stories collaboratively. Pupils in the senior rooms enjoy sharing their work with peers and with pupils in the more junior classes.

Assessment data of learning in English are compiled annually in all classes. Analysis of this data ensures that key information and evidence of progression is recorded. Formative and summative assessment strategies with the regular recording of pupils' learning outcomes in English should be developed as a feature of all teachers' practice. To maximise the potential benefits of assessment in guiding planning and differentiation, teachers should analyse assessment data systematically and document assessment findings consistently to create profiles on individual learners. The more

strategic use of assessment data and monitoring of pupils' progress in their learning as they move from class to class and across settings would contribute to supporting learning and enhancing learning outcomes for all pupils.

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

All teachers prepare useful short-term planning to guide their work in the classroom. Purposeful work is planned for in almost all classes with topics identified across four classes where tasks and activities are suitably differentiated. The school plan in English should be updated to inform and reflect current practice in the school. It should inform and guide teachers' individual preparation and work in their classrooms. The SET supports literacy development through the use of a variety of teaching strategies including withdrawal and in-class support. These strategies should be planned collaboratively with the appropriate class teachers and underpinned by appropriate assessment.

SSE reports and school improvements plans have impacted positively on the teaching of literacy. Areas targeted include reading, comprehension and spelling. This work and focus on self-improvement has promoted staff collaboration and professional dialogue. As the school re-engages with the SSE process, it has prioritised the area of oral language for further development.

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	***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 *very good* 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;