An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation

English

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	SN Ciarain
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Cillfiobhnai Ath Dara Contae Luimnigh
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	18717V

Date of inspection: 18-09-2018

An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
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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 evaluated learning and teaching in English 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

Date of inspection	17-09-2018 to 18-09-2018
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

Scoil Náisiúnta Ciaráin is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Limerick. The school has a staff of three teachers, one of whom works in a support setting. At the time of the evaluation, there were forty-one pupils enrolled in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of learner outcomes in English is satisfactory and would be enhanced by whole-school approaches to oral language and genre writing.
- While pupils enjoy a broad variety of reading texts including newspapers, science magazines and novels, the overall quality of learner experiences in literacy is satisfactory.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory, however, there is scope to use a greater variety of teaching methodologies in the instruction of English.
- Support teaching for pupils is of a good standard but the organisation of provision merits review.
- The quality of whole-school planning is satisfactory and previous cycles of school self-evaluation (SSE) have impacted positively on pupils' experiences of literacy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The development of specific oral language skills with pupils in the senior setting is advised.
- A whole-school approach to the teaching of writing genres should be implemented.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on active learning methodologies and collaborative learning activities in literacy lessons.
- The school should implement *The Continuum of Support* to ensure that all pupils with learning needs are identified and supported through a variety of approaches and interventions.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupils' learning in English is satisfactory.
- Pupils' oral language skills are of a satisfactory to good standard. All pupils experience a range of poetry which they can recite with varying degrees of confidence and expression. They demonstrate age-appropriate understanding of vocabulary. In general, pupils use the components of language correctly in oral and written communication but they find it difficult to explain their function. A discrete programme has been introduced in junior

classes to progress pupils' oral language development. While pupils in senior classes are regularly facilitated to engage in discussions on cross-curricular topics, a more focused approach to the development of specific oral language skills is advised.

- Pupil attainment in reading is of a good standard. Pupils are exposed to a variety of texts including graded readers, authentic texts and novels. In general, pupils read with good fluency and understanding. Many pupils read for personal pleasure which is encouraged in the school through the provision of well-stocked classroom libraries.
- The quality of learner outcomes in writing is satisfactory. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to write in each learning setting. To progress learner outcomes further, a staged approach to the teaching of writing genres is recommended. Greater use should be made of information technologies to support a process approach to writing. While pupils' work is recorded neatly in copybooks, a variety of approaches are used to teach handwriting. The school is advised to agree a whole-school approach to penmanship.

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

- The quality of pupils' learning experiences in English is satisfactory. Positive learning atmospheres were noted during the evaluation where pupils were respectful of and attentive to teacher direction. During the focus group interview, pupils stated that they enjoyed weekly opportunities to read articles from newspapers and science magazines in class. They also enjoyed the novels that they read last year. Pupils expressed a keen interest in working in pairs and groups but stated that they rarely had the opportunity to do so. They reported that English lessons often followed the same format, where stories from commercial texts were read aloud by individual pupils before completing the activities at the end of the chapter independently. While some pupils stated that they liked this work because it was easy, other pupils expressed a need for more varied and challenging learning activities during English lessons.
- The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers in all settings create literacy rich learning environments. Classroom displays and corridors are used to good effect to support pupils' learning in English. Teacher planning is completed consistently and is of a satisfactory to good standard. While teaching content was differentiated for various class groupings in the lessons observed, greater use should be made of assessment data to ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged. The methodologies used during the evaluation were largely teacher centred. It is recommended that a greater variety of active learning methodologies be used in literacy lessons. While teachers address aspects of oral language, reading and writing in lessons, increased use of collaborative activities would enable greater integration of language skills. Teachers are advised to share the learning intentions of lessons with pupils and to encourage pupil self-assessment of their achievement.
- The quality of support teaching is good. Individual pupil learning profiles (IPLPs) are devised to support pupils' progress in literacy. They contain clearly defined learning targets. Purposeful learning activities are organised in support sessions to develop pupils' literacy skills. To support the attainment of targets, however, clear roles should also be outlined in IPLPs for class teachers, parents and where appropriate pupils. Currently, the provision of support is solely on a withdrawal basis. The school is advised to compile a learning profile of pupils' needs and to implement *The Continuum of Support* to ensure that all pupils with learning needs are identified and supported through a variety of approaches and interventions.

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

- The quality of school planning for English, including school self-evaluation (SSE), is satisfactory. The whole-school plan for English was reviewed in 2015 and provides good direction to teachers on whole-school approaches to oral language, reading and writing. However, not all aspects of the plan are being implemented consistently. It is advised that whole-school approaches to literacy are reviewed regularly at staff meetings to ensure continuity of practice through the school.
- The school initiated cycles of intervention to improve pupils' disposition to reading, reading fluency and reading comprehension through the SSE process between 2013 and 2015. These interventions have impacted positively on pupils' experiences. The school is preparing to re-engage with SSE currently.
- The school is commended for engaging with the implementation of the *Primary Language Curriculum* (PLC) in junior classes. Future cycles of SSE in literacy should be informed by the PLC.

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;

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 S.N. Ciarán, Kilfinny accepts the recommendations in the report.

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 "Rainbow Oral Language Programme" will be introduced in senior classes. *The Continuum of Support* and a whole school approach to writing genres are being implemented. Emphasis will be placed on active learning methodologies and collaborative learning in literacy lessons.

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