An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: English
Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	S N Fhursa
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Lyre Banteer Co. Cork
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	18316D
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	08-02-2023
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	18/04/2023

What is a curriculum evaluation?

Curriculum evaluations report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects of the *Primary School Curriculum (1999)* and the *Primary Language Curriculum (2019).* 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.

Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and tackle bullying

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Child Protection</td><td>Anti-bullying</td></tr>
<tr><td>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.</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013) and this policy is reviewed annually.
2. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides a report to the board at least once a term on the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template provided in the Procedures) since the previous report to the board.
3. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils.</td></tr>
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Curriculum evaluation

Date of inspection	08-02-2023
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 Fhursa is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cloyne. It is situated in the village of Lyre, County Cork. The school has three mainstream class teachers, one full-time and one part-time special education teacher (SET) based in the school. At the time of the evaluation there was sixty-eight pupils enrolled in the school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning in English was very good.
- The learning experiences provided to support pupils' learning were very good.
- The overall quality of teaching in mainstream and support settings was commendable.
- The quality of assessment was very good.
- The overall quality of school planning and of school self-evaluation (SSE) was very good and the agreed actions and approaches were systematically implemented, monitored and evaluated throughout the school.

Recommendations

- To further enrich pupils' learning experiences, teachers should agree a whole-school approach on the use of information, communication and technology (ICT) across the school.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

The overall quality of pupils' learning in English was very good. Pupils demonstrated a very good understanding and command of language and were exposed to a rich variety of reading materials. It was evident that pupils enjoyed their learning and were motivated to learn. They experienced success in challenging tasks and were aware of the progress that they have made in learning. This has contributed to their overall wellbeing and positive image of themselves. They applied an enquiring disposition, critical thinking and problem-solving skills when responding to literacy tasks. In the focus-group discussion, pupils reported they enjoyed English, in particular playing literacy games and writing creatively. They spoke positively about how their English learning complements their work in other subjects and they expressed their love of reading and poetry. They also reported that they enjoyed working collaboratively with their peers.

Appropriate attention was given to developing oral language skills. Pupils' understanding and use of the components of language was developed progressively. Most pupils described and gave information on a variety of topics. They explained their points of view confidently.

Vocabulary development was a key feature in all of the lessons observed, as a result of recent work undertaken through the SSE process. Rhymes and poetry enhanced the development of oral skills in all classes and pupils were enabled to recite, explore and analyse a good range of poetry. Very good assessment approaches to oral language were observed and were used to assist teachers in acquiring baseline data against which pupils' progress was monitored and evaluated.

Pupils' early literacy skills were developed to a high standard. Their phonological awareness was very good, and many pupils were able to apply this learning to authentic reading material. Pupils' comprehension skills were well developed and each child was encouraged to read independently for pleasure.

Pupils' understanding and use of the components of language was developed progressively. They completed functional writing tasks, free-writing activities and they were facilitated to write in a variety of genres. Samples of pupils' written work displayed in classrooms, recorded in copybooks and completed during the inspection were neatly presented and of a very good standard generally.

2. Supporting pupils' learning: Learner experiences and teachers' practice

The quality of pupils' learning experiences was very good. Classroom environments were supportive of pupils' learning with word walls, exhibits of the pupils' work and language-rich displays throughout the school. Commendably, classroom libraries were very well stocked and organised with books of various genres. Pupils experienced a wide range of poetry that reflected their cultural experiences and heritage. To further enhance the pupil's learning experiences technology should be used as a tool for literacy development. As digital literacy and responsibility are important aspects of learning, it is advised that the school implement an agreed whole-school approach to ICT to further benefit pupils' learning.

The overall quality of teaching was very good. Differentiated teaching methods were working well in catering for the wide range of pupil abilities in the multi-grade settings. Small group and pair work was effectively used in the lessons observed. Teachers should assign clearer roles to the pupils when they are engaged in group work. This would provide them with opportunities to further develop their collaborative skills. Overall, the teachers' differentiated questioning approaches were very effective.

The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) was very good. Assessment data from a range of standardised, cognitive and diagnostic testing informed the development of high-quality school support plans (SSPs). Clear and measurable targets were provided which facilitated the recording of pupils' progress and achievement. Differentiated reading programmes were used as appropriate and supplementary support for pupils was provided through a combination of in-class support and pupil withdrawal.

The quality of assessment was very good. Decisions about progression in learning were underpinned by high-quality assessment practices. Portfolios of work and classroom test results provided useful records of pupils' progress. Written work was well monitored and regularly corrected and useful written feedback was provided by teachers. It would be worthwhile for the teachers to share a clear learning intention with the pupils at the beginning of lessons to help develop their self-assessment skills.

3. The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning

The quality of school planning, including SSE, was very good. Dialogue with teachers and review of their recorded preparation demonstrated good knowledge of the primary language curriculum (PLC). Teachers drew on their experience and their knowledge of the children in making decisions about progressing language learning. The school plan for English provided guidance for teachers on whole-school approaches and practices. Their engagement with the PLC through sustained support from the professional development service for teachers (PDST) was evident in the whole-school plan and in teacher's recorded preparation. Whole-school planning informed and guided teachers' practice.

A school improvement plan (SIP) has been formulated to progress the development of pupils' attainment in English. The school has usefully targeted vocabulary development in English as an SSE priority and worthwhile actions were implemented to achieve these targets. Agreed practices were being embedded in classroom experiences and the implementation of the SIP was consistently monitored and evaluated.

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 welcomes this positive report on the evaluation of teaching and learning in English.

The report affirms the hard work and dedication of our school staff in providing high quality learning experiences for our pupils.

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

As recommended in the report, staff will devise a whole-school approach to the use of ICT throughout the school.

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