# Curriculum Evaluation

## English

## REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Deravoy National School</th>
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| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Deravoy  
Emyvale  
Co. Monaghan |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number | 00373P |

**Date of inspection: 08-04-2019**
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 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 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  08-04-2019

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
- Post-inspection feedback meeting with the principal and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Deravoy National School is a co-educational, Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Clogher. The school currently caters for sixty-six pupils who are distributed across three mainstream classrooms. The school has one full-time special education teacher and another part-time special education teacher who is shared with a neighbouring school. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of learning in English is good with pupils demonstrating positive learning dispositions and progress in reading in particular; pupils’ self-assessment skills, and in particular their spelling and editing skills in writing are under-developed.
- The quality of teaching is good overall; teachers prepare attractive learning environments and use suitable resources to provide well-paced and suitably structured lessons; however, short-term planning is presented on a monthly basis instead of fortnightly as required, and the provision of individual classroom support plans has not yet commenced within the mainstream context.
- The current deployment of a special education teacher (SET) to teach Mathematics to a mainstream class on a daily basis is not in line with best practice or Circular 0013/17.
- The quality of assessment is commendable with teachers using a wide range of screening and diagnostic assessment approaches to monitor and support pupils’ learning although a whole-school approach to developing pupil peer and self-assessment has not yet been fully developed.
- The quality of DEIS improvement planning for language and literacy is good and improvement initiatives are impacting positively on teachers’ collective and individual practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should develop and adopt a whole-school approach to developing pupils’ spelling, editing and self-assessment skills to further enhance their writing skills in English.
- The practice of using special education teachers to provide instruction to a mainstream class on a daily basis should be reviewed to ensure that the resources are being deployed in accordance with Circular 0013/17 for the maximum benefit of pupils presenting with additional needs in the school.
- Teachers should provide short-term planning on a fortnightly basis and individual Classroom Support plans for pupils who are identified as being on stage one of the continuum of support, to better reflect and inform differentiated teaching and the progression of pupils’ learning.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
The quality of pupils’ learning is good overall. They demonstrate enthusiasm about their learning and in particular, very positive dispositions regarding reading and the number of books which they have read. Pupils’ level of engagement in the lessons observed during the evaluation was commendable. They participated in whole-class and group discussions, showing good knowledge of a suitable range of writing genre and poetry. During the focus group discussion, senior pupils highlighted their experiences of debating and the ‘Write a Book’ competition as very positive aspects of their learning experiences in English. Pupils in the infant classes participate in play-based learning and are benefitting from the opportunity to use language in meaningful, interactive contexts.

Pupils demonstrate very good word-attack skills and enjoy a variety of reading material at their appropriate instructional levels. Most pupils read with fluency and apply comprehension strategies to enhance their understanding of reading material. It is evident that most pupils are making progress in their reading commensurate with their stage of development.

Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards speaking and communicate confidently with each other and with their teachers, using suitable verbal and non-verbal strategies. The ongoing development of their oral language skills has been prioritised by the staff and these focused interventions will further enhance pupils’ learning outcomes. Greater promotion of language that enables pupils to question and engage in peer and self-assessment will be beneficial to them going forward. The school has used DEIS funding to provide a speech and language therapist to a number of pupils on a part-time basis. Pupils can discuss a range of poetry and children’s literature with considerable insight and understanding.

Pupils demonstrate very good knowledge of the characteristics of the various writing genres and they have good opportunities to write in these genres. A significant number of pupils do not yet have an understanding of spelling or grammar conventions appropriate to their class level. Teachers should develop and adopt a whole-school approach to developing pupils’ spelling, editing and self-assessment skills to further enhance their writing skills in English. Pupils’ handwriting and written work is praiseworthy. Pupils enjoy regular opportunities to record, present and display their work using digital technology.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE
The overall quality of the pupils’ learner experience is good. Pupils work collaboratively and demonstrate good listening skills and respectful interactions with one another. Pupils’ learning is celebrated through various displays throughout the school environment. Pupils are enabled to make meaningful connections between learning in English and other areas of the curriculum, most notably, their project work in Science and the Creative Arts project which they shared with parents and members of the local community.

The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers prepare attractive learning environments and suitable resources to stimulate pupils’ interest and sustain their engagement in lessons. They use a suitable range of questions and prompts to facilitate meaningful discussion and provide appropriate formative feedback to pupils. However, short-term planning in all contexts is presented on a monthly basis instead of fortnightly as required. While clear and comprehensive School Support plans and School Support Plus plans are in place for pupils in receipt of supplementary support from the SETs, Classroom...
Support plans are not yet in place to reflect and inform the differentiated support provided by mainstream teachers for pupils who are at stage one on the continuum of support. The provision and regular use of Classroom Support plans and fortnightly planning would better support differentiated teaching and optimise pupils’ progress across all strands of the English curriculum.

Teachers have been proactive in developing their collective and individual practices to support ongoing improvement in pupils’ learning. They have developed team-teaching and in-class support models to provide focused, evidence-based interventions that are impacting positively on pupils’ learning. These include ‘Literacy Lift-Off’ and the recent introduction of an accelerated reading programme that facilitates a close alignment between pupils’ instructional reading ability and their reading material. Teachers develop pupils’ language and literacy skills through purposeful integration across a number of curricular areas. They have also been judicious in selecting a number of competitions and events that provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence and competence in using language, such as the debating competition and the ‘Write a Book’ project.

Special Education teachers (SET) also provide support for pupils with additional needs in withdrawal settings. They demonstrated very good pedagogical knowledge and skills as they deployed a range of strategies very effectively to address pupils’ prioritised needs during the support sessions. However, SETs are also deployed on a daily basis to provide instruction in a curricular area to a mainstream class and this practice should be reviewed to ensure that the resources are being deployed in accordance with Circular 0013/17 for the maximum benefit of pupils presenting with additional needs in the school.

The overall quality of assessment is commendable. The results of standardised assessments are used effectively to inform teaching and learning and to monitor pupils’ incremental progression. However, a whole-school approach to promoting peer and self-assessment would further enhance teaching and learning.

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

The overall quality of school planning is good and it is evident that the DEIS whole-school planning has been effective in progressing pupils’ learning in literacy. A review of targets from previous phases of DEIS indicate progress in relation to the genres of writing and pupil reading attainments. The school plan for English has been recently reviewed to embrace and embed the Primary Language Curriculum in infant and junior classes and this plan is informing and supporting practice in these classes.

Staff has prioritised the development of pupils’ oral language skills and teachers have been systematic in their approach to implementing the strategies identified; discrete oral language lessons are a feature of practice and pupils are provided with regular opportunities to make oral presentations. Teachers are encouraged to extend their cross-curricular integration to include a greater emphasis on identifying and promoting subject-specific vocabulary in other curricular plans. Amending teachers’ short-term planning will strengthen the implementation and monitoring of the improvement plan along with progression of pupils’ learning in accordance with their varying abilities. A strong sense of collaborative teamwork and commitment to ongoing improvement underpins planning and practice in this school.
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 Deravoy N.S. welcomes the positive findings of this report. In particular the Board of Management welcomes the affirmation of the good standard of teaching and learning in the school and is delighted that many of the school’s strengths in the area of English have been highlighted. The board acknowledges the recommendations made in this report and will support the school staff in their commitment to effectively implementing the recommendations made.

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 board acknowledges and accepts the recommendations made in the curriculum evaluation report. The following changes have been implemented following the curriculum evaluation in English.

- Teachers have been working closely with PDST to develop and implement a whole-school approach to developing pupils’ spelling, editing and self-assessment skills.

- The school is now fully compliant with the requirements of circular 0013/2017 regarding the deployment of teaching resources.

- Teachers now provide short-term planning on a fortnightly basis and individual Classroom Support plans for pupils who are identified as being on stage one of the continuum of support.
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.

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<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<td>Very Good</td>
<td><strong>Very good</strong> 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 <strong>outstanding</strong> and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.</td>
<td>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</td>
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<td>Good</td>
<td><strong>Good</strong> 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.</td>
<td>Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement</td>
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<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong> 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.</td>
<td>Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas</td>
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<td>Fair</td>
<td><strong>Fair</strong> 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.</td>
<td>Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils’ learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve</td>
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<td>Weak</td>
<td><strong>Weak</strong> 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.</td>
<td>Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;</td>
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