An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation

English

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School name</th>
<th>S N Naomh Padraig</th>
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<tr>
<td>School address</td>
<td>Bearna Chlé</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Arklow</td>
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<td>Co Wicklow</td>
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<td>Roll number</td>
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Date of inspection: 20-03-2019
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 inspector(s) 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**  
20-03-2019

**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
- Feedback to principal and teachers

**SCHOOL CONTEXT**
S N Naomh Padraig is located in Bearna Chlé, a rural community approximately five kilometres outside Arklow, Co Wicklow. It is a vertical primary school that operates under the Dublin Catholic Archdiocese. The teaching staff comprises four mainstream teachers and one support teacher. At the time of the evaluation there were ninety seven pupils enrolled.

**SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**FINDINGS**
- The overall quality of pupils’ learning is high, their ability in oral language is particularly noteworthy; there is scope to improve pupils’ writing skills.
- High quality learning experiences are provided for pupils in English, positive interactions were observed in all settings; there is scope to further extend and embed team teaching approaches to literacy.
- The overall quality of teachers’ practice is good, teachers are clear communicators and lessons are well structured.
- The quality of assessment is good and teachers collect a wide range of assessment data.
- Overall planning for English is good.
- There is a strong sense of community and belonging in the school and links between the school and the wider community are strong and serve to enhance pupils’ learning in English.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**
- To further differentiate reading instruction, particularly for pupils in the early years, teachers should agree, implement and evaluate team-teaching interventions for pupils at each class level.
- To further develop pupils’ writing skills, teachers should plan and provide pupils with more regular opportunities to write in all genres at each class level.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
   The overall quality of pupils’ learning in English is high. They present as motivated and articulate learners who are proud of their school and their learning. Attainment in English is generally high. During classroom observations pupils demonstrated good engagement levels in their lessons and could recall previous learning easily. Pupils are lively, animated and eager to share their learning in English. Pupils’ oral language is well developed and a considerable strength of the provision at the school. They can use language to explain, discuss and justify their opinions. Pupils are articulate and during the focus group they could explain the impact of their learning in English across the curriculum. During classroom observations pupils demonstrated a keen interest in poetry and could recite a wide range of poems with flair and energy.
   In writing, high quality writing samples are on display in classrooms and in copybooks. Pupils generally demonstrate good presentation, phonics and grammatical skills. During the focus group, conducted as part of the evaluation, pupils reported that writing across the genre was their favourite aspect of English and would like more regular experiences of writing. During classroom observations pupils in some classes could identify the components of genres and in others classes pupils could not recall writing across a range of genres. There was, at times, an over-emphasis on the final written product. It is advised that teachers plan and provide more opportunities for pupils to engage in the process of writing across all genres. Teachers should agree a whole-school approach to the teaching of writing, which should be reflected in planning and practice.
   The school is praised for the considerable work done to promote differentiated reading at all class levels. During the focus group, pupils reported that they understood the value of reading books at their level. Pupils demonstrate good fluency and pace when reading and could independently use some comprehension strategies to understand the text but pupils were, at times, unsure of the meaning of some vocabulary within the texts.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE
   High quality learner experiences are provided to pupils. Respectful interactions were observed in all classes and pupils were observed working collaboratively and independently on meaningful tasks. There is a strong community spirit in evidence at the school and pupils’ in the senior classes write story books for pupils in the infant classes and members of a local business engage in weekly paired reading with pupils. The school engages with a range of interesting local and national programmes and pupils reported that these experiences considerably add to their learning, interest and confidence in English, particularly in poetry, drama and in oral language presentation skills. Aistear is providing pupils in the early years with valuable oral language opportunities. There is scope to provide pupils with additional opportunities to share their writing with authentic audiences beyond the immediate school community.
   The school is developing its approach to in-class and team-teaching in English and is praised for its flexibility in trialling a range of interventions. Currently, the senior infant class is being withdrawn for instruction in reading with the special education needs (SEN) teacher. This practice should be discontinued and the school should identify and implement a whole-school approach to team-teaching interventions in literacy for each class level. These interventions should be time-bound, skills based and differentiated. Teachers should use pre and post
intervention assessment of pupils’ attainment in order to track pupils’ progress. Collaborative planning for in-class support with a clearer emphasis on desired learning outcomes is advised. The school should also identify a consistent approach to the teaching of reading in mainstream classes.

The quality of teachers practice, including assessment is good. Teachers are prepared for their lessons, classroom environments are attractive and supportive of learning in English and work on display is of a high quality. Teachers are good communicators with very effective classroom management skills and demonstrate high expectations for the pupils in their care. Lessons observed during the evaluation were well structured and paced. In the best instances, teachers used a wide range of teaching approaches including, sharing of the learning intention with pupils, clear direct teaching and modelling of new literacy skills. These highly-effective practices should be shared across the school and used in all settings.

Teachers use a range of methods to assess pupils’ progress in English, including standardised tests, diagnostic tests, teacher observation and checklists. It is advised that the school consider how to connect this data into their teaching and planning. Teachers should begin to plan collaboratively in order to devise plans based on clearer learning intentions which can be shared with pupils and used to track pupils’ progress at the end of the lesson. Providing comments to pupils’ work in order to support their ability to look critically at their own work and self-assess is recommended.

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

The overall quality of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils’ learning is good. The school has previously identified comprehension and genre writing as an area to improve and agreed actions are having a positive impact on teaching and learning in some classes. The whole school plan is contextualised and provides some guidance on the content to be taught in English. When the plan is next reviewed the school is advised to agree and include details on how reading and writing will be taught at each class level, the components of effective lessons and an overview of various reading initiatives at each class level. The principal and staff are highly praised for the warm school atmosphere which they have created. There is a strong sense of belonging among the teachers and pupils. Teachers have worked collaboratively to develop a whole-school understanding of the Primary Language Curriculum.

Given the dedication of the staff, the capacity of the staff to implement these recommendations is very good.
**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><strong>Very Good</strong></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 outstanding 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><strong>Good</strong></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><strong>Satisfactory</strong></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><strong>Fair</strong></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><strong>Weak</strong></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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Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management
Part A  Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board accepts and welcomes the positive evaluation report on English.

The findings of the report reflect the high value we place on the teaching and learning in literacy. The report comments on the good relations between teachers and pupils, resulting in pleasant learning environment and fluent confident communicators.

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 of Management will support the teaching staff as they continue to engage positively in training staff with School Self-Evaluation and the Primary Language Curriculum.

We will endeavour to explore the possibility of introducing team-teaching to all classrooms.