An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
English

REPORT

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<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Templeglantine N S</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Templeglantine Co Limerick</td>
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<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
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Date of inspection: 29-11-2018
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 did not meet the requirements in relation to 2 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken.
Curriculum Evaluation

Date of inspection | 29-11-2018
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**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 the deputy principal and teachers

**CONTEXT**
Templeglantine National School is a co-educational Catholic school, under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Limerick. There are five teachers on staff, including a teaching principal and two support teachers, both of whom are shared with other schools. There are fifty-six pupils enrolled. The school did not have a board of management in place at the time of the evaluation and also for a considerable period prior to the evaluation.

**SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**FINDINGS**
- The pupils’ learning in English is of a good quality; they speak confidently, achieve good standards in reading and write fluently in a range of genres; however, the quality of their handwriting and presentation of their work ranges from fair to good.
- The quality of pupils’ learning experiences in English is very good; they engage diligently in stimulating and purposeful activities across the curriculum.
- The quality of teaching is good; however, there is a lack of consistency in the approach to assessment of oral language and written work, and assessment data could be used more purposefully to inform differentiated teaching approaches within the class settings.
- The pupils benefit from good-quality support in the special education settings; there is potential to provide more support to pupils within the classroom settings.
- The quality of whole-school planning is good and the initiatives introduced through the school self-evaluation (SSE) process are having a positive impact on the pupils’ learning outcomes and experiences in English.
- The school is not compliant with the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* as its Child Safeguarding Statement has not been ratified by a board of management.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**
- The school should implement strategies to improve the overall quality of pupils’ handwriting and presentation of work.
- Consistent approaches to assessing oral language and writing should be introduced at each class level, and teachers should use assessment data more productively to inform differentiated teaching approaches within the class settings.
- Further in-class support needs to be provided to optimise the pupils’ experiences in English within the class settings, and to support more differentiated teaching approaches across the curriculum.
- Immediate steps need to be taken to ensure that the school is compliant with all aspects of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*. 
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
The overall quality of pupils’ learning in English is good. The pupils’ oral language skills are developing well. In all settings, they participate in class discussions, they speak confidently and are keen to engage with their peers, teachers and visitors on a range of topics. They recite nursery rhymes and poems with enthusiasm and they enjoy writing rhyming poems and limerick poems. In the junior setting, the pupils develop and use their vocabulary and speaking skills during play-based activities informed by Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework; the benefits of these activities could be further optimised by providing in-class support. In the senior setting, the pupils read newspapers and prepare oral reports on current affairs.

Pupils achieve good standards in reading. They read factual and fictional books in school and at home. Pupils complete functional writing tasks, they engage in free writing and they write in a range of genres. The quality of their handwriting and presentation of work ranges from fair to good. Accordingly, additional emphasis needs to be placed on ensuring that the pupils’ handwriting is consistently legible and that their work is neatly presented.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE
The quality of pupils’ learning experiences in English is very good; they engage diligently in stimulating and purposeful activities across the curriculum. In the focus-group discussion, pupils described their learning in English with great enthusiasm, highlighting the range of their experiences and their confidence across the curriculum.

The overall quality of teaching in English is good. Well-structured and well-paced lessons were observed during the evaluation. Appropriate and engaging methodologies are used. Classroom environments are print rich, and include teacher-generated materials which focus on key aspects of literacy. Lessons in English feature good-quality teacher input and opportunities for the pupils to explore and discuss topics in pairs and in small groups.

In the junior setting, pupils’ early literacy skills receive good attention, and good work is being undertaken in implementing the Primary Language Curriculum; the centrality of play is recognised and dialogic practices are promoted. The school has prioritised oral language in recent years. The teachers have collaborated well with each other and with the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) to implement programmes which focus on vocabulary development. Currently, pupils are withdrawn from the mainstream classes for support in oral language. To develop practice, the school is now encouraged to provide more in-class support sessions which incorporate aspects of oral language, reading and writing. This will enable teachers to differentiate learning outcomes to a greater extent, and to provide more differentiated support which will benefit all pupils.

Reading and comprehension skills are well taught. The teachers employ engaging strategies including reader’s theatre, a strategy that promotes reading fluency and encourages expressive reading for an audience. Graded readers and novels are used to good effect, and pupils generate character descriptions and make dramas based on the plots. Further differentiation of reading materials would benefit some pupils.

Writing frameworks are very well used to analyse texts and to support the pupils to structure their writing tasks. The pupils draft and finalise their work and their ability to write independently is good.
They have some opportunities to use information and communication technologies to explore and acquire information and to publish their work, and they enjoy sharing their written work with their peers on the author’s chair.

The quality of assessment in English is good. Standardised tests are used in reading, and where required, diagnostic tests are also used. Teachers record pupils’ progress regularly. The data generated could be used more productively to inform differentiated teaching in the class settings, and to inform decisions about in-class support. While there is some assessment of pupils’ progress in oral language, more consistency is required throughout the school. Some helpful written feedback is provided to pupils to enable them to improve the quality of their written work. To further improve practice, the school is encouraged to develop its approaches to the assessment of writing. To this end, it would be beneficial to set out writing benchmarks for each class level which outline and promote a clear line of progression in pupils’ writing skills.

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

The quality of school planning for English is good. The whole-school plan provides some good direction to teachers on aspects of literacy. It is currently being reviewed and updated.

The teachers set out long-term and short-term plans which encapsulate a good range of learning experiences in English. Additional emphasis needs to be placed on differentiating learning outcomes to take account of the range of pupils’ learning needs and abilities. In the junior classes, good initial work is underway in planning for the implementation of the Primary Language Curriculum.

Purposeful work has been carried out through the SSE process. This has focussed on teaching writing genres and developing oral language skills. The school’s actions in these areas have had a positive impact on pupils’ learning outcomes.
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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Appendix

TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the School Manager
Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The school welcomes the recently received report. We are delighted that the inspector found the quality of pupils’ learning experiences in English to be very good.

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

We have included as priorities for future development a focus on handwriting, assessment of writing genres and the assessment of oral language development as outlined in the report.

We intend to focus on handwriting and we have organised PDST in-service to support us in the development of a whole school approach to the assessment of writing genres and oral language as recommended in the report.

We look forward to implementing a new in-class literacy initiative suggested by the inspector in the junior classes this year.

We share concerns regarding compliance with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017. Since the date of inspection, a Single Manager has been appointed by the Patron to oversee the running of the school. The school has reviewed both the Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment which have been ratified by the Manager.