An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills  

Curriculum Evaluation  
English  

REPORT  

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Churchtown N S</th>
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| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Churchtown  
Athy  
Co Kildare |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number | 07790U |

Date of inspection: 25-10-2017
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.
Curriculum Evaluation

Date of inspection  25-10-2017

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
Churchtown National School is a rural, co-educational primary school located near Athy, Co Kildare. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. At the time of the evaluation there were 102 pupils enrolled in the school with five mainstream class teachers and two special education teachers (SET).

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
- The quality of pupils’ learning in English is good overall and pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to develop their literacy skills.
- The school offers very effective supports for pupils through the provision of print-rich environments, well stocked libraries and a range of suitable resources.
- Teachers are committed to the developmental and incremental approach to progressing pupils’ early literacy skills in the school.
- While the overall quality of teaching in the English lessons observed was good, the design of appropriately-challenging learning experiences needs to be extended in some settings.
- Assessment practices are well developed in the school; however, there is scope to use the data gathered to its full potential to inform the differentiation of learning objectives and learning activities for pupils.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Teachers should extend the range of appropriately-challenging learning experiences in some settings in order to enable all pupils to become active and motivated learners.
- The school should develop a whole-school approach to analysing assessment outcomes in order to inform the differentiation of learning content and learning activities to cater for the varying needs and abilities of all pupils.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING IN ENGLISH
The overall quality of pupils’ learning in English is good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and their interest in literacy is stimulated through the provision of print-rich classrooms and the availability of a wide range of suitable resources. Most pupils listen attentively during English lessons and engage enthusiastically in learning activities. Pupils can recite a variety of rhymes and poems and speak confidently on a range of topics.

The use of the Primary Language Curriculum in the infant classes to support the development of pupils’ oral language skills is praiseworthy. Pupils’ early literacy skills are competently and systematically developed in the junior classes. Lessons observed in junior classes demonstrate a very effective developmental and incremental approach to progressing pupils’ learning. Standardised test results indicate that pupils generally demonstrate good reading and comprehension skills. Pupils in middle and senior classes read fluently across a range of reading materials for interest, research and pleasure. Pupils benefit from the use of English novels to develop vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

All pupils engage in the writing process and write in a variety of genres. Some good examples of handwriting and written work are displayed in the school. There is scope to enhance pupils’ creative writing skills through the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and the presentation of collections of pupils’ work at all class levels.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE IN ENGLISH
Pupils’ learning in English is effectively supported in all settings. Responding to the focus group discussion, most pupils spoke very positively about their experiences of learning in English. They particularly enjoy lessons in oral language, vocabulary development and reading. Pupils engage in self-evaluation in English using success criteria checklists.

Some examples of very effective teaching was observed during the evaluation. Generally, lessons were well developed in all strands of the curriculum and pupils’ learning progress was systematically assessed. Teachers use a wide range of approaches to stimulate pupils’ learning and create opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning. Many lessons provided challenging learning experiences for pupils. There is scope to extend the teaching approaches in some classes to include more active and challenging learning activities for all pupils to enable all pupils to become active and motivated learners.

Pupils benefit from the structured oral language programme which is being developed in the school. In some classes, pupils make very good presentations of their work to peers. This is commendable practice. The quality of teaching in reading is good with some very significant strengths in the area of early literacy development and comprehension. A model of team teaching was recently introduced in the school and is being developed in some classes to support differentiated programmes of work.
The school should continue to ensure that special education teaching resources are utilised in the optimum manner to improve learning experiences and educational outcomes for pupils with special educational needs. While effective approaches for assessing and recording pupils’ attainments were noted in the majority of classrooms, there is scope to further analyse assessment outcomes in order to meaningfully differentiate content and activities for the varying needs and abilities of pupils.

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

The quality of whole-school planning for English is good. The whole-school plan outlines the curriculum strands, content and methodologies to be used at each class level. The school engaged in the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) process and designed a school improvement plan for English. The plan prioritised oral language as an area for development. The plan was reviewed and new literacy actions were identified. All teachers provide written plans for their work. The most effective long-term plans are linked to the school plan. Effective short-term plans include clear, relevant learning objectives that are contextualised to pupils’ learning needs.

4. CHILD PROTECTION

The following aspects of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools were checked during the evaluation:

1. Teachers’ access to a copy of the school’s Child Protection policy
2. The prominent display of the name of Designated Liaison Person near the main entrance

The school was fully compliant with both aspects.
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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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Very good</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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<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Satisfactory</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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<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Fair</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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Weak</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
Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report

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Area 2  Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

In order to use assessment to its full potential to inform differentiation of learning objectives and learning activities, the staff propose to engage in SSE in the area of assessment. They aim to develop a whole school approach to analysing assessment outcomes as part of this process.

As a result of the development of a new approach to assessment in the school, the staff hope that it will better inform the differentiation of learning objectives and learning activities for all abilities and needs and therefore more appropriately challenging learning experiences will be evident throughout the school.

The staff also aim to include a wider variety of teaching methodologies in conjunction with appropriately challenging learning experiences to enable all pupils to become active and motivated learners.