Curriculum Evaluation

English

REPORT

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<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Scoil Naomh Mhuire</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Caisleán Geal Clifoney County Sligo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>15337T</td>
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Date of inspection: 14-02-2019
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 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.
Date of inspection: 14-02-2019

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

CONTEXT
Scoil Naomh Mhuire is a rural, co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Elphin. It caters for pupils from junior infants to sixth class. At the time of the inspection there were forty-five pupils enrolled in the school. The school has two mainstream class teachers and one part-time special education teacher based in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
- The overall quality of pupils’ learning is very good with all pupils participating in worthwhile learning activities.
- Pupils’ learning experiences in English are good; team-teaching approaches are not being used consistently to support pupils’ learning.
- Teaching in English is of a very high standard; all teachers demonstrate highly effective classroom management skills.
- The overall quality of assessment is satisfactory; a strategic whole-school approach to assessment is not in place.
- The quality of whole-school planning for English is good.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Teachers should use assessment data more effectively to inform differentiated teacher planning and team-teaching approaches and ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged and supported in their learning.
- A whole-school approach to assessment of learning (AoL) and assessment for learning (AfL) in English including pupil, peer and self-assessment is needed to inform ongoing teacher planning and provision of differentiated teaching approaches.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING

The overall quality of pupils’ learning is very good, with all pupils participating in worthwhile learning activities. In the focus-group discussion most pupils described with enthusiasm how they enjoy their learning in English and how it is linked to other subjects. Standardised test results indicate that pupils are doing well in English.
Pupils’ early literacy skills are progressed very effectively. Pupils can recite a variety of rhymes and poems with expression. They actively listen and demonstrate motivation to learn through their focused engagement in classwork. Oral language skills are fostered at whole-school level. Most pupils can describe, give information, predict and explain points of view with the majority of pupils expressing their opinions confidently. A whole-school emphasis on the development of oral language has been identified to address the five components of effective oral language instruction. This should be further developed through the identification of subject-specific vocabulary to be learned and used by the pupils. This will enhance pupils’ confidence and further improve their articulation of thinking across various oral language learning opportunities as outlined in the Primary Language Curriculum (PLC).

Pupils demonstrate a very positive attitude to reading and are exposed to a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction texts. They can read with fluency and very effective use of dictionaries was observed in the senior classes. Early-reading skills are well developed through a developmental approach to letter-sound relationships and phonological awareness instruction. A broad range of graded reading texts in a variety of genre provides pupils of varying levels of ability in the junior classroom with an appropriate challenge in reading. Senior pupils are provided with core texts and contemporary novels which complement each other. Pupils have very good access to independent reading materials with well stocked libraries. Writing skills are of a good standard; the pupils purposefully engage in the writing process and the presentation of written work is commendable overall. Further use of digital learning technologies by pupils would enhance the drafting, editing and publishing processes.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE

The overall quality of pupils’ learning experiences in English is good. The learning environments are stimulating, print-rich and attractive spaces. Highly respectful interactions were observed between pupils and teachers. Almost all pupils agreed during the focus-group discussion that they enjoy their lessons in English. Pupils would benefit from further pupil collaboration and activity based learning approaches. Literacy initiatives are promoted in the school including paired and guided reading.

The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good and characterised by clear explanations, the use of appropriate resources and affirming interactions which help to build self-confidence. Clear measurable targets have been identified in individual educational plans. The Continuum of Support has been initiated for a small number of pupils. There is a need to ensure that the Continuum of Support is implemented consistently for all identified pupils throughout the school. Team-teaching approaches underpinned by assessment data and monitored should be used to enhance the learning experiences and needs of all identified pupils.

The overall quality of teaching is very good with all teachers demonstrating highly effective classroom management skills. Purposeful talk and discussion is a regular feature during lessons. Teachers scaffold and extend pupil responses and use a purposeful range of questioning techniques. Lessons observed were well structured and a suitable range of very effective methodologies was employed including direct teaching, individual work and pair work. Very good differentiation was observed in the junior classroom during a writing lesson where all pupils were working to their ability. There was very good integration between oral, reading and writing activities.
The overall quality of assessment is satisfactory. While teachers use a range of assessment techniques in the classroom including formative feedback in copybooks and quality questioning techniques, there is a need to agree and implement a more consistent approach at whole-school level to AoL and AfL strategies to include self and peer-assessment. Success criteria and learning intentions should be shared with all pupils. A strategic whole-school approach to the use of assessment data should be adopted to monitor the progression and continuity of pupils’ learning and inform teachers’ forward planning and to set revised improvement targets for the varying ability levels.

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

The quality of whole-school planning for English is good. The principal leads the school’s engagement in a process of self-evaluation and the school has identified the plan for review during this school year to contextualise the plan in accordance with the Primary Language Curriculum.

The quality of individual teacher planning is good. All teachers present long and short-term planning in preparation for their work. Classroom teachers’ planning would be enhanced with the identification of suitably differentiated targets for the identified learning outcomes.

The school has engaged very effectively with the SSE process with targeted actions clearly identified to progress pupils’ oral language proficiency in line with the PLC. A school improvement plan for literacy has been developed through collaboration with all school partners.
Appendix

TO THE REPORT

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

The Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Mhuire welcomes the positive Curriculum Evaluation Report in English and endorses its findings. We are pleased that the report acknowledges the high standards of teaching and learning being achieved in the school.

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 welcomes the recommendations outlined in the report. Plans are in place to devise a whole-school approach to assessment in English. The provision of differentiated teaching approaches will be enacted and informed by assessment data and a whole-school approach to assessment.
**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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<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</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 <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><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 <strong>very good</strong> 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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