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>Clonaghadoo N S</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Clonaghadoo Geashill Co Offaly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>16160L</td>
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Date of inspection: 10-10-2017
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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.
Curriculum Evaluation

Date of inspection  10-10-2017

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

Clonaghadoo National School is a rural, co-educational, primary school located near Geashill, Co Offaly. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. At the time of the evaluation, there were 117 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 engage in literacy activities with enthusiasm.
- The school provides effective supports for pupils in English through the creation of print-rich environments and the availability of a wide range of appropriate resources.
- While the overall quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good, there is scope to extend the range of challenging learning experiences provided for pupils in some settings.
- Teachers present comprehensive planning documents to guide their work; however, some short-term planning documents were very general in nature and not specific to the learning needs of the pupils’ in the class.
- Teachers have developed assessment records that are clear, useful and easy to share. There is not enough evidence to confirm that these records are used to their full potential to provide feedback to pupils’ and to develop clear strategies for improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school should extend the implementation of challenging learning experiences to enable all pupils to become more active and motivated learners.
- The school should develop a whole school approach to short-term planning so that clear, relevant learning targets that are contextualised to pupils’ learning needs are consistently used.
- Assessment data should be used more regularly to provide feedback to pupils and to develop clear strategies for improvement.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING IN ENGLISH

The overall quality of pupils’ learning in English is good. Pupils listen attentively and actively engage in learning activities. Many pupils are confident communicators and avail of opportunities to present
Pupils’ learning outcomes to peers. There is scope to extend this practice to all classes. Pupils can recite a suitable variety of rhymes and poems. During the focus group discussion with pupils conducted as part of the evaluation, most pupils spoke positively about how they enjoy learning new vocabulary, writing reports and playing language games in English. Standardised test results indicate that pupils generally demonstrate good standards in reading and comprehension skills.

Pupils’ early literacy skills are competently developed. The introduction of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and the *Primary Language Curriculum* in the infant classes to support the development of pupils’ oral language skills is praiseworthy. Phonological and phonemic awareness are effectively promoted in the junior classes. Pupils in middle and senior classes can present information, describe and predict endings in stories. Pupils in middle and senior classes can present information, describe and predict endings in stories. Pupils in middle and senior classes can present information, describe and predict endings in stories. Pupils read a wide variety of books for interest, research and pleasure and teachers read aloud to classes on a regular basis. Most pupils read with confidence, fluency and understanding. Reading and comprehension strategies are explicitly taught and progress is monitored carefully.

All pupils write in a variety of genres. Good examples of handwriting and work presentation were noted throughout the school. The school is advised to ensure the consistent implementation of the handwriting policy in the school. Pupils demonstrate an appropriate use of grammar, spelling and punctuation in their writing.

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

Pupils’ learning in English is effectively supported in all settings. Classroom and whole-school displays are used to celebrate pupils’ work and to stimulate pupils’ interest in literacy. Pupils have access to well-stocked libraries, resources, literacy and language games and information and communication technology (ICT).

Teachers’ practices are effective in supporting pupils’ learning. Teachers use a wide range of approaches, such as, whole class teaching, pair work and group work to provide pupils with opportunities to consolidate their literacy skills. In most lessons observed new vocabulary was taught very effectively. A variety of whole school strategies is used to enhance pupils’ reading. There is scope to create more challenging learning experiences for pupils in some settings to enable them to become more active and motivated learners.

While effective approaches to assessing and recording pupils’ attainment were noted in all classrooms, there is scope to develop a whole-school approach to the consistent use of assessment records to provide feedback to pupils and to develop clear strategies for improvement. In addition, assessment records should be utilised to track continuity and progression of individual pupils’ learning as they advance through the school. The school uses a combination of team-teaching initiatives, early intervention and small group or individual support for pupils with additional learning needs. 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. Short-term planning for pupils with additional needs should set out clear, relevant learning objectives, on a weekly basis, that reflect a developmental and incremental approach to progressing pupils’ learning.

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 improvement plan indicates that a number of worthwhile initiatives has been introduced to support pupils’ oral language and reading abilities. All teachers provide written plans for their work. Effective short-term plans include specific, time-bound learning targets. There is scope to develop a whole school approach to short-term planning to ensure that clear, relevant learning targets that are contextualised to pupils’ learning needs are consistently used. Short-term plans are aligned to long-term plans and the school plan.

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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<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td><strong>Very Good</strong></td>
<td>Very good 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>Good 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>Satisfactory 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>Fair 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>Weak 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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