Curriculum Evaluation

REPORT

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<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Kinaffe National School</th>
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<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Swinford County Mayo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>16173U</td>
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Date of inspection: 12-03-2019
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  12-03-2019

Inspection activities undertaken
- Discussion with principal and special education teacher (SET)
- Review of relevant documents
- Observation of teaching and learning
- Examination of pupils’ work
- Interaction with pupils
- Feedback to principal and SET

SCHOOL CONTEXT
Kinaffe National School is a rural, one-teacher school near Swinford, County Mayo. As well as the mainstream class teacher—who is also the teaching principal—a special education teacher (SET) is based in the school for part of the week. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Achonry with a current enrolment of ten pupils. It participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), an action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
- The overall quality of learning across the three strands of the English curriculum is very good; pupils were highly motivated and demonstrated very high standards in oral language, reading and writing in the lessons observed.
- The school provides teaching of a very high quality in a complex multi-class setting; the breadth, balance, continuity and progression in provision for English are highly commendable.
- Pupils have very well-developed writing skills and there is some scope to challenge them further in this regard.
- Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework provides opportunities for the development of comprehension, as identified in the DEIS plan for literacy, and this work could be further expanded.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- The school should review the implementation of Aistear to ensure that it supports all three strands of the Primary Language Curriculum from infants to second class.
- The school should review its handwriting policy and the timing of the introduction of cursive writing.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING
The overall quality of pupils’ learning is very good. During the inspection, pupils displayed strong oral-language skills and were observed engaging in independent and collaborative learning, discussing and assessing their own work and the work of others. The pupils’ enjoyment of reading is very evident. They read very ably from a variety of texts and from their own writing. They demonstrated an ability to draft and edit their writing in an organised way.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE
The learner experiences observed during the inspection were of a very high standard. The quality of the teachers’ individual and collective practice is very good.

The utilisation of the language-experience approach to literacy development is highly commendable. Oral, reading and writing activities are integrated effectively. The class teacher creates a language-rich environment, both visually and orally. She challenges the pupils appropriately through her use of vocabulary and sentence structure, with ‘modelling and recasting’ used consistently as a strategy. Both reading and writing processes are modelled effectively.

The implementation of Aistear provides very good learning opportunities in play, improvisational drama and storytelling. The school should review the implementation of Aistear to ensure that it supports all three strands of the Primary Language Curriculum for infants, first and second class.

Suitable resources and approaches are used in the teaching of reading. The class library is well stocked and pupils have access to other literacy resources, including information and communications technology (ICT) and visits to the local library. The use of guided reading supports the pupils’ progression effectively.

The development of the pupils’ writing ability is based on a comprehensive school plan for the teaching of writing genres. The pupils are given opportunities to present their written work orally and their written work is also displayed and celebrated in the classroom. The school should review the timing of the introduction of cursive handwriting, as was discussed during the inspection.

Pupils are enabled to participate fully in literacy lessons and those experiencing difficulties are ably supported through differentiation and scaffolding. The collaboration between the class teacher and the visiting SET is highly commendable.

The overall quality of assessment is very good. A variety of assessment strategies is used to support effective planning of pupils’ learning. The teachers regularly monitor pupils’ learning and provide very effective individualised feedback. Self-assessment is encouraged and feedback is positive, dialogic and highly effective.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS’ LEARNING
A very clear, detailed DEIS plan provides evidence of very good school planning for literacy, using the school self-evaluation (SSE) process very effectively. Both the class teacher and SET collaborate effectively to further the pupils’ progress in all areas of English, with a particular emphasis on comprehension.
Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

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

The Board of Management and staff of Kinaffe National School welcome this positive report which affirms the work of the school. The Board welcomes the report’s recognition of the commitment and diligence of staff members, management and parent body. The Board welcomes the recognition of high standards of teaching and learning. We also welcome the recognition in the report of the high standards achieved in the following areas:

- The overall quality of learning across the three strands of the English Curriculum is very good.
- The school provides teaching of a very high quality in a complex multi-class setting.
- Pupils have very well-developed writing skills.

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 and staff of Kinaffe N.S, acknowledge the recommendations outlined in the report and undertake to address them as follows:

1. We have introduced a Cursive Handwriting scheme from September 2019 from Senior Infants upwards.
2. We are reviewing our Aistear programme in line with the recommendations from the Inspectorate.
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>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 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>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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