

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
English

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	S N Lisnafunchin
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Castlecomer Co. Kilkenny
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	16230G

Date of inspection: 24-10-2019



**An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna**
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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; a response was not received from the board.

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	24-10-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal and teachers• Review of relevant documents• Pupil focus-group interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Lisnafunchin National School is a rural school located near the town of Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ossory. There are two mainstream class teachers and two special education teachers both of whom are shared with other schools. At the time of the evaluation, there were 47 pupils, from junior infants to sixth class, enrolled in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning in reading, writing and oral language is very good.
- Pupils' learning experiences are of a very high quality and they are provided with a wide range of opportunities to use language across the curriculum areas; effective use of digital technologies is a commendable feature of pupils' learning experiences.
- Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to engage in high quality writing activities, scope exists to monitor the variety of writing genre.
- The quality of teaching is very good overall; a wide variety of approaches and methodologies was evident and teachers provided frequent opportunities to develop the pupils' oral language.
- Assessment practices are good and teachers use a valuable range of assessment strategies to evaluate pupils' progress in classroom settings; enhanced use of diagnostic testing is required to support teaching of pupils with identified literacy difficulties.
- The quality of school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE) is of a high standard and the impact of the digital learning plan is evident in classroom practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The high quality diagnostic assessment data that is gathered for some pupils should be utilised to construct more specific and measurable targets for all pupils with identified literacy learning needs.
- Writing activities should be monitored to ensure pupils are provided with opportunities to engage with the full range of writing genres.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The quality of pupils' learning in English is very good overall. Pupils demonstrate enthusiasm about their learning and in particular, very positive dispositions regarding the variety of teaching methodologies and use of digital technologies. Pupils' level of engagement in the lessons observed during the evaluation was commendable. They participated in whole-class, group discussions and pair discussion very successfully. Assessment data indicate that pupils overall are doing well in English.

Pupils demonstrate very good word-attack skills and enjoy a variety of reading material at their appropriate instructional levels. Pupils read with fluency and apply comprehension strategies to enhance their understanding of reading material. It is evident that almost all pupils are making progress in their reading commensurate with their stage of development. Pupils demonstrate a very positive attitude to reading and are exposed to a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction texts. Early-reading skills are well developed through a monitored, 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, novels, comprehension activities and digital texts. Senior pupils have very good access to independent reading materials with well stocked libraries.

Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards speaking and communicate confidently with each other and with their teachers. Oral language skills are fostered at whole-school level and pupils experience challenging vocabulary and sentence structures from teachers. The Primary Language Curriculum is used very effectively by teachers to plan and teach oral language. Pupils are able to use increasingly more complex sentence structures as they progress throughout the school.

Pupils demonstrate very good knowledge of the characteristics of the various writing genres and they have good opportunities to write in these genres. In addition to explicit teaching of a range of genre, teachers provide pupils with autonomy in choosing their writing topics and regular opportunities are provided for free writing. Pupils' handwriting and written work is praiseworthy, and pupils demonstrate confidence and pride in sharing their written work with others. Pupils enjoy regular opportunities to record, present and display their work using digital technology. It is recommended that pupil choice of genre be monitored to ensure pupils develop the skills for each genre.

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

The overall quality of the pupils' learner experience is very good. Pupils work collaboratively and demonstrate very good listening skills; respectful interactions with one another were evident throughout the school. Very effective pair work and group work was observed during the evaluation. Pupils in the focus group indicated that they enjoy working in groups for challenging tasks such as project research and debates. In addition, pupils in the focus group indicated that they enjoy the variety of games and activities used to develop oral language. Pupils are enabled to make meaningful connections between learning in English and other areas of the curriculum, most notably, through their project work Social, Environmental and Science Education (SESE) which they shared with parents and members of the local community via the school web site.

The overall quality of teaching is very good with highly-effective classroom management skills observed. Teachers prepare attractive learning environments and suitable resources to stimulate

pupils' interest and sustain their engagement in lessons. They use a suitable range of questions and prompts to facilitate meaningful discussion and provide appropriate formative feedback to pupils. Very good differentiation was observed throughout the school in reading, writing and oral language tasks suited to pupil ability level. Furthermore, there was very good integration between oral, reading and writing activities. Pupils are also provided with experiences to enhance their learning experiences in English.

The overall quality of assessment is good. Teachers collect quality assessment data and use this to plan for teaching. A variety of peer and self-assessment techniques were observed during the evaluation. Very good quality diagnostic data is also gathered for some pupils. Scope exists to develop the use of this data to ensure that more targeted teaching and monitoring of progress is in place for all pupils with identified literacy difficulties.

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

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 has engaged in the school self-evaluation (SSE) process with a focus on digital learning. A plan is in place to ensure that pupils engage purposefully in meaningful learning activities with digital technologies for knowledge creation. Pupils will also be able to source, critique, and manage information and to reflect on their learning. The impact of this plan was evident in the school during English lessons. Pupils in the focus group described learning activities that allowed them to source and manage information. They also described tracking learning and setting targets for progress using digital technologies.

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.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	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 outstanding and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	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
Good	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 <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	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.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	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.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	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.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;