

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
English

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Kilmeedy N S
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Kilmeedy Co Limerick
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	16764U

Date of inspection: 23-01-2020



**An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna**
Department of
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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 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	23-01-2020
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

Kilmeedy NS is a rural, co-educational school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Limerick. At the time of the evaluation there were 21 pupils on roll. The staff comprises of two recently appointed mainstream teachers and two special education teachers who support pupils with additional needs and are based in other schools. The school has experienced significant changes in staffing in recent years.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning is of a high standard; pupils are immersed in a culture of reading for pleasure and across the school they recognise reading as an intriguing, valuable and rewarding endeavour.
- The quality of pupils' learning experiences is outstanding; exploration of literacy through arts education is making a unique contribution to pupils' social and emotional development.
- The quality of teaching is very good; the collective and collaborative practice of teachers in creating personalised, child-centred learning experiences is a key strength of the school.
- The quality of assessment is high and peer assessment is enabling pupils take ownership over their learning; assessment of oral language requires further development.
- While the quality of whole-school planning including school self-evaluation is good and parental involvement in school improvement initiatives is admirably fostered, the English plan does not adequately reflect the innovative range of whole-school approaches embedded in practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Oral language assessment practices should be further developed to ensure information gathered facilitates the identification of the specific learning needs of pupils in a format that is easy to interpret and share.
- The school should commence a review of the whole-school plan for English ensuring that it captures the highly effective approaches embedded in practice and that it ensures progression in pupils' learning.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

Pupils' learning is of a high standard. They experience a balance of success and challenge in the range of literacy tasks offered. They have rich opportunities to transfer their learning in literacy to other areas of learning through collaborative project work, dramatic productions and the schools' 'buddy system'. Pupil participation in lessons is high. They have a strong understanding of the features of effective speaking and listening and in lessons observed they purposefully applied these skills. Pupils in the junior room recite a range of rhymes with expression and poise. Senior pupils have also explored a wide repertoire of poetry of cultural and historical significance. A highly-integrated approach to the development of oral language skills is enabling pupils meaningfully acquire and apply specific vocabulary and language associated with a range of spoken text types.

Pupils are immersed in a culture of reading for pleasure. Infant pupils have mastered a range of book handling skills and understand basic print conventions and specific book terminology. These pupils were attentive, curious and deeply captivated by the story selected for storytelling time. All pupils were eager to share their book preferences and inquired with interest to the selected book choices of their classmates. Senior pupils also elaborated on their experiences of whole-class exploration of novels. Pupils would benefit from increased opportunities to share their learning with a variety of audiences and for a range of purposes in order to strengthen their confidence.

A bespoke programme of punctuation and grammar is impacting positively on pupils' writing skills. Pupils have a clear sense of what is required in presenting their work to a high standard. A recently developed whole-school cursive writing programme should enhance their penmanship. Pupils engage regularly in the writing process and can describe the significance of most stages. Senior pupils have developed very good word processing skills. They used advanced technical terms and digital conventions in describing this learning during a focus group conducted as part of the evaluation. Some pupils are beginning to learn how to use presentation software to enable them to communicate and share their learning in creative ways. Further engagement with multi-sensory digital texts such as online articles, podcasts and audiobooks will enhance pupils' critical literacy.

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

The quality of learner experiences is outstanding. Pupils experience secure, nurturing classroom environments that enable them to fully engage with their learning. Throughout the school, a very comprehensive range of literacy resources is available to support teaching and learning. Inviting reading spaces have been created within the classrooms. Generously stocked libraries provide a range of high quality texts to support multiple reading preferences. Displays in classrooms and assembly areas recognise and celebrate pupils' accomplishments. Opportunities for pupils to experience literacy through the arts in the production of their annual play and through visits to the theatre uniquely enrich and extend pupils' appreciation of literacy as an art form. Involvement of families in school events such as Grandparents' Day provide pupils with valuable, communicative, learning experiences. The implementation of *Aistear: The Early Childhood Learning Framework* is facilitating provision of appropriately playful language-learning contexts in the junior room.

The quality of teaching is very good. Lessons are carefully planned, clearly structured and well-paced. The practice of explicit teacher modelling of processes in oral-language, reading and writing is highly praised. Pupils benefit strongly from teachers' skilful use of the gradual release of

responsibility model in learning tasks. Highly effective questioning techniques are utilised to elicit understanding, challenge thinking and prompt comprehensive contributions from pupils. Excellent differentiation techniques are organically applied to create highly personalised learning experiences for pupils. Teachers recognise and capitalise on the distinctive learning opportunities the schools' unique context offers. Collaborative, thematic planning and the maximising of peer-learning opportunities are central considerations of teachers' planning and practice. The school provides commendable support to pupils with additional learning needs. A range of models are employed including team-teaching and intensive individual tuition. Collaboratively, staff have engaged in a robust, problem-solving process leading to the development of detailed, specific support plans that respond incrementally to progressing pupils' identified learning priorities.

A complementary suite of assessment for learning and assessment of learning methods is gainfully employed. Pupils have a strong sense of their achievements in reading and writing and can capably identify the focus for the next stages of their learning. Senior pupils explained the peer-assessment processes with which they have engaged. Pupil profiles, informed by longitudinal standardised assessment results, allow careful tracking of pupil attainment. Assessment practices in oral language should be developed to enable identification of the specific learning needs of pupils, in a format that is easy to interpret and share.

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

The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning is good overall. The school has engaged very effectively in school self-evaluation. Significant action-research has been conducted to establish improvement priorities and implement associated improvement actions. A number of literacy initiatives, including an integrated approach to oral, reading and writing skills, a cursive writing programme and use of graded readers have been initiated. The school should now commence a review of the whole-school plan to ensure that these approaches to literacy are formally captured. This will ensure appropriate progression, development and consolidation of pupils' learning that is reflective of multi-class settings. The development of assessment practices in oracy will also enhance the monitoring of the impact of agreed improvement targets.

The collaborative practice of teachers is a key strength of the school. This strong community of practitioners use formal meeting time to discuss the literacy programme. They make collective decisions on amending practice in light of emerging pupil needs and evidence-based educational research. Teachers apply the outcomes of the range of professional development courses with which they have engaged to their practice.

The schools' commitment to recognising parents as partners in their child's education through encouraging parental voice and involvement in improvement initiatives is highly commended. School newsletters provide parents with regular updates on school self-evaluation and give useful guidance on how they can actively support their children's learning.

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;

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 of Kilmeedy NS welcomes the positive findings contained in this report on our recent school inspection. The Board of Management is delighted that the report acknowledges the high standard of teaching and learning of English in our school. The teachers work very hard to ensure the pupils are receiving their education in a secure and nurturing environment. We are very pleased that the report acknowledges the outstanding quality of learner experiences. We welcome the report's recognition of the collaborative practice of teachers as a key strength of the school. We are very pleased that the principal's commitment to recognising parents as partners in their child's education, through encouraging parental voice and involvement, was recognised and highly praised in the report.

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 of Kilmeedy NS will take on board the recommendations of this report.

We confirm immediate engagement with the recommendation in the report that oral language assessment practices should be further developed. We are currently researching the various methods of assessment and will have a formal method in place as soon as is possible.

While acknowledging that the staff have only recently received their training in the new Primary Language Curriculum, we now intend to use this training to commence a review of the whole-school plan for English. As we develop and improve the teaching and learning of different strands and learning outcomes, we will review and re-write the whole school plan for English. We recognise that this plan will be incremental and that it will happen over a period of time. This deep reflection on our school plan and our continuous engagement with the PLC will ensure that our whole school plan for English is relevant to our school context.