An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
English

REPORT

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<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Scoil Naomh Colmcille</th>
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<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Craigtown</td>
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<td>Carndonagh</td>
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<td>County Donegal</td>
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<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>16880W</td>
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Date of inspection: 27-03-2019
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 inspectors 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 did not meet the requirements in relation to 2 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, the school has subsequently furnished evidence of compliance with these requirements.
Curriculum Evaluation

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**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**
Scoil Naomh Colmcille is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Derry. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in School (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. There are seven mainstream class teachers and one special education teacher based in the school. There are 160 pupils enrolled currently.

**SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**FINDINGS**
- The overall quality of pupils’ learning is good; pupils enjoy their learning and are motivated to learn.
- The quality of learner experiences is good; pupils’ communication skills are not sufficiently developed.
- The overall quality of teaching is good; teachers make good use of a variety of teaching methodologies.
- The quality of assessment is good; teachers use a variety of assessment for learning (AFL) and assessment of learning (AoL) strategies effectively; however, assessment is not used effectively to identify differentiated literacy activities.
- A very significant number of teaching hours for special educational needs (SEN) are being deployed to whole class groups.
- The overall quality of whole-school planning is satisfactory.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**
- Teachers should optimise the potential of all lessons to create challenging oral language learning experiences for pupils; this should include higher-order vocabulary and the extension of good quality pupil responses to further develop their communication skills.
- The provision of differentiated literacy activities, which are underpinned by the analysis and use of the school’s assessment data, is necessary to ensure that all pupils achieve specific learning outcomes and to enable their full participation during lessons.
- The board should, as a matter of priority, ensure that the school complies with the requirement of circular 0013/2017 regarding the deployment of teaching resources.
1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING

The overall quality of pupils’ learning in English is good. Pupils enjoy their learning, are attentive and are motivated to learn. Pupils show an active interest in their learning and can recite a variety of rhymes and poems with confidence and enthusiasm. During a focus-group discussion with pupils, they all agreed that they enjoy their lessons and appreciated the importance of English in their learning. They particularly enjoyed opportunities where they collaborate and engage in creative learning experiences. Junior pupils can engage in good quality conversation and can recall significant events to a good standard; however, there is need to concentrate a more deliberate focus on expanding their vocabulary and the development of their oral language skills in order to further develop their reciprocal communication skills.

Pupils demonstrate a positive attitude to reading. Overall pupils read with phrasing and fluency and read core texts in class with supplementary texts from the classroom libraries. There is significant scope to provide contemporary and graded reading materials for all pupils in facilitating appropriately challenging reading experiences for pupils of all abilities.

Pupils across the various classes benefit from a structured approach overall to the development of their writing skills. Early writing skills are developing appropriately within a suitable structure and scaffolding; further opportunities to engage with pupil-led free writing experiences would be of benefit. Attractive displays of pupils’ work across the genres of procedure, narrative and good samples of composed poetry are evident throughout the school. While some exemplary examples are provided in the narrative genre, there is a need to adopt a strategic approach to the development of pupils’ writing skills across the writing genres.

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

Pupils’ learning experiences in English are of a good quality overall. Classrooms and the wider school environments present as print rich and celebrate pupils’ work. Display areas in classrooms were effective in providing pupils with supports for learning. While pupils engaged very well in their various activities which are stimulating and well managed, teachers should develop a systematic approach to exploring and consolidating, with pupils, new vocabulary which arises incidentally during lessons. Teachers should optimise the potential of all lessons to create challenging oral language learning experiences for pupils; this could be achieved by the consistent teacher modelling of higher-order vocabulary and the extension of pupil responses.

The overall quality of teaching is good. Very respectful and affirming interactions among pupils and between pupils and teachers were observed during lessons. Teachers make good use of a variety of methodologies and approaches and provide some opportunities to work collaboratively with their peers. Very good practice was observed where teachers provided explicit direction and structure regarding meaningful pupil discussion and collaboration. This very good practice should be extended to all classrooms including the outlining of differentiated learning intentions. In many instances, questioning was very effective in eliciting prior knowledge, recall and understanding of their previous learning.
The quality of assessment is good overall. A variety of assessment of learning (AoL) and assessment for learning (AfL) strategies are used to assess pupils’ work. While useful analysis tools are used to ascertain the quality of pupils’ achievement at the end of each year, a whole school approach to the strategic use of assessment data is necessary to monitor the progression of pupils’ learning and inform teachers’ differentiated activities. While pupils’ self-assessment is working very successfully, AfL should feature more during lessons to support pupils in their learning.

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

The quality of the whole-school plan for DEIS and English is satisfactory. The whole-school plan for English and SEN, and target setting in the DEIS plan require review and updating to align with current school literacy priorities. As a next step, teachers need to review the whole school plan collaboratively so as to outline the approaches for the development of pupils’ oral language skills and to plan for the content and skills to be delivered at each class level. In reviewing the whole school plan for English, teachers should be provided with guidance to optimise the potential of all lessons to create challenging oral language learning experiences for pupils; this should include consistent teaching of higher-order vocabulary and the extension of good quality pupil responses to further develop their communication skills.
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 Scoil Naomh Colmchille welcomes the very positive findings of this report. In particular the Board of Management welcomes the affirmation of the high standard of teaching and learning in the school and is delighted that many of the school’s strengths in the area of English have been highlighted. The Board acknowledges the recommendations made in this report and will support the school staff in their commitment to effectively implementing the recommendations made.

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 staff will work collaboratively at a whole school level to adopt a strategic approach to the analysis of the assessment data collected in order to effectively identify the literacy priorities of the pupils. In doing so, this will further inform the schools approach to differentiation in the area of literacy.
- In line with the recommendations, the staff will review and update the current target setting within the DEIS plan to align with the current school literacy priorities. A review of the whole school plan for English will be completed collaboratively at a whole school level in order to outline the development of pupils’ oral language skills and the skills and content to be delivered at each class level in order to optimise the potential of all lessons.
- The school is now fully compliant with the requirements of circular 0013/2017 regarding the deployment of teaching resources.
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>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 <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>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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