Curriculum Evaluation

English

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name
Scoil Náisiúnta Phádraig Naofa

Seoladh na scoile / School address
Kilmacannon
Ballinfull
County Sligo

Uimhir rolla / Roll number
17021C

Date of inspection: 13-03-2019
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 met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.
Curriculum Evaluation

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<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>13-03-2019</th>
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<td>Observation of teaching and learning</td>
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<td>Examination of pupils’ work</td>
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<td>Interaction with pupils</td>
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SCHOOL CONTEXT
Scoil Phádraig Naofa is a rural co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Elphin. There are eighty-six pupils enrolled across four mainstream classrooms. There are three special education teachers (SET), one of whom is based in another school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
- The overall quality of pupil learning outcomes in English is good; the pupils are attentive, show interest in their learning and are highly motivated to learn.
- Teachers have been successful in securing improvements in pupils’ oral language skills; there is a need to develop pupils’ writing skills.
- The quality of teaching is good overall; further differentiated teaching approaches are required to provide appropriately challenging learning experiences that better cater for the varying needs of pupils.
- The quality of assessment is satisfactory; assessment of, and for learning strategies including providing constructive feedback based on completed tasks in copybooks are required.
- The quality of planning including school self-evaluation (SSE) is good overall; planning for team-teaching and for differentiated approaches, including classroom support planning, requires development.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- A whole-school systematic approach to planning for the development of pupils’ writing in terms of content taught, topic-specific vocabulary and writing skills is required.
- Teachers should plan for appropriately challenging learning experiences, including provision for higher order questioning, to cater for the varying ability levels of pupils.
- All teachers should promote assessment of and for learning strategies.
- A co-ordinated approach to team-teaching and using differentiated approaches should be planned for and implemented.
1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
The quality of pupils’ learning overall is good. Pupils are attentive, show interest in their learning and are highly motivated to learn. The school has been successful in securing improvements in pupils’ oral language skills. Pupils actively engage in discussing curriculum based topics and respond well during lessons. During the focus group discussion, pupils commendably referred to their enjoyment of writing poetry, expressing their opinions in writing and engaging in project work in English.

Initiatives are in place to support pupils’ learning in English including Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and shared reading groups. Pupils can recite a variety of rhymes and poems with confidence and enjoyment in the junior classes and they engage effectively with exploring and using language through poetry in all classes. Many of the pupils can tell and retell stories using appropriate sequencing, tense and oral vocabulary. However the pupils’ use of the topic-specific vocabulary for the topics taught requires development. In lessons observed, pupils demonstrated an understanding of how to give and follow instructions well and they engaged very well with learning the conventions of report writing through shared and guided writing experiences. A more deliberate focus on expanding their vocabulary and on teaching topic specific vocabulary is needed to extend their confidence and competence.

The school promotes a range of activities to encourage reading. Core texts are used in class and supplementary readers provide opportunities for pupils to experience a wider range of genres of text. They can read to a very good standard with fluency and understanding. Their progression in reading is good overall as evident from assessment information provided by the school. The provision of differentiated oral language and writing activities will ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged so as to maximise their progress. The inclusion in short-term planning of specific vocabulary and language structures to be taught and planning for shared reading and writing approaches will be useful in this regard.

Pupils’ writing skills are good overall with some very good examples noted; however, there are aspects of learning that require development. Pupils can write for a variety of audiences, in a broad range of genres and they use digital technologies in some classes to present and share their work. However, pupils should be exposed to writing in a broader range of genres and experience free writing in all classes. The content in writing tasks and handwriting should also be developed incrementally across the school.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE
Overall, the pupils’ learning experiences in English are good. Most classrooms and the wider school environment are stimulating and print-rich and celebratory of pupils’ work. Pupils are provided with purposeful opportunities to engage in collaborative learning.

The quality of teaching is good overall. Lessons observed were well structured with resources used well, and a successful range of methodologies was employed. Where the best learning was observed, specific planning was outlined for the intended learning outcomes for the dual-grade classes, topic-specific language was taught purposefully, challenging work was given to pupils along with appropriate scaffolding for learning, including collaborative activities, and pupils’ understanding
was supported and challenged through skilful teacher questioning. These very good practices should be extended to all classes.

The quality of assessment is satisfactory overall. While assessment results are analysed at whole school level, there is a need for a more systematic approach to the analysis of assessment data to better inform differentiated classroom support planning.

The school has made progress in the development of whole-school approaches to the assessment of learning and assessment for learning. Pupils, in a few classes, collate self-assessment folders which include samples of their completed tasks; this practice should be extended so that all pupils are provided with opportunities to reflect on their own learning and record key facts and skills they have acquired. While constructive feedback is provided in pupils’ writing copybooks in most classes, this practice of carefully monitoring pupils’ copybooks should be extended to all classes.

The quality of support provided for pupils with additional needs is very good overall. The Continuum of Support approach is being implemented very effectively. Learning targets are specific, achievable and time-bound and pupil progress in attaining targets is recorded regularly. Support teachers have particular expertise in this area and opportunities should be provided at staff meetings to share their expertise in special education with other teachers appropriately. This would support the planning for a co-ordinated approach to team-teaching and classroom support planning for differentiated needs in a more systematic manner.

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

Overall, the quality of school planning including the school self-evaluation (SSE) process is good. However, it is recommended that a whole-school systematic approach to the development of pupils’ writing in terms of content, vocabulary, skills and its assessment be implemented.

In whole-school planning, further guidance should be provided to individual teachers in providing for appropriately challenging learning experiences, including the use of higher-order questioning, to cater for the varying ability levels of pupils. While team-teaching approaches are being implemented to support pupils with varying needs in the junior and middle classes, planning does not reflect current practice. It is recommended that a co-ordinated approach to team teaching and the use of differentiated approaches should be planned for and implemented.

The school has engaged appropriately in the SSE process. It was evident during the evaluation that the focus on active learning activities to promote oral language and providing a wider variety of reading materials are impacting positively on pupils’ learning outcomes.
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 St Patrick’s N.S. welcomes the publication of this Curriculum Evaluation Report of English. The Board acknowledges of the work done by the staff and children in our school and the good quality of teaching in our school.

This good quality is seen in the many points highlighted in the report

- the overall quality of teaching is good
- the pupils are attentive, show interest and are highly motivated to learn
- the overall quality of pupil outcomes are good
- the quality of planning is good
- SSE planning is good and the effectiveness of these plans
- Pupils referred to their enjoyment of writing poetry and expressing their opinions in writing
- Pupils referred to their enjoyment in project work
- Initiatives taken on by the staff in the school to support learning in English e.g. Aistear, shared reading groups
- The school promotes a range of activities to encourage reading
- The use of ICT to present and share their work
- Pupils have the opportunity to engage in collaborative learning
- The quality of support provided for pupils is very good and the Continuum of Support approach is being implemented very effectively.
- The focus on active learning activities to promote oral language and providing a wider variety of reading materials are impacting positively on pupils’ learning.

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 accepts the evaluation and will support the school in working on the recommendations from this report. The school has already made provisions to promote the assessment of and assessment for learning strategies within the school. The school has started to form a systematic approach to the development of pupils writing and are happy to make team teaching a focus for the next school year.
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>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<tr>
<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 <strong>very good</strong> 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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