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>Kilmainham Wood National School</th>
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| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Kilmainham Wood  
|                               | Kells  
|                               | County Meath |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number   | 17123K |

Date of inspection: 20-04-2018
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, 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 | 20-04-2018
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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, deputy principal and teachers

**SCHOOL CONTEXT**

Kilmainham Wood National School is a rural, co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kilmore. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in School (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. The school caters for 113 pupils distributed across four classrooms. Two special education teachers provide support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

**SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**FINDINGS**

- The overall quality of pupils’ reading and writing in English is good; pupils do not demonstrate satisfactory oral language ability, however.
- Good-quality learning experiences are provided for pupils.
- Overall, teaching of English is commendable, with some highly successful practices evident.
- Effective assessment procedures are employed in the school.
- While whole-school planning for English is satisfactorily developed, there was no DEIS plan available at the time of the inspection.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- A structured whole-school approach to the development of pupils’ oral language skills should be implemented and progress in learning monitored.
- School management and staff should devise and ensure the implementation of a DEIS plan, setting specific and measurable targets for school improvement.

**DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING**

The overall quality of pupils’ reading and writing in English is good. Their ability to express themselves orally requires improvement, however.

Evidence from pupil focus group discussion indicates that they enjoy their learning in English and are motivated to learn. Pupils can read with fluency and use a variety of comprehension strategies across a range of texts and genres. Pupils read a suitable range of differentiated texts and novels and have a good knowledge of books and authors. Their reading skills are generally in line with their ability. They have good phonemic awareness and most pupils can recite a suitable variety of rhymes and poems. Junior pupils write collaboratively with the teacher as scribe. Pupils write in a broad
range of genres and some very high-quality free writing was observed. Most senior pupils write in a cursive script and some good examples of handwriting and work presentation were noted. Pupils generally demonstrate an appropriate use of grammar and punctuation, though their ability to spell high-frequency words requires improvement.

While some pupils are very articulate and communicate their ideas confidently the majority of pupils require more explicit teaching of oral language and communication skills. Their ability to elaborate their views, to persuade, negotiate and justify a position in a confident and audible manner requires significant development. The systematic implementation of a structured whole-school approach to the development of pupils’ oral language skills is advised.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE
The quality of pupils’ learning experiences in English is good. Pupils are provided with purposeful opportunities to engage in independent and collaborative learning. They make effective use of information and communications technology as a learning tool. Pupils are afforded interesting learning opportunities, including visits to the local library and attendance at plays and literacy-related events. Their learning is integrated successfully with project work and whole-school activities such as the Junior Entrepreneur and Green Schools Programmes, thereby developing their skills and attitudes for life-long learning. During focus group discussion, pupils expressed enjoyment in reading for pleasure and cited many examples of using their writing skills outside school to communicate with family and friends.

The quality of teaching in English is good overall, with some very effective practice also observed during the evaluation. Classrooms present as print-rich and pupil-centred learning environments which display and celebrate pupils learning in English. Where very good teaching was noted, lessons were differentiated skilfully to meet the learning needs of pupils and activities stimulated interest and deep engagement with the writing process. While teachers’ plans identify relevant learning objectives to progress pupils’ learning, there is scope to delineate oral skills and subject specific language to be taught and to outline how learning will be differentiated for more-able pupils.

Support for pupils experiencing difficulties in English is appropriately met through a combination of early intervention programmes, in-class team and parallel teaching and withdrawal approaches. Appropriate individual education plans (IEP) are prepared in collaboration with parents and relevant professionals. Teachers are advised to keep records of pupils’ achievements of individual learning targets and to use these records in reviewing progress and setting new learning goals.

Good assessment practices are employed. Standardised tests are administered annually and results are examined in conjunction with pupil achievements in ability tests. Teachers monitor pupils’ written work carefully and provide useful feedback which affirm pupils’ work and provide advice on where improvement is needed. All teachers maintain checklists, work samples and records of learning in English. A good variety of different examples of assessment-for-learning (AfL) strategies were noted in individual classrooms. Teachers are advised to continue to develop whole-school AfL practices in all settings and to augment the assessment policy accordingly.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS’ LEARNING
The quality of school planning for English is satisfactory. The school plan is under review currently by the newly appointed principal and the teaching staff. Some work in outlining whole-school approaches to oral language, reading and writing have already been outlined and staff are devising two-year cycles of work currently to reflect the multi-grade classrooms in the school.
At the time of the evaluation, there was no DEIS plan for literacy available for inspection. The school needs to plan for, implement, monitor and evaluate learning outcomes for those pupils for whom DEIS funding has been provided. The school has engaged previously in school self-evaluation, setting precise and measurable targets for the development of writing skills. There is clear evidence that this planning impacted positively on pupils’ learning. School management and staff should now implement a similar approach to the development of the DEIS plan. There is a need to identify specific actions which can be undertaken by all teachers, on a daily basis, to accelerate improvement in pupils’ oral language ability and spellings.
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 Kilmainhamwood National school is pleased the inspection has found that the overall quality of pupils’ reading and writing in English was good and that overall the teaching of English is commendable with some highly successful practices evident.

Part B: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

- We intend to implement a structured whole-school approach to the development of pupils’ oral language skills and ensure that progress is monitored.
- School management and staff will devise and ensure the implementation of a DEIS plan, setting specific and measurable targets for school improvement. We will focus on the areas of oral language development and spellings.
- Help has been sought to scaffold and guide this process from the PDST.
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>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<td>Very Good</td>
<td>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.</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>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 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>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.</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>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.</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>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.</td>
<td>Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;</td>
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