

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
English

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Áine
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Maio Tierworker Kells Co. Meath
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	17946I

Date of inspection: 15-01-2019



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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 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

Date of inspection	15-01-2019
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• Review of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Post-evaluation professional dialogue with principal and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Anne's National School is a co-educational Catholic school under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Meath. The school currently caters for twenty-seven pupils across two mainstream classrooms. One special education teacher is shared with another school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of learning in English is very good although a number of pupils would benefit from reading material that presents a greater challenge to them.
- High quality learning experiences are provided for pupils in English: pupils are attentive, motivated and enjoy their learning.
- The quality of teaching is very good; teachers prepare well for their lessons and this was reflected in the quality of the lessons observed.
- The quality of assessment is good: while formative assessment was used effectively on a number of occasions to inform learning during the inspection, a whole-school approach to formative feedback has not yet been fully developed.
- Pupils with additional learning needs are well-supported and the continuum of support is in place; the practice of team-teaching has not yet been fully developed and would enhance the development of pupils' fluency and comprehension skills.
- The effectiveness of school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE), in progressing pupils' learning is very good.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pupils would benefit from access to reading material in English that is more closely aligned to their abilities; enhanced use of assessment information currently collected should underpin literacy initiatives.
- Teachers should further develop the use of a variety of formative feedback methods to support the pupils' learning on a whole-school basis in order to support the pupils in their learning.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The quality of pupils' learning is very good. Pupils can speak clearly about their own learning and express their opinions with confidence. They are motivated and enjoy their learning. Pupils are confident in their use of oral language and the skills of oral reporting are well-developed. Pupils participate in play-based activities with great enthusiasm and use language very effectively to report back on their learning experiences.

Pupils benefit from the systematic teaching of vocabulary; they engage in digital-learning activities that support the development of a rich bank of language relating to various topics. Pupils demonstrate good levels of phonological awareness and knowledge of letter sounds. There is a whole-school emphasis on encouraging reading, with pupils involved in reading challenges throughout the year. Pupils were engaged in reading a wide variety of novels. While pupils read well, the use of texts that are more closely aligned to their varying ability levels should enhance fluency and maximise their progress.

The quality of writing is very good overall. Pupils engage with a suitable range of writing genres; their creative use of language was evident in the poems they wrote. They have a good understanding of the conventions of grammar, punctuation and sentence structure; this is further supported by a multi-sensory approach to the teaching of these conventions. During the focus-group discussion, held as part of the evaluation, pupils spoke of their enjoyment of the writing process. A whole-school approach to the use of formative feedback during the writing process should lead to further improvement in pupils' writing skills and their capacity to engage in pupil-led assessment. The whole-school approach to developing pupils' comprehension strategies is well-established and is having a positive impact on their learning.

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

The quality of the learner experience is very good. Pupils work collaboratively and demonstrate good listening skills and respectful interactions with one another. During the evaluation, pupils spoke of their enjoyment of the opportunities they had to use digital learning technology to support their learning.

The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers plan carefully and prepare well for literacy lessons. Classrooms are well-resourced and pupils have access to a wide range of texts. A variety of approaches is used to support the development of pupils' literacy skills while sustaining their engagement and motivation. Group work was facilitated in a very effective manner during the lessons observed. In some instances, a more systematic use of pair work including the 'Think, Pair, Share' strategy would have enriched the learning experience of the pupils. A good understanding of *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is evident with a planned approach to the development of pupils' communication skills successfully adopted.

Support for pupils with additional learning needs is good overall. The staff implements the continuum of support appropriately and provides suitable support to pupils with additional needs, mainly by withdrawing them from the mainstream class. Pupils would benefit from more targeted in-class support through the development of an in-class literacy initiative.

The overall quality of assessment is good. The results of standardised assessments are used effectively to inform teaching and learning. While there is occasional use of running records to monitor pupils' progress in reading, there is scope to develop this throughout the school to ensure that all pupils are reading texts at an appropriately challenging level. Careful tracking of pupils as they master skills and competencies is evident. However, a more consistent approach to formative assessment with pupils' engaging in more self-assessment would further enhance teaching and learning.

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

The overall quality of school planning is very good. The school plan for English is currently under review and staff are working collaboratively in this process. Their engagement with the new Primary Language Curriculum is commendable with implementation evident in both planning and practice. The staff has formulated a comprehensive whole-school plan that includes clearly delineated writing and comprehension skills. This is used purposefully to monitor implementation throughout the year along with its impact on pupils' learning.

The quality of the school's engagement in the SSE process is very good. The acting-principal promotes a culture of ongoing improvement. There is a focus on collaboration among staff and pupils. The school improvement plan indicates that oral language development has been targeted. A systematic approach to the development of oral language skills has been adopted and this is impacting positively on pupils' learning.

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. Anne's N.S., Maio is pleased that the hard work and commitment of the staff have been affirmed and welcome the acknowledgement that high standards of teaching and learning are being achieved in the school.

We are also delighted that our pupils are seen as confident, motivated, enthusiastic and that they enjoy their 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 of Management and staff will take on board the recommendations of the report and they will inform our whole school English planning process and our school improvement plan.

THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

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;