Curriculum Evaluation
Social Personal Health Education

REPORT

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<th>Aín m a s cóile / School name</th>
<th>S N Cnoc Machan</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Bun Machan Co Waterford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>18077L</td>
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Date of inspection: 16-01-2018
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 Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) 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.
Date of inspection  16-01-2018

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<th>Inspection activities undertaken</th>
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<td>Discussion with principal and teachers</td>
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<td>Review of relevant documents</td>
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<td>Pupil focus-group interview</td>
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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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<td>Feedback to principal and teachers</td>
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SCHOOL CONTEXT

Knockmahon National School is a co-educational, primary school, catering for pupils from infants to sixth class under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Waterford and Lismore. The school is situated near the village of Bonmahon. The staff comprises of two mainstream class teachers, a special education teacher and three special needs assistants. At the time of the evaluation there were 24 pupils enrolled in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
- The quality of pupils’ learning is effective, ensuring that they are supported to take greater responsibility for their personal safety and wellbeing.
- The quality of support for pupils’ learning experiences is good, and a warm, inclusive atmosphere is evident in the school.
- Most pupils engage well in the classroom activities; on occasion there is a tendency among some pupils not to listen appropriately or participate fully in all activities.
- The teachers and staff have responded very positively to the needs of their pupils and have undertaken continuing professional development and liaised with relevant personnel to ensure that they are best addressing the pupils’ needs.
- The quality of school planning, including School Self-Evaluation (SSE) in progressing pupils’ learning is commendable.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- It is advised that for some pupils the promotion of their active and positive participation in all classroom activities be prioritised.
- Positive listener-speaker relationships should be promoted consistently.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
- The quality of pupils’ learning is effective.
- The pupils are developing an understanding of healthy living and show willingness to participate in activities that promote and sustain health, including a variety of sporting activities and gardening, which they evidently enjoy.
• The pupils are also supported to understand the need to take greater responsibility for their personal safety and wellbeing, and make informed decisions. The school arranges for speakers to visit the school to discuss with the pupils such topics as internet safety, water and fire safety, and to also develop their interests and talents in a variety of activities including arts and crafts, cookery and pet care. The pupils are also learning appropriate strategies for managing feelings and emotions with programmes such as Zones of Regulation and Think Stop Do being implemented effectively in the school.

• Pupils’ understanding of sexuality and the processes of growth and change are developed through the effective implementation of the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme.

• The school’s participation in the Green Schools Programme promotes pupils’ understanding of their role as global citizens and their responsibilities in relation to the environment.

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

• The quality of support for pupils’ learning experiences is good. A caring ethos and a warm, inclusive atmosphere is evident in the school. Classrooms and school environs promote an appreciation of SPHE and the pupils experience a sense of belonging. Pupils are consistently affirmed and their work is celebrated. These aspects of the work of the school help to promote the development of pupils’ self-esteem. Most pupils engage fully in all classroom activities, but for some pupils, it is advised that the promotion of their active and positive participation in the classroom activities be prioritised. Linked closely to this is the need to consistently reinforce with the pupils positive listener-speaker relationships.

• Teachers prepare purposeful lessons that enable all pupils, including those with special needs, to participate actively. They employ a wide range of methodologies including circle-time, pair and small group work, role-play and drama. The special educational needs teacher supplements and supports the work of the class teachers. The teachers integrate the curriculum very effectively with other subjects, including Literacy, Drama, Geography and Science. While SPHE is promoted in the delivery of Aistear, The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework; a clear focus on the learning objectives of SPHE in planning for Aistear would enhance learning further.

• Teachers engage diligently in a range of continuing professional development courses relevant to pupils’ engagement in learning. These are impacting positively on pupils’ learning. The school liaises very closely with professional agencies to ensure that teachers are best supporting the variety of needs of the pupils. Very good links have also been established with parents and the local community.

• The teachers use appropriate methods to assess pupils’ progress in SPHE. These methods include oral questioning, written tasks, work samples and classroom observation.

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

• The quality of school planning, including School Self-Evaluation (SSE) in progressing pupils’ learning is commendable. The whole-school plan for SPHE is designed as a two-year programme and informs teachers’ practice.

• The teachers prepare yearly and short-term schemes of work which ensures that a broad curriculum in SPHE is presented to the pupils.
4. CHILD PROTECTION

During the evaluation, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The school principal is aware that revised child protection procedures for primary and post-primary schools came into effect on 11 December 2017 and arrangements are in place to begin the process of implementing these procedures.
2. The name of the designated liaison person for child protection matters was prominently displayed near the main door of the school.
3. The school has a Child Protection policy in place.
4. All teachers are aware that they are mandated persons and of their responsibilities in that regard.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.
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 is pleased with the content of the inspection report based on the curriculum evaluation 16-01-2018.
We welcome that the findings outline effective learning and teaching experiences throughout the school.
We are delighted that the report mentions the caring ethos and warm supportive atmosphere evident in the school.
We welcome that the findings outline commendable planning including planning for school self-evaluation.

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 school will implement the recommendations with the support of the Board of Management.
We have made an application to the S.E.S.S. for support with:
Strategies to promote listening skills.
Strategies to encourage active and positive participation in classroom activities.
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><strong>Very Good</strong></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><strong>Good</strong></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><strong>Satisfactory</strong></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><strong>Fair</strong></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><strong>Weak</strong></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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