

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
English

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Naomh Earnain N S
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Killashee Longford Co Longford
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	18258P

Date of inspection: 20-11-2019



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agus Scileanna**
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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 inspector(s) evaluated learning and teaching in [Subject] 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.

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. The Board of Management has not conducted the annual review of the Child Safeguarding Statement and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken.

The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

Curriculum Evaluation

Date of inspection	20-11-2019
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• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Naomh Earnain is a rural, co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois. The school caters for twenty-five pupils across two classrooms. Two special education teachers (SET), shared with other schools, provide support for pupils with special educational needs.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning in English is satisfactory; reading skills require further development.
- Pupils' learning experiences in English are appropriate.
- Teaching in English, including the support provided for pupils with additional learning needs is satisfactory; learning support provision is not effectively organised and planning for pupils with additional learning needs requires improvement.
- Whole-school planning and school self-evaluation practices are fair.
- The board of management has not completed the annual review of the schools' Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pupils should be provided with differentiated reading material and reading skills should be explicitly taught.
- In-class support approaches should be used to implement early-interventions in literacy and to provide opportunities for pupils to learn through play.
- School support plans for pupils with additional learning needs should include clear and measurable learning targets and be informed by the use of appropriate diagnostic tests.
- Staff should revise and implement the whole-school plans for English and Special Education and identify literacy targets in the school improvement plan.
- The board of management should conduct the annual review of the Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment in line with the requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The overall quality of pupils' learning in English is satisfactory. Pupils listen actively and demonstrate motivation to learn through focused engagement in learning activities. Most pupils can communicate their ideas confidently, voice personal opinions and explain their point of view. In focus group discussions pupils expressed enjoyment of debating and collaborative group learning in English. There is potential to expand this work, thereby providing pupils with regular opportunities to discuss and debate confidently on a wide range of topics.

A significant minority of pupils do not demonstrate appropriate phonic and word-attack skills. Early intervention programmes should be implemented in the junior classroom to address at the earliest opportunity, these emerging difficulties. While most pupils' reading skills are in line with their ability, insufficient challenge is provided, especially for the more able reader. There is a need to provide a broader range of differentiated reading material and to explicitly teach reading skills, with a particular focus on comprehension strategies, to further extend pupils' reading abilities.

Pupils' writing skills are well developed and they demonstrate an appropriate use of grammar and punctuation. They engage effectively in the writing process and write in a good range of genres. Senior pupils write in a cursive script and many good examples of penmanship and work presentation were noted.

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

The quality of pupils' learning experiences in English are satisfactory. The pupils are provided with purposeful opportunities to engage in independent and collaborative learning. Senior pupils have autonomy in choosing writing topics and engage in shared and pair reading; these approaches provide pupils with a sense of ownership of their literacy learning.

Pupils have access to literacy games and a school library, though there is room for improvement in classroom displays. Teachers are advised to consider how a more print-rich environment could better scaffold and celebrate learning.

Junior pupils can recite a variety of rhymes and poems. However, senior pupils engage with a narrow repertoire of poetry. There is potential to extend all pupils' engagement with poetry and to provide a wider repertoire of poems to include cultural, historical and Irish poets.

During focus group discussions pupils reported that they infrequently use computers in English. Staff should devise a digital learning plan and provide pupils with opportunities to use digital technologies to support the development of their literacy skills.

The overall quality of teachers' practice is satisfactory. Teachers employ a variety of teaching methodologies and model good levels of language complexity and sentence structure in their interactions with pupils. However, there is insufficient engagement with the implementation of the Primary Language Curriculum in the junior classroom. Teachers should plan for, teach and assess specific language learning outcomes and vocabulary in a systematic manner across the school. Furthermore, play-based methodologies should be implemented in the infant setting, through the use of Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum framework, to provide pupils with opportunities to develop their early literacy skills.

The quality of support provided for pupils with special and additional learning needs is satisfactory. The Continuum of Support framework is outlined in planning documentation. However, it is not articulated in the school's policy for special educational needs and the use of the framework needs to be developed in practice. Currently, the overall quality of target setting in the school support plans has scope for improvement. In reviewing planning and provision in light of Circular 13/2017, teachers are advised to prepare pupil support plans which include clear and measurable learning targets. These should be informed by the use of appropriate diagnostic tests and prepared in consultation with parents and other professionals. Staff should strive to further develop their expertise in special education by seeking assistance from the support services and by developing effective working relationships with external agencies.

Currently the majority of support is provided through withdrawal from mainstream classrooms, with in-class support provided to assist literacy learning in the senior classroom. This approach should be prioritised in the junior classroom also, to enable the implementation of early-interventions in literacy and to provide opportunities for pupils to learn through play.

There are weaknesses evident in the use of assessment to support learning in English. Standardised tests are administered annually and results are examined in conjunction with pupils' achievements in ability tests. Teachers monitor pupils work in copybooks and provide them with useful feedback. However, overall, records of pupils' progress in oral, reading and writing in English need to be more consistently maintained and used to inform future planning for literacy. The whole-school plan for assessment focuses on assessment of learning approaches. This plan should be reviewed and assessment-for-learning approaches outlined and implemented across the school. This would support pupils to reflect on their progress as learners.

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

The quality of school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE) is fair. The whole-school plan for English outlines content to be taught across all classrooms. However, the plan requires review in order to reflect current practice and to provide clear direction to class teachers in implementing whole-school approaches to oral language, reading, comprehension, poetry and writing genres. Furthermore, the whole-school plan for pupils with special educational needs requires revision as it does not reflect current guidelines. While all teachers prepare long-term and short-term schemes of work there is scope to define differentiated learning outcomes more precisely to meet the needs of all learners given the multi-grade nature of the classrooms.

Currently the school has no literacy targets outlined as part of the school self-evaluation process. Moreover, there is no evidence in classrooms of the implementation of previous improvement targets in literacy. Staff are advised to devise a school improvement plan for literacy with clear and measurable targets and to ensure actions are implemented and that progress in learning is monitored regularly.

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.

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;