An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills  

Curriculum Evaluation  

Report  

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<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Scoil Náisiúnta Talamh Na Manach</th>
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<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Monksland</td>
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<td>Carlingford</td>
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<td>County Louth</td>
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<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
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Date of inspection: 11-12-2018
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 inspectors evaluated learning and teaching in Geography 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; a response was not received from the board.

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.
SCHOOL CONTEXT
Scoil Náisiúnta Talamh na Manach is a co-educational rural primary school on the Cooley peninsula in County Louth. The school is under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh. There are five mainstream class teachers and two support teachers, one of whom is shared with another local school, on the school staff. At the time of the evaluation 134 pupils were enrolled.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
- Overall, the quality of pupils’ learning in Geography is at a very good standard in accordance with the objectives and skills of the Primary School geography curriculum.
- The quality of learner experiences in Geography is very good; more regular revision lessons and experiences would contribute to the deepening and retention of detail among individual pupils.
- The quality of educational display in support of pupils’ learning in Geography is excellent overall.
- Curricular leadership for Geography is very good.
- The quality of teaching of Geography is very good.
- Certain formats of short-term planning and assessment practices are not optimally supporting the delivery of Geography.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Regular revision of the content of different topics is advocated to further support all pupils in their learning of Geography.
- Assessment of Geography on a whole-school basis should be augmented in terms of the exact information and concepts learned.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
The pupils’ knowledge, skills and understanding are at a very good standard in accordance with the objectives, skills and concepts of the geography curriculum. During the evaluation pupils demonstrated that they enjoy the subject and are motivated strongly to learn. They have a well-developed sense of place and space, demonstrate good knowledge of the physical features of the world and can describe the social and natural features of their local area. At appropriate class levels they have suitable knowledge of people and places in other areas of Ireland and other countries.
Overall, in the school as a whole pupils recalled information from different topics they have studied very well using suitable subject-specific language. Learning through project work is of a very high standard and displayed to very good effect. A small number of pupils were unsure about details surrounding certain aspects of geographical features; regular revision experiences will be of help in supporting individual pupils in their learning. During an interview with a focus group of pupils held as part of the evaluation, pupils displayed high levels of enthusiasm for learning Geography as a subject. All who participated spoke of the importance of learning geographical facts and of the importance of developing personal research skills through project work. They also spoke of the relevance of school assemblies for the sharing of their learning with others and for building confidence in their presentation skills.

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

Pupils are provided with very good quality learning experiences in Geography. All lessons evaluated were purposeful and very interesting and high levels of engagement were ensured. Teachers are ambitious for pupils’ learning; the pitch of all lessons observed was very good. The differentiation of lesson objectives for the different classes in the multi-class settings of the school was carried out very well. Successful integration with other aspects of the curriculum was observed across many classes.

Pupils use different resources including atlases, maps and globes regularly in support of their learning. Other good visual resources are in place to support pupils’ learning. The use of information and communications technology and interactive whiteboards featured during different elements of lessons; this could be extended further within the school as a whole. Overall, however, teachers’ preparation of practical resources to provide high quality experiences during geography lessons is very commendable.

Very good quality teaching was evident across the school during the evaluation. Effective development characterised all lessons during the evaluation with very good clarity in particular in the explanation of new content knowledge. Language specific to the learning of Geography is well taught and terminology well explained. The teachers prepared and employed highly engaging learning activities, which frequently facilitated purposeful collaborative learning. The pupils’ active participation in Green-Schools and other local and national environmental awareness programmes has impacted very positively on their awareness of environmental issues.

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

Curricular leadership for Geography is of a very good standard. The whole-school plan for the subject, developed by school leadership, provides clear information to all teachers to ensure breadth, balance depth in the geography curriculum’s implementation. The overall quality of long-term classroom planning for Geography is very good; certain formats of short-term planning in use in a small number of classes are insufficient to support the differentiation of learning objectives for the varied needs of pupils within classes. Better formats should be sourced and used. Assessment of exact content in Geography features strongly in some classrooms; there is scope to augment assessment on a whole-school basis in terms of the exact information and concepts covered and learned in addition to skills.
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.

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<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<th>Description</th>
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<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>
<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 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><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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