Curriculum Evaluation

English

REPORT

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<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Scoil Mocheallóg</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Kilmallock County Limerick</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>20193C</td>
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Date of inspection: 30/5/2018
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 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 30/5/2018

SCHOOL CONTEXT
Scoil Mocheallóg is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Limerick. The staff consists of twelve mainstream class teachers, eight teachers who support pupils with special educational needs and two teachers who support pupils with autism in early intervention and school age classes. 320 pupils were enrolled in the school at the time of the evaluation.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
- The overall quality of pupils’ learning in English is good and would be further enhanced by the implementation of whole-school, differentiated reading interventions.
- Pupils’ learning experiences are of a very good standard; they are provided with a rich and varied literacy programme.
- The quality of teaching is good; however, there is significant scope to develop assessment for learning practices and differentiated approaches to literacy development.
- The quality of support for pupils with learning needs in English is satisfactory; however, the organisation of provision and the development of individual pupil profiles merit review.
- School self-evaluation processes have been used effectively to advance whole-school approaches to literacy and should be reflected in the school plan for English.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- The implementation of differentiated, reading interventions at each class level should be prioritised.
- Assessment for learning strategies should be developed to inform differentiated approaches to teaching and learning.
- The organisation of support for pupils with additional needs should be reviewed to ensure a greater balance between in-class support and the withdrawal of pupils.
- Individual pupil profiles should be further developed to include more specific targets and the clear delineation of roles in supporting the attainment of those targets.
- The school plan for English should be revised to reflect agreed whole-school approaches to teaching and assessment.
1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupils’ learning in English is good. Pupils in all settings present as interested learners who derive enjoyment from their lessons.

- Pupils’ oral language skills are of a high standard generally. Pupils are exposed to a broad range of vocabulary through Aistear topics, school-based word-building programmes, precision teaching, social vocabulary programmes and cross-curricular themes. Accordingly, pupils can engage in and sustain conversations about significant events, areas of personal interest and curriculum based topics with clarity and confidence. In the focus-group interview conducted during the evaluation, pupils described different strategies that are used to help them to understand new words. They expressed a keen interest in the more frequent use of vocabulary games and inter-class vocabulary quizzes to consolidate their learning in a fun yet contextualised manner. Pupils in senior classes participate successfully in inter-school debates. They also produce and perform dramas for the community annually in the local theatre. To progress pupils’ oral language skills further, the content of the whole-school plan for vocabulary development should be refined to ensure that it is appropriately challenging for each class level. Its implementation and impact should be regularly assessed.

- Pupil attainment in reading is good overall although a significant minority achieve a satisfactory standard. Graded reading interventions are being trialled in junior classes currently and the use of novels has been standardised in middle and senior classes. Pupils who participated in the focus group stated that they really enjoyed novels and that they would like to use them more frequently. A whole-school approach to the development of comprehension strategies has been introduced. Reading Recovery, child and parent reading initiatives and paired reading activities with transition year pupils are being implemented in an effort to progress learner outcomes in reading. Greater emphasis should be placed on the implementation of differentiated, reading interventions at each class level to ensure that pupil attainment in reading aligns with age appropriate expectations. Investment in graded reading materials to support such interventions should be prioritised.

- The quality of learner outcomes in writing is good generally with some pupils attaining to a very high standard. A whole-school approach to the development of writing genres has been introduced. The skills and techniques of each genre are consolidated through a process approach to writing with pupils from first to sixth class. Senior pupils are encouraged to use the skills they have learned to articulate their opinions on school life and youth issues to staff and elected representatives. In junior classes, more frequent engagement in free-writing and the integration of differentiated oral language targets for vocabulary and sentence structure with writing activities should assist in the cohesive development of pupils’ writing skills. While in general pupils’ work is neatly presented, consideration should be given to a whole-school approach to handwriting.
2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE

- The overall quality of support for pupils’ learning in English is good.
- Pupils’ learning experiences are of a very good standard generally. Interactions among pupils and between pupils and teachers are very positive and conducive to well-being. In a majority of the lessons observed, opportunities were provided for pupils to engage in both independent and collaborative learning activities. Most classrooms are print rich and celebrate pupils’ work in English. In the focus-group interview, pupils described their experience of a rich and varied literacy programme which included oral language games, debates, drama, creative and free-writing activities and the use of a variety of authentic reading texts. They stated that a small number of classes visit the local library monthly and they welcome the schools’ plan to develop a library for pupils on site.
- The overall quality of teaching is good with practices observed in support and mainstream settings ranging from satisfactory to very good. Teacher planning is completed consistently and is of a good standard generally. It was noted, however, that a significant minority of teachers complete short-term plans monthly; all teachers are required to complete short-term planning fortnightly. Teachers prepare for and resource their lessons appropriately. They use a range of methodologies to ensure that aspects of the strand and strand units of the English curriculum are developed at each class level. There is significant scope to develop teachers’ use of assessment data to differentiate lesson content appropriately in order to meet the varying needs of pupils in each setting.
- The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs, including that for pupils with autism, is satisfactory. Diagnostic assessments and standardised tests are used to identify pupils’ emerging needs in literacy. These needs are addressed primarily through the withdrawal of pupils for individual or group support. A number of pupils are currently withdrawn during core time for English, this practice should be discontinued. The Continuum of Support should be used to clearly identify the level of support required by pupils. A more balanced system of support should be implemented through the use of differentiated team teaching interventions as well as withdrawal approaches. While individual pupil profiles are devised to support pupils’ progress in English, the targets set for pupils need to be defined more precisely. Clear roles to support the attainment of targets should be outlined in pupil profiles for class teachers, support teachers, parents and where appropriate pupils. Concise progress records on the attainment of these targets should be completed at the end of each instructional term. In the school-age class for pupils with autism, attention should be given to the enhancement and restructuring of the learning environment for literacy in a manner that is appropriate to the needs of these pupils.

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

- The overall quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is good. Whole-school approaches to vocabulary development, comprehension strategies and writing genres have been adopted through concurrent cycles of school improvement. The implementation of these approaches should be monitored, assessed and refined at more regular intervals to maximise their impact on learner outcomes.
- Future cycles of school-improvement should prioritise the skill development of teachers and the facilitation of a shared understanding of collective approaches prior to the implementation of new initiatives.
The school plan for English should be reviewed to delineate whole-school approaches to oral language, reading and writing referencing specific content and expected outcomes for junior, middle and senior classes. Assessment for and of learning in each language skill should also be addressed in the plan.
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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Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management
Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report

We acknowledge receipt of the Curriculum Evaluation Report dated 21.06.2018. We have reviewed the report and accept its findings and contents.

Area 2  Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

We have noted the recommendations and the board of management fully intends to implement these findings in the coming school year in collaboration with the principal and staff.