An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
English

REPORT

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Trim Educate Together National School</th>
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| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Glebe  
Kildalkey Road  
Trim |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number | 20444B |

Date of inspection: 13-02-2018
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 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; a response was not received from the board.
Curriculum Evaluation

**Date of inspection**: 13-02-2018

**Inspection activities undertaken**
- Discussion with principal and teachers
- Review of relevant documents
- Observation of teaching and learning
- Examination of pupils’ work
- Interaction with pupils
- Feedback to principal and teachers

**SCHOOL CONTEXT**
Trim Educate Together National School is a co-educational vertical school operating under the patronage of Educate Together. The school was established in 2014, and currently caters for sixty-two pupils from infants to second class. At present, there are three mainstream teachers and two part-time support teachers on the staff. The school is currently located in temporary accommodation outside Trim town in County Meath.

**SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**FINDINGS**
- The quality of pupils’ learning in English is good; they are attentive, show interest in their lessons and are motivated to learn.
- A more deliberate focus on teaching discrete oral language is needed.
- The majority of pupils can apply their phonic skills effectively to read new and unfamiliar words, and many pupils read fluently and with good expression and understanding.
- The quality of teaching in English is good with some very good practice observed.
- Further differentiation of literacy activities is required to cater for a variety of pupil needs.
- While whole-school planning for English is very good, classroom planning needs to be further developed.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**
- The provision of differentiated literacy activities, which are underpinned by the analysis and use of the school’s assessment data, is necessary to ensure that all pupils achieve specific learning outcomes and that all pupils are enabled to participate fully and maximise their progress.
- Short-term planning for English should include clear and measurable learning outcomes across the curriculum and the learning activities planned to achieve them, and should document evidence of progression in pupils’ learning.
- A more deliberate focus on teaching discrete oral language is recommended to extend pupils’ confidence and competence and to enable pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) to further develop their communication skills.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
The quality of pupils’ learning in English is good. Pupils are attentive, show interest in their lessons and are motivated to learn. They listen well and with good understanding. Many of the pupils are articulate and can express their opinions confidently and competently. A more deliberate focus on expanding their vocabulary and on teaching discrete oral language is needed to extend their confidence and competence and to enable pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) to further develop their communication skills. The inclusion in short-term planning of specific vocabulary and language structures to be taught will be useful in this regard.

The school promotes a range of activities to encourage reading. Core texts are used in class and supplementary readers provide opportunities for pupils to experience a wider range of genres. There is an explicit focus on the development of comprehension strategies. Phonemic awareness and phonics are systematically taught. The majority of pupils can apply their phonic skills effectively to read new and unfamiliar words, and many pupils read fluently and with good expression and understanding. However, there are some pupils who have difficulties with word identification and understanding of more challenging vocabulary. The provision of differentiated literacy activities will ensure that all pupils achieve specific learning outcomes and that all pupils are enabled to participate fully and maximise their progress.

Some good quality written work was observed and samples of the pupils’ writing are appealingly displayed throughout the school. Further work on the development of emergent writing and on modelling writing that is very much in the pupils’ own language are recommended.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS’ PRACTICE
Pupils’ learning experiences in literacy are of a good quality overall. Classrooms and the wider school environment present as stimulating and print-rich and are celebratory of pupils’ work.

The quality of teaching is good with some very good practice observed. Teachers provide effective models of appropriate spoken language. They make good use of a variety of teaching methodologies and approaches, and opportunities are provided for pupils to work collaboratively with their peers. Aistear is being implemented in the infant classes to support pupils’ learning. A further focus on the development of language under the various Aistear themes will help all pupils, particularly those for whom English is an additional language (EAL), to develop their communication and social skills in the classroom setting. Regular documentation of assessment of the pupils’ play will enable the development of rich portraits of the children as learners and will enhance and support their future learning. Additional reading materials have been purchased and Literacy Lift-off is being introduced. The acquisition of a range of big books, and their use for collaborative, early structured reading, is recommended.

Support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties in literacy and for those for whom English is an additional language (EAL). The staged approach to support is being implemented effectively. Good quality individualised pupil profiles demonstrate a clear understanding of the pupils’ needs and potential, clearly identify the strengths of each individual pupil and outline suitable learning targets. Progress of pupils in receipt of additional supports is regularly assessed. Short-term planning for these pupils should be more explicit, however, regarding specific learning outcomes and activities, and all planning should be available in the school to support the teaching and learning.
Overall, classroom teachers adopt a whole-school approach to their short-term planning. However, in order to ensure the delivery of a broad and balanced programme and to meet the needs of a wide range of learners effectively, all teachers should document clear and measurable learning outcomes across the English curriculum. These learning outcomes should be suitably differentiated and underpinned by the analysis and use of the school’s assessment data. Learning activities planned to achieve the stated learning outcomes should be clearly outlined, and planning should document evidence of progression in pupils’ learning.

The quality of assessment is good, overall, with evidence of highly effective practice in some settings. Further analysis of all assessment data is required to facilitate its constructive use in assisting planning and in guiding differentiation. Consistent formative and summative assessment strategies, and the regular recording of pupils’ learning outcomes in English should be developed as a feature of all teachers’ practice.

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

The quality of the whole-school plan for English is very good. The plan provides high quality guidance on key aspects of the English programme. Although the school is not currently engaging in the school self-evaluation process due to industrial action, staff had previously identified phonological awareness as an area for improvement. In developing their whole-school curriculum plans, the teachers have taken cognisance of the subject-specific language attached to each subject area. This is very good practice and, as other curriculum plans are developed, this focus should be maintained.

Staff development is a priority and teachers are encouraged to avail of continuous professional development opportunities.

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 in the school’s reception area.
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.
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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