

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Curriculum Evaluation**  
**English**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Greystones Community NS
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Greystones Rugby Club Mill Road Greystones
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	204731

**Date of inspection: 27-03-2019**



## **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 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.

## **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 check 1 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, the school has subsequently furnished evidence of compliance with these requirements.

## Curriculum Evaluation

<b>Date of inspection</b>	27-03-2019
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Pupil focus-group interview</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Greystones Community National School is a co-educational school and is operating under the patronage of the Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board. The school opened in 2015 and is currently catering for 188 pupils from junior infants to second class. There are seven mainstream class teachers, two full-time and one part-time special education teachers (SET).

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- Pupils display very high levels of interest in English and the quality of their learning is very good overall.
- The school supports pupils' learning in English very effectively.
- Teachers model enthusiasm for English, and the quality of teaching in mainstream and support settings is very good.
- While the quality of assessment practices is very good overall, there is a need to respond more strategically to assessment data.
- For the most part, the quality of school planning and School Self-Evaluation (SSE) is very good; there is scope to further develop target setting.
- Leadership of learning is highly commendable; a strong culture of collaboration exists throughout the school, with a continuous focus on improvement.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school should respond more strategically to assessment data and ensure that all targets identified through the SSE process are indicators of improvement rather than actions identified.
- The information from diagnostic assessment should be used to construct more specific and measurable targets for the pupils with specific literacy learning needs.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

Pupils display very high levels of interest in English and the overall quality of their learning is very good. They present as motivated, engaged learners and their achievements are celebrated in all classrooms. The pupils' ability to recall learning from previous lessons and to talk about their learning is praiseworthy. They are able to report and explain the process and outcome of their learning activities to a highly competent level. In the focus-group discussion, the pupils expressed their enjoyment of reading and writing.

Teachers use *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and the *Primary Language Curriculum* very effectively to support the development of pupils' oral language skills. A wide variety of reading material, including factual and fictional books and magazines, is available in all classrooms and in the school library. Pupils read confidently at their instructional level and their level of fluency is increasing as they move from class to class. While pupils are exposed to a good range of poetry and rhymes, their ability to recite poetry with confidence and expression varies. Details of poems to be learned at each class level should be identified, agreed and included in the school plan. Pupils engage in a wide variety of free-writing tasks and, commendably, all classrooms host interesting and stimulating free-writing stations. Pupils' confidence and competence in discussing writing genres and applying the specific language and skills to their writing is of a high standard.

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

Teachers provide very high-quality learning experiences to pupils in English. Learning experiences occur in a playful, interactive way, with very effective use of indoor and outdoor environments. Pupils work well independently and are provided with opportunities to work in groups. They are afforded opportunities to discuss their learning and to share their ideas with each other. Classrooms are welcoming and friendly environments that promote creativity. They are print rich with a clear focus on the target language and learning outcomes. While valuable digital learning is a feature of some lessons, this aspect should be further embedded as an integral part of the learning experience.

The overall quality of teaching is very good. Teachers are very effective communicators and model rich language for pupils. The contributions of pupils are actively listened to and respected by teachers. Teachers demonstrate very good pedagogical knowledge and deliver well-structured lessons using a variety of teaching methodologies. They consistently share the learning intentions with the pupils, link previous learning to new learning, and monitor pupils' progress at the end of the lessons. Teachers place a significant emphasis on developing pupils' oral language skills. A very successful and systematic whole-school approach to the teaching of reading is well embedded. An enthusiasm for writing is fostered in all classrooms.

There is a balanced and flexible approach to supporting the range of pupils' learning needs in English, including the withdrawal of pupils for additional targeted teaching and the provision of in-class support. Teaching approaches are adjusted to accommodate differences in pupils' learning styles, and learning intentions are appropriately differentiated. The impact of the support provided on pupils' progress is monitored and reviewed regularly. However, for some pupils with specific literacy learning needs, information from diagnostic assessment should be better used to construct targets which are more specific and measurable.

The overall quality of assessment is very good. A wide range of assessment tools including work samples, checklists and teacher observation is used by all teachers to track pupils' progress and to inform ongoing teaching and learning.

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

The quality of whole-school planning for English is very good. The whole-school plan informs and reflects current practice in the school. It guides each teacher's individual preparation and their work in the classroom. The plan is reviewed regularly and clearly identifies areas for development in English.

Leadership of learning is highly commendable. There is a strong culture of collaboration with a continuous focus on improvement. Teachers value and engage in a wide variety of professional development. Their approaches to professional collaboration within their own school and with other schools in the local community is praiseworthy.

The school has engaged very well in the SSE process. Clear actions for improvement have been identified, agreed and implemented. The school should respond more strategically to assessment data and ensure that all targets identified through the SSE process are indicators of improvement rather than actions identified.

## 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
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

### **Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report**

This inspection report contains what we think is a fair and accurate assessment of the quality of teaching and learning in regard to English at Greystones CNS. The board and staff are delighted that the quality of all areas assessed was evaluated as 'Very Good' by the inspectors. We feel that the recommendations are achievable and will be acted upon immediately.

### **Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.**

1. The school will increase its use of assessment data to inform targets for its SSE process and ensure that progress towards these targets is measurable and monitored over time.
2. The school will supplement its diagnostic tools to improve target setting for children with specific literacy needs. It will seek further CPD in the area of diagnostic testing and work closely with the schools in our local SET cluster to achieve this.