



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: English Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil Áine Naofa
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Rathkeale Co. Limerick
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	18177P
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	17/04/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	11/06/2024

What is a curriculum evaluation?

Curriculum evaluations report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects of the *Primary School Curriculum (1999)* and the *Primary Language Curriculum (2019)*. 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 outcomes
2. Supporting pupils' learning through learning 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.

Included in this curriculum evaluation report is a student-friendly page that provides information for the children/young people in your school about the inspection that occurred recently. It outlines for them some of the main findings and recommendations.

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.

Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and tackle bullying

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:	
<i>Child Protection</i>	<i>Anti-bullying</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">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.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)</i> or <i>Bí Cineálta (2024)</i> and this policy is reviewed annually.2. The school's current anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Curriculum evaluation

Date of inspection	17/04/2024
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 Áine Naofa is located in Rathkeale, County Limerick. It operates under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Limerick. Boys and girls attend the school up to the end of first class, and from second class to sixth class only girls attend. This year, enrolment peaked at 307 pupils and at the time of the evaluation, 274 pupils were enrolled. There was an administrative principal, twelve mainstream class teachers, thirteen special education teachers, one special class teacher, and one home-school community liaison (HSCL) teacher, who was shared with another school,. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the Department's action plan for inclusion in education.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of pupils' learning outcomes in English was very good.
- In the lessons observed, the quality of the learners' experiences was very good. The pupils were motivated, they had choice, and they eagerly participated in the lessons.
- In the lessons observed, the teachers' individual practices were of a very good quality overall. They used a broad range of teaching approaches to meet the pupils' learning needs, interests and abilities.
- The mainstream class teachers and special education teachers collaborated successfully to provide very effective in-class support, team teaching, and support in small groups.
- The school leaders led the school's engagement in a continuous process of self-evaluation (SSE) and they promoted a culture of improvement, collaboration and creativity in the teaching of English.

Recommendations

- The teachers should ensure that the pupils' writing tasks are further differentiated; for some pupils the template-based activities need to be replaced with more opportunities to write independently. Teachers should provide pupils with additional formative feedback on their writing tasks, and pupils need more opportunities to engage in self-assessment.
- The special education teachers should ensure that the pupils' support plans incorporate more specific and measurable targets which could then be used as a basis for weekly recorded preparation.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The overall quality of the pupils' learning outcomes was very good. The pupils demonstrated very positive learning dispositions. They were confident and highly engaged in their learning activities and it was clear that they were keen to succeed. The pupils could apply their learning

in English to other curriculum areas and to their interests outside of school. They reported that their lessons in English were fun and interesting.

In the strand *Oral language*, the pupils presented as confident communicators, and they demonstrated very good listening skills. In the junior classes, they engaged in play scenarios and had discussions with their teachers who joined them as play partners. In the lessons observed at all class levels, the pupils used appropriate vocabulary to speak about their learning activities. They recited poetry well.

The pupils' reading skills were well developed. Throughout the school, they had a positive disposition towards reading. They understood why reading is important for day-to-day reasons, and how reading can be enjoyable. When they spoke about their favourite authors it was clear that many of them enjoyed reading as a hobby. Many of the pupils read fluently and they understood how to apply comprehension strategies.

The quality of the pupils' learning outcomes in writing were good overall, with some very good examples noted. For the most part, their written work was well presented and could be easily read. The pupils' handwriting skills were well developed. They understood the writing genres, and could give examples of how the genres are used. They wrote for different audiences. For example the pupils in the senior classes had written stories for the junior classes. They described many creative and imaginative ways in which they had used digital technologies in their writing. In some of the lessons observed it was clear that a number of pupils did not need the writing template provided; they could have completed the task independently.

2. Supporting pupils' learning outcomes through learning experiences and teachers' practice

The overall quality of the pupils' learning experiences was very good. In the junior classes, the pupils engaged in play scenarios which were enhanced with costumes, toys and real-life equipment. While they played they used an extensive range of vocabulary, and they applied their early reading and writing skills. Throughout the school, in the lessons observed, the pupils and teachers had meaningful interactions and conversations. The pupils had sufficient time to consider questions alone, in pairs, and in small groups, and they responded to these very eagerly. In the learning outcome *Playful and creative use of language*, the pupils enjoyed role play, language games, including tongue twisters, and attending pantomimes and plays. Pupils in the focus group reported that they enjoyed making presentations, and would like to take part in more debates.

During the school day, the pupils experienced frequent opportunities to read in a variety of genres, including novels, levelled readers, class readers, comics and digital texts. They selected fictional and non-fictional texts from the class library and from the local library, and they had interacted with an author. Some of the pupils in the focus group indicated that they enjoyed when their teacher read stories for them. This approach could be adopted more consistently at all class levels.

The pupils had many enriching writing experiences. In the learning outcome *Motivation and choice*, they often selected their own writing topics. The pupils had gone for walks along the Limerick Greenway seeking further inspiration for their writing. They engaged in free writing, functional writing and creative writing.

The quality of the teaching of English was very good overall. The teachers had high expectations of the pupils' learning in English. They had successfully created a culture which motivated the pupils to extend their learning. The lessons observed were well planned. The teachers prepared stimulating learning environments. There were many displays that supported the pupils' learning. These included word walls and information about grammar, punctuation, handwriting, the parts of speech, and writing genres. The pupils' written work was also displayed in the classrooms and on corridors. The teachers used a variety of teaching approaches, they gave clear instructions, and the lessons observed were well structured.

The teachers assessed the pupils' progress on a regular basis. They used a range of successful questioning techniques to elicit and extend the pupils' responses. They reviewed assessment data to identify trends and monitor progress. In particular, very careful consideration was given to how small group teaching was organised to optimise the benefits for the pupils. While the teachers frequently corrected and dated the pupils' written work, limited formative written feedback was provided. The children would have benefited from more opportunities to assess their own work, for example by using an assessment rubric.

The quality of the support provided for pupils with special educational needs was very good. The Department's Continuum of Support was implemented successfully. Using the models of in-class support, support in small groups, and one-to-one support, the teachers worked together very effectively to support pupils with identified learning needs. The pupils' parents were informed about the approaches used by the school, and encouraged to use these at home also. Support plans were generated. In these plans more specific and measurable targets were needed, and these needed to form the basis for weekly recorded preparation.

3. The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning

School planning, including SSE, was very effective in progressing pupils' learning. The principal, in collaboration with the deputy principal and teachers, had competently led and managed action planning for improvement through the SSE process. A cyclical approach was adopted. At frequent intervals, the pupils' progress and needs were considered and arrangements for differentiated teaching were revised.

The literacy section of the DEIS plan included clear guidance for teachers and a systematic approach to developing the pupils' skills. The school's agreed approaches were consistently implemented. For example, on a whole-school basis each day, a specific priority area was addressed in each classroom. Specific programmes which supported the pupils' skills in English were very well embedded in the school's practices. These were used to provide holistic learning experiences for the children.



Introduction



Your school had an inspection of **English** recently. This page for pupils describes what the inspectors found and gives ideas about what the school could do to make learning in **English** better.

Meeting with pupils



The inspectors visited classrooms and talked to pupils about the work they were doing. The inspector also met with a focus group of pupils to hear what they had to say about their learning and experiences at school.

What did the inspector learn about your school?

The inspectors saw many things in your school during the inspection.

Here are some main things:

- Pupils learning in English was very good. The pupils were motivated, they had choice and they participated eagerly in lessons.
- Teaching in English was very good. The teachers used many different ways of teaching which were well matched to the pupils' learning needs, interests and abilities.
- The mainstream class teachers and special education teachers worked together successfully to provide very good support for pupils in the classroom.
- The school leaders helped the teachers to improve, work together and be creative when teaching English.



What the school could do to make learning in **English** better



- Rather than giving every pupil the same writing tasks, the teachers should give pupils different types of writing tasks, based on each pupil's ability. Some pupils do not need to use a template every time. They could do the writing tasks independently. Teachers should give the pupils more written feedback on their writing tasks and help the pupils to assess their own work.
- The special education teachers should include more specific and measurable targets in the pupils' support plans. They should make sure that these targets are used as a basis for weekly recorded preparation for teaching and learning.

Thank you for taking the time to read this page.
A special thank you to the pupils who took part in the focus group.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of St. Anne's Primary School, Rathkeale, Co. Limerick are satisfied at the findings of the evaluation.

The overall quality of pupils' learning outcomes in English was very good.

The quality of the learners' experiences was very good.

Pupils were motivated, they had choice, and they eagerly participated in the lessons.

Teachers' individual practices were of a very good quality overall. They used a broad range of teaching approaches to meet the pupils' learning needs, interests and abilities.

The mainstream class teachers and special education teachers collaborated successfully to provide very effective in-class support, team teaching, and support in small groups.

The school leaders led the school's engagement in a continuous process of self-evaluation (SSE) and they promoted a culture of improvement, collaboration and creativity in the teaching of English.

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

The Board of Management look forward to the staff implementing the recommendations of the inspectorate. Teachers will ensure that pupils will be provided with more opportunities to write independently. They will provide pupils with additional formative feedback on written tasks.

Special Education teachers will ensure that pupils support plans will incorporate more specific and measurable targets that will be used for their weekly recorded preparation. Teachers at all class levels will read to pupils for enjoyment. Pupils will participate more in debating. Pupils will have more opportunities to assess their own work.

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	Examples of descriptive terms
Excellent	Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of learners. This provision provides an example for other schools and settings of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Excellent; exemplary; outstanding; exceptionally high standard; with very significant strengths
Very good	Provision that is very good is very effective in meeting the needs of learners and is of a very high standard. There is potential to build on existing strengths to achieve an excellent standard.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful
Good	Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to build on existing strengths in order to address the aspects to be developed and achieve a very good standard.	Good; of good quality; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; strengths outweigh the shortcomings; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist
Requires improvement to achieve a good standard	Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard is not sufficiently effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is good or better.	Fair; less than effective; less than sufficient; evident weaknesses that are impacting on learning; experiencing difficulty; shortcomings outweigh strengths; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard	Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard is not meeting the needs of learners. There is immediate need for significant action to address the areas of concern.	Weak; poor; ineffective; insufficient; unacceptable; experiencing significant difficulties; serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated; requiring significant change, development and improvement to be effective