



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: English Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil Uí Riada
Seoladh na scoile/School address	An Bhánóg Cill Choca Co Chill Dara
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	198971
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	30-11-2023
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	03/04/2024

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 inspectors evaluated learning and teaching in English under the following headings:

1. Quality of pupils' learning outcomes
2. Supporting pupils' learning outcomes through learner experiences and teachers' practice
3. The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning

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.

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.

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> and this policy is reviewed annually.2. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides a report to the board at least once a term on the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template provided in the <i>Procedures</i>) since the previous report to the board.3. The school's 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	28-11-2023 - 30-11-2023
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 Uí Riada is an Irish-medium co-educational primary school located in Kilcock, County Kildare. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. At the time of the evaluation, the staff comprised an administrative principal, twenty-one mainstream class teachers, seven special education teachers (SETs) and one teacher assigned to a class for pupils with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). There were 498 pupils enrolled in the school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning in English was good and pupils displayed high levels of motivation and participation in their learning.
- Pupils were provided with learning experiences that were of a high quality with pupils engaging in a wide range of interesting and purposeful learning activities.
- The overall quality of teaching was commendable: teachers employed a variety of teaching approaches and methodologies to stimulate pupils' engagement and enhance their learning outcomes.
- The effectiveness of whole-school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE), in progressing pupils' learning was very good.

Recommendations

- To enable pupils to become more effective communicators, teachers are advised to create stronger links between the development of pupils' oral language, reading and writing skills and to provide more opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate language already acquired in the oral language and reading strands into their writing assignments.

Detailed findings and recommendations

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1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The quality of pupils' learning was good. Pupils enjoyed their lessons in English and were motivated to learn. They listened attentively and engaged purposefully with teachers and peers. Most pupils spoke confidently to express personal needs and to explain and justify points of information across a range of topics and they responded appropriately to teacher questioning. They used a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures when engaging in class discussions, retelling stories accurately and responding appropriately to a variety of texts.

Pupils' early literacy skills, including the development of phonological and phonemic awareness, were effectively established in the infant and junior classes. English was introduced in senior

infants due to the school's Irish-language early immersion education policy. Pupils' reading skills and their word identification and fluency skills were developed incrementally as they progressed through the school. Commendably, there was evidence that the same staged approach was employed in both Irish and English in some settings. Class novels, class readers and levelled readers were used successfully in all classes to foster pupils' interest in reading. Pupils enjoyed listening to and discussing stories and novels read by teachers and their peers.

Pupils' written work was displayed in classrooms and in copybooks and there was evidence that their work was celebrated throughout the school. Pupils' functional writing skills, including the application of the conventions of print and grammar were developing well. The differentiated spelling programme implemented in the school was successfully addressing the identified needs of all pupils. Pupils were able to make use of the writing process to communicate and express themselves in a variety of genres.

The focus group of pupils who were interviewed as part of the inspection process reported that they liked English. They said that the learning activities expanded their vocabulary and allowed them to develop their communication skills. They noted that they enjoyed debating and would like more opportunities to extend their experience in this area. Pupils stated that they enjoyed reading class novels and found them interesting. They had opportunities to publish their work using digital technologies and they enjoyed sharing their writing with their peers.

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

The quality of pupils' learning experiences was good. Pupils were enabled to learn in an environment in which their suggestions and ideas were valued and respected. Interactions among pupils and teachers and between pupils and their peers were very positive and respectful. The school library and class libraries provided access to a wide range of literacy resources, including digital technologies, to support pupils' language learning. Teachers created print-rich displays in their classrooms and in circulation areas, which promoted pupils' appreciation of language and writing conventions.

Pupils engaged in literacy tasks both individually and collaboratively. They had opportunities to explore and use language for a wide range of purposes, in a variety of genres, and with a range of audiences. There was a whole-school approach to the development of pupils' handwriting and penmanship and, in most settings, pupils' work in copybooks was of a good standard. While teachers effectively nurtured pupils' discrete language skills across each strand of the *Primary Language Curriculum*, to enable pupils to become more effective communicators, teachers are advised to create more opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate the language that they have already acquired in the oral language and reading strands into their writing assignments.

The quality of teachers' practice was commendable. They demonstrated good classroom management skills and high levels of preparation for lessons. They had good pedagogical knowledge and they communicated new learning clearly to pupils and delivered well-structured and well-paced lessons. They employed effective methodologies including whole-class teaching, group work and active learning to stimulate pupils' interest and engagement. Teachers effectively differentiated learning activities to support the needs, interests and abilities of pupils. Teachers provided meaningful opportunities for pupils to extend their literacy skills to other subjects, such as Irish, and there was evidence of very effective transfer of language learning skills between Irish and English in a number of settings. Where best practice was observed, teachers ensured that learning activities were appropriately challenging for all pupils. School leaders and teachers had engaged in professional development in English and this learning was successfully shared to enrich teachers' collective practice.

The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs was very good. A range of assessment tools, including standardised tests and teacher-designed tests was used to identify pupils' needs. A range of effective interventions was in place and support was provided on both a withdrawal and an in-class basis. Suitable learning targets were created to meet pupils'

identified needs. In some instances, however, there was scope to create targets that were more specific and measurable. The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) *Continuum of Support* was implemented effectively.

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

The effectiveness of school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE), in progressing pupils' learning was very good. School leaders and teachers successfully fostered a culture throughout the school in which learning flourished. The whole-school plan for English was devised collaboratively and reviews were carried out on a regular basis. Recent reviews focused on the introduction of a whole school approach to the teaching of comprehension strategies, teacher professional development, and the use of levelled readers in the school. The plan effectively guided and supported teachers' classroom practice. Teachers engaged purposefully with planning the implementation of the *Primary Language Curriculum* to ensure the provision of high quality learning experiences for pupils.

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
Very Good	<i>Very good</i> 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 <i>outstanding</i> 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
Good	<i>Good</i> 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
Satisfactory	<i>Satisfactory</i> 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
Fair	<i>Fair</i> 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
Weak	<i>Weak</i> 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

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The report is a satisfactory account of a recent subject (English) inspection in our school.

The Bord Bainistíochta is happy to accept the report

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

Following on from the inspection & a discussion with the inspectors, we established a Focus Group to look at the recommendations put forward by the inspectors.

The following actions are in place or will be actioned in the near future;

- The development of a plan emphasizing the direct link (s) between Oral Language, Reading & Writing for all class groups
- Classroom practice must mirror for the most part The Primary School Curriculum & teachers must become less reliant on published schemes/programmes.
- In writing, classroom teachers to focus on one genre per term.
- Give pupils more opportunities to practice & consolidate language acquired from other curriculum strands.
- In SET, Pupil Support Files will have less targets that are more specific & more easily measurable.