



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: English Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	S N Bríghde
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Kill Co. Kildare
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	17662R
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	27-09-2023
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	06/03/2024

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	26-09-2023 - 27-09-2023
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 Bhride is a co-educational primary school located in the village of Kill, County Kildare. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. The school has an administrative principal and deputy principal, twenty-six mainstream class teachers, nine special education teachers (SETs) and two special class teachers. At the time of the evaluation, there were 671 pupils enrolled in the school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning was good with pupils displaying high levels of motivation and positive dispositions towards language-learning and literacy.
- Pupils were provided with good quality learning experiences to support the development of their communication skills.
- Teaching was of a good standard; teachers presented preparation for lessons that was of a good standard and used a range of resources effectively to create opportunities for pupils to develop language skills and learning strategies.
- The quality of whole-school planning and school self-evaluation (SSE) was good.

Recommendations

- School leaders should develop their oversight role and monitor the planning and implementation of the *Primary Language Curriculum* on a whole-school basis. They should identify strengths and areas for development regarding continuity of experience and progression in language learning across the school and use this evidence to provide practical support for teachers to build rich language-learning experiences that are developmental and integrated.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The quality of pupils' learning outcomes was good. Pupils presented as highly motivated and interested learners with positive dispositions towards language-learning and literacy. Most pupils demonstrated their ability to use oral language competently and capably listened and responded to others. They demonstrated their ability to use appropriate sentence structure and grammar when asking questions, describing characters and explaining their ideas during class discussions and conversations.

There was a consistent approach to the development of pupils' reading skills throughout the school. Pupils used a range of texts and had exposure to a rich variety of reading materials,

including multi-modal texts, available in both classroom and school libraries. The majority of pupils in the infant and junior classes had developed a good understanding of the conventions of print, including left to right orientation and identification of the title and author of a text. They demonstrated good levels of phonological awareness, including the ability to recognise, hear and distinguish syllables within words, rhyming words and words with the same initial sound. The skills associated with word recognition and decoding were well advanced in most classes. Pupils in middle and senior classes used a range of comprehension strategies competently to interact with and make meaning of text.

Pupils' understanding and use of the components of language were consolidated through their experience of a wide range of writing activities. They had opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences as they explored a variety of genres while they engaged in the writing process. Pupils' functional writing skills were well developed using a structured approach. Commendably, there was some evidence of pupils transferring their writing skills in English to writing in Irish. Although discrete language skills associated with each strand were developing well, in order that pupils become more effective communicators, teachers should engage with all three strands of oral language, reading and writing in an integrated way.

In the focus group discussion with inspectors, pupils spoke enthusiastically about their learning in English and reported that they enjoyed reading. They reported that they particularly enjoyed exploring and creating their own poetry and stories and that they appreciated the opportunities they received to share their work with peers and others.

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

The quality of pupils' learning experiences was good. Learning experiences encompassed play, social interaction, communication, language, and the development of problem-solving skills. Some highly effective learning experiences were observed in a number of settings. Teachers created positive and stimulating language learning environments which promoted an awareness and an appreciation of pupils' language development. Teachers cultivated a culture in which pupils communicated positively and respectfully with one another. Where best practice was observed, language experiences were extended to support and challenge pupils at an appropriate level.

The overall quality of teaching was good. Effective classroom management skills were evident in all classes and teachers modelled good standards of language for pupils across all elements of the language curriculum. Learning environments were well-organised and teachers presented good-quality visible and recorded preparation for their work. The principles of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* were implemented effectively in the infant classes and provided pupils with opportunities to engage in playful learning experiences using language. Teachers had a clear focus for learning, based on the designated learning outcomes of the curriculum and many communicated the learning intentions to pupils at the start of lessons. Lessons were well structured and varied. Teachers used a range of appropriate pedagogical approaches and resources, including digital resources, to support pupils on their learning journey.

Throughout the school, teachers encouraged pupils to become confident communicators, have fun with language, create stories, recite rhymes and sing songs at frequent intervals throughout the day. Where best practice was observed, teachers modelled structures and extended pupils' language, introduced new vocabulary, and promoted reading and writing skills in both English and Irish in an integrated way. In some settings, teachers facilitated the development of critical literacy by presenting pupils with texts that challenged them to analyse the context. Commendably, teachers had engaged actively in continuous professional development and contributed to building whole-staff capacity by sharing their expertise with colleagues. This practice should continue to be a feature of school life as new practices and resources are identified.

Teachers used a range of assessment strategies and recorded pupils' learning progress. A variety of assessment data, including checklists, teacher designed tests, standardised and diagnostic tests, was maintained and used to monitor pupils' learning progress. Work in pupils'

copybooks was well-monitored and good quality formative feedback was provided by teachers to guide pupils' progress. In some classes, teachers used a range of assessment data to meaningfully differentiate content and activities to ensure that all pupils were appropriately challenged and were enabled to experience success as learners. To enhance pupils' language learning, teachers should monitor pupils' learning outcomes more methodically to ensure continuity of experience and progression in language learning as they advance through the school.

The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) was good. Assessment data from a range of standardised, cognitive and diagnostic tests informed the development of high-quality school support plans (SSPs). Clear and measurable targets were identified which facilitated the recording of pupils' progress and attainment. Differentiated reading programmes were used appropriately and support for pupils was provided through a combination of in-class support and pupil withdrawal. In special classes, literacy lessons were provided in a supportive environment appropriate to the needs and abilities of pupils. In English as an additional language (EAL) settings, support was provided in linguistically rich and activity-based lessons. Teachers used language games, nursery rhymes and poems to support pupils' listening and speaking skills.

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

The quality of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning, was good. The whole-school plan for English gave useful guidance to teachers on the implementation of the *Primary Language Curriculum* in the school. Teachers planned collaboratively across class levels. A collaborative approach was used effectively to introduce a range of interventions, differentiated programmes and new approaches to support the development of pupils' language and literacy skills. Through this collaborative process, the school identified the development of reading comprehension strategies, writing genres, and the implementation of a spelling programme as areas for improvement.

As teachers continue to implement agreed actions arising from the SSE and planning process, school leaders should develop their oversight role and monitor the planning and implementation of the *Primary Language Curriculum* on a whole-school basis. They should identify strengths and areas for development regarding continuity of experience and progression in language learning for pupils and use this evidence to provide practical support for teachers to build rich language-learning experiences that are developmental and integrated.

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

Scoil Bhríde Board of Management acknowledges the work of the Inspectorate with their inspection and their subsequent Inspection report of 29th January 2024. We also acknowledge the hard work and dedication of a committed and collegiate staff in all areas of the curriculum in extremely busy times with increasingly varied demands. We look forward to the school developing and further demonstrating the excellent provision we provide in preparing the pupils to be active and seminal members of an ever-changing society.

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