



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: English Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil Náisiúnta Cronáin
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Kiltiernan Kilcolgan County Galway
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	17645R
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	22/10/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	10/12/2024

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

Dates of inspection	21/10/2024 and 22/10/2024
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 Náisiúnta Cronáin is a co-educational primary school situated approximately fourteen kilometres from Gort, County Galway. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Galway. At the time of the evaluation, the school had three mainstream class teachers, one of whom was the principal, and a special education teacher. There were sixty-one pupils enrolled at the time of the evaluation.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of pupils' learning in English was very good; the majority of pupils shared their learning confidently with the inspector using very high-quality language.
- Pupils' learning experiences were of a very high quality; all pupils engaged in meaningful and purposeful learning activities.
- The overall quality of teaching was very good; classroom environments were very supportive of teaching and learning and included high-quality teacher-designed charts and displays.
- School planning was very effective in progressing pupils' learning.
- All pupils created and published high-quality books annually through their engagement in the Write-a-Book project.

Recommendations

- In order to further develop pupils' critical literacy skills, guided reading initiatives should be implemented at all class levels.
- All teachers should implement assessment for learning (AfL) strategies to support pupils in reflecting on their learning.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The overall quality of pupils' learning was very good. Most pupils were enjoying their learning and were very motivated to learn.

Overall, pupils' early literacy skills were very well developed including their phonemic awareness and word attack skills. They were supported very effectively to use target language in full sentences while engaging in speaker and listener activities. There was scope to further develop their understanding of the conventions of print. Most pupils were making very good progress in their reading and reported that they enjoyed reading. Pupils read a range of texts including novels, graded readers, and digital texts. The majority of pupils could share their opinions on texts they had read and apply some comprehension strategies. Pupils at some class levels could apply and discuss a wide range of comprehension skills very competently. In

order to further support the development of pupils' critical literacy skills, guided reading initiatives should be implemented at all class levels.

It was highly commendable that pupils in all classes engaged in a wide variety of writing activities including diary entries, character profiles, creating lists, and responding to poetry. The majority of pupils demonstrated a very good understanding of the genres of writing to recount and writing to inform. Pupils at some class levels could discuss and share the features of a wide range of writing genres. Very good samples of pupils' writing in some genres were displayed in copybooks, folders, and on walls in classrooms and on corridors. Consideration should be given to revising the whole-school approach to the teaching of the writing genres to include the teaching of the genres over a two-year cycle. The majority of pupils demonstrated a very good understanding of grammar conventions. Pupils in senior classes confidently explained their knowledge of the origin of a range of words and could make connections and transfer skills across languages including Irish, French, and Latin. Overall, pupils' work in copybooks was well organised and presented.

In the strand of *Oral language* most pupils demonstrated very good listening skills. They worked very well collaboratively in all lessons. The majority of pupils shared their learning confidently with the inspector using very high-quality language. Pupils in all classes explored poetry and most pupils recited poetry with enthusiasm and expression. Pupils at some class levels discussed the features of poetry confidently. It was highly commendable that pupils engaged in poetry writing including writing acrostic poems, limericks, and cinquains. Pupils in some classes presented their learning, including project work, to their peers, recorded a podcast, and engaged in debating. In order to further develop pupils' presentation skills across the breadth of the oral genres, a whole-school approach to the development of pupils' presentation and oral language skills should be implemented.

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

The overall quality of pupils' learning experiences was very good. Highly respectful interactions between teachers and pupils and between pupils and their peers were observed. Pupils engaged in meaningful and purposeful learning activities and had opportunities to share their learning in all lessons.

Classroom environments were very supportive of teaching and learning. Very high-quality language was displayed in classrooms, including subject-specific language across the curriculum. It was highly commendable that bespoke teacher-designed charts and prompts were a feature of all classroom environments. Building on these very good practices, the celebration of the diversity of languages within the school should be displayed in classrooms and corridors.

It was highly commendable that pupils in all classes engaged in the Write-a-Book project annually. This provided them with opportunities to explore the writing process and they produced very creative and high-quality books that were displayed in classroom libraries. Pupils had opportunities to develop their digital literacy skills through the publication of their stories and poems and the creation of digital presentations. Pupils in all classes engaged in buddy reading that supported both the development of pupils' literacy and social skills and pupils' enjoyment of reading. Pupils in the focus group reported that they really enjoyed buddy reading and participating in events to celebrate Book Week. They reported that they would benefit from further opportunities to engage in project work and presenting these to their peers.

It was highly commendable that the school provided pupils with opportunities to meet with authors and storytellers on an annual basis. All pupils had access to well-stocked classroom libraries. Through a range of cross-curricular projects, pupils had opportunities to apply and develop their literacy skills, including interviewing external speakers and participating in environmental projects. The student council recently published a high-quality school newsletter.

The overall quality of teaching was very good. Excellent practice was noted in one lesson. All teachers prepared effectively for the lessons observed and lessons were well structured. Most lessons were appropriately paced. Commendably, all teachers consolidated previous learning at the start of lessons. A range of methodologies was observed including, whole-class teaching, pair work, station teaching, and readers theatre. A range of resources was used to support teaching and learning including games, photographs, puppets, and novels. A highly

commendable feature of all lessons was the modelling of very high-quality language by teachers. All teachers supported pupils in using and exploring very good vocabulary throughout the lessons. Pupils had opportunities to share their learning in all lessons. Where excellent practice was observed, the teacher used very skilful questioning techniques to support pupils in sharing and justifying their learning. There also was a very good balance between teacher-input and pupil discussion and success criteria were shared with the pupils in advance of their engagement in learning activities.

The creation and use of a wide range of social stories to support pupils with autism in explaining social situations relevant to the pupils' lives, was very good practice. Some very good home school communication strategies to support the development of pupils' literacy skills, including prompts for parents and guardians when listening to pupils' reading, were noted.

Commendably, support for pupils on the school's continuum of support for literacy was provided through both in-class and withdrawal models of teaching. Student support plans were in place for all pupils in receipt of support teaching for literacy. A log of actions, and assessment data was maintained for each pupil. Pupils' strengths, priority learning needs and learning targets were identified. There was evidence of very good home-school links including parental input on pupils' learning goals. Building on these good practices, the school should use a student support file to keep together all the information about the support of the pupils and to track pupils' pathways through the continuum of support. Teachers should ensure that all learning targets in relation to literacy are specific and measurable and based on assessment data. Pupils' progress towards the achievement of these learning targets should be recorded in student support files.

A range of assessment of learning practices was observed including very effective questioning, checklists, teacher tests and tasks. It was highly commendable that some teachers recorded their observations on pupils' literacy skills. A few assessment for learning (AfL) strategies were observed to support pupils in reflecting on their learning. All teachers should implement AfL strategies to support pupils in reflecting on their understanding of lessons and in identifying the next steps in their learning. Written formative feedback was provided to pupils in some classes. All teachers should provide written formative feedback to support pupils in improving their work.

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

Overall, school planning was very effective in progressing pupils' learning. The school plan provided very good guidance to teachers on the implementation of the *Primary Language Curriculum*. Whole-school approaches to the teaching of the comprehension skills, writing genres, grammar, handwriting, phonics, have been agreed. It was highly commendable that children's books, including picture books, were identified across a range of themes to support pupils' learning. While guidance was provided on the teaching of the *Oral language* strand, a whole-school approach to the teaching of the breadth of the oral genres, linked to the writing genres, should be agreed and included in the school plan for English.



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

For the pupils of Scoil Náisiúnta Cronáin about their learning in English

Dates of inspection: 21/10/2024
and 22/10/2024



Introduction

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



Meeting with pupils

The inspector visited classrooms and talked to teachers and pupils about the work they were doing. The inspector also met with a focus group of pupils to talk to them about their learning.



What did the inspector find?

Here are some of the main things:

- Pupils' learning in English was very good, overall. The majority of pupils were very good at talking about their learning with the inspector.
- Teaching was very good in the school.
- Pupils in all classes created very good books every year as part of the Write-a-Book project.



What the inspector said the school should do to make learning better

- Teachers should help pupils get even better at talking about books they have read by organising reading in small groups.
- Teachers should help pupils to think more about their learning and how they can get even better.

Thank you for taking the time to read this page.
A special thank you to 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 welcomes recognition by the inspector of the commitment and professionalism of our staff. As a school we are proud that our pupils could “share their learning confidently” with the inspector “using very high-quality language”. Our “pupils’ learning experiences were of a very high quality” and it was evident that all pupils engaged in what was termed, “meaningful and purposeful learning activities.” This confirmed our confidence that our school is performing at a high level.

Provision for pupils with learning challenges and with ASD were praised, notably in areas we consider fundamental to the ethos of our school, namely;

- The creation and use of a wide range of social stories to support pupils
- Very good home school communication strategies
- Very good home-school links including parental input on pupils’ learning goals.

As a Board we applaud our staff for their inclusive models of teaching, providing literacy opportunities for our pupils.

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

Our board will ensure that our staff are given all the resources needed to create effective, engaging and purposeful learning experiences.

As a board we will support our staff in working towards implementing the two recommendations, namely;

- guided reading initiatives
- implementation of assessment for learning (AfL) strategies to support pupils in reflecting on their learning.

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