An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: English

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil Naomh Mícheál
Seoladh na scoile/School address	St. Mel's Road Longford
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	00856M
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	03/04/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	26/05/2025

What is a curriculum evaluation?

Curriculum evaluations report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects of the *Primary School Curriculum (1999),* the *Primary Language Curriculum (2019)* and the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum.* 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 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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Child Protection</td><td>Anti-bullying</td></tr>
<tr><td>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.</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013) or Bí Cineálta (2024) 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.</td></tr>
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Curriculum evaluation

Date of inspection	01/04/2025 & 03/04/2025
Inspection activities undertaken • Discussion with principal and teachers • Review of relevant documents • Pupil focus-group interview	• Observation of teaching and learning • Examination of pupils' work • Interaction with pupils • Feedback to principal and teachers

School context

Scoil Naomh Mícheál is a boys' school located in Longford town. The school caters for boys from second class to sixth class and operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois. It participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action plan, which provides additional resources to identified schools to assist them in reducing barriers to children and young people reaching their potential. At the time of the evaluation, the school had an administrative principal, a home-school-community liaison co-ordinator, twelve mainstream teachers, and seven special education teachers, one of whom was shared with another school. There were 230 pupils enrolled. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a sample of settings.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- Pupils' learning was of a good standard and pupils displayed commendable competence in oral language and writing.
- Learner experiences were of a very good quality; pupils had frequent opportunities to engage in active and collaborative learning.
- The quality of teaching, including assessment, was good. Teachers had very well-developed classroom management skills and they successfully created nurturing and respectful learning environments.
- The quality of whole-school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE), was very good.

Recommendations

- Teachers should provide pupils with systematic opportunities to engage with and respond to a wider range of poetry.
- Pupils should be provided with differentiated reading experiences on a more consistent basis to cater for their varying abilities.
- To support optimum progression in learning, teachers should adopt a focused approach to the assessment of learning outcomes from the *Primary Language Curriculum*. The supports in the online Toolkit would assist teachers in monitoring progression and in informing next steps in learning for pupils.
- Leaders and teachers should adopt a whole-school approach to the incremental development of pupils' digital literacy to promote creativity, imagination and critical thinking.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

Pupils' learning outcomes were of a good standard. Their learning outcomes across the elements of communicating, understanding, exploring and using language were commendable. During lessons, most pupils demonstrated competent understanding and recall of a broad range of vocabulary. Where learning outcomes in the playful and creative use of language were most effective, pupils had opportunities to engage with the aesthetic features of aural and figurative language through the creation of rhymes and oral texts in addition to exploring the work of poets. In other instances, pupils had limited engagement with poetry. To this end, teachers should adopt a systematic approach to providing pupils with exposure to a wider range of poetry.

The school made concerted efforts to expand the selection of engaging reading materials to enhance pupil motivation and choice. Pupils demonstrated a competent understanding of the conventions of print and sentence structure. Their phonological and phonemic awareness skills were well developed. In general, comprehension, fluency and self-correction were areas of challenge for pupils. Teachers deployed meaningful strategies including the explicit teaching of reading comprehension skills and guided reading initiatives to improve pupils' reading skills. Opportunities existed to embed the provision of differentiated reading experiences across the school. Where pupils of varying abilities were assigned the same level of reading challenge, their capacity to comprehend, interpret texts, and apply inferential thinking was impacted. Teachers should collaborate further to provide pupils with appropriately differentiated reading experiences on a more consistent basis.

Learning outcomes in writing were of a good quality. Pupils engaged positively and purposefully while creating text in a variety of genres. They capably used simple and compound sentence structures, with good awareness of the importance of varying sentence length to suit the audience, style and tone of their writing. Their ability to identify and evaluate skills and strategies associated with writing as a process were meaningfully developed.

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

The quality of learner experiences was very good. Overall, pupils were provided with meaningful opportunities to engage in active and collaborative learning which successfully promoted high levels of response and engagement. In a few instances, there was need to develop think-pair-share activities to support pupils in applying and consolidating their new language learning. Teachers collectively demonstrated a strong commitment to helping pupils make meaningful connections between their learning and real-life contexts. They regularly facilitated visits to the local library and incorporated drama, storytelling and special events, fostering a positive disposition among pupils towards learning in English.

During the lessons observed, teachers made effective use of technology as a teaching tool. There was significant scope to incorporate the use of digital technologies to support pupils in their literacy development and learning. Leaders and teachers should adopt a whole-school approach to the incremental development of pupils' digital literacy to promote creativity, imagination and critical thinking.

In the focus-group discussion, pupils reported that they enjoyed regular trips to the library, that classroom displays helped their learning, and they felt a sense of pride in seeing their work celebrated throughout the school. They expressed interest in having more opportunities for games, fun vocabulary work, and to engage with technology more often.

The quality of teachers' practice, including assessment, was good. Teachers delivered well-structured and appropriately paced lessons with clear communication of new concepts and explanations. They had very well-developed classroom management skills and they

successfully created nurturing and respectful learning environments. Mainstream and special education teachers worked in collaboration with the home-school-community liaison co-ordinator and relevant external professionals to support pupils' learning and to promote meaningful home-school literacy links. When devising and reviewing support plans in consultation with parents, pupils, and external professional, special education teachers should garner and note pupils' perspectives, ensuring that interventions are responsive to pupils' strengths, experiences and aspirations.

Teachers undertook effective assessment approaches and compiled useful records of learning. Overall, there was scope for teachers to provide more specific developmental feedback to pupils. To support optimum progression in learning, teachers should adopt a focused approach to the assessment of learning outcomes from the *Primary Language Curriculum*. The supports in the Primary Language Toolkit would assist teachers in monitoring progression and in informing next steps in learning for pupils.

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

Whole-school planning, including SSE, was of a very good quality. The whole-school English plan was grounded in language learning as a developmental and integrated process, and it provided clear and comprehensive guidance for teachers on many aspects of language learning. It is advised that the plan incorporate more specific guidance on the use of the Primary Language Toolkit to support the assessment of learning outcomes, and the promotion of pupils' digital literacy skills. Aspects of the plan could be more effectively reflected in teachers' practice and learner outcomes. To strengthen curriculum implementation, leaders should further develop procedures for systematic monitoring and review.

The school had engaged in many cycles of DEIS action planning with very meaningful use of evidence gathering and analysis, consultation and communication.

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

For the pupils of Scoil Naomh Mícheál about their learning in English
Date of inspection: 01/04/2025 & 03/04/2025

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 should do to make learning better.

What did the inspectors do during the visit ?

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

What did the inspectors find?

Here are some of the main things:

- Pupils' learning was good and pupils were doing well with speaking and writing.
- Pupils had very good learning activities with lots of chances to learn by doing and working together.
- Teachers were good at teaching and they made the classroom a kind and respectful place.

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

- Teachers should help pupils to learn about and enjoy different types of poetry.
- Pupils should be given reading materials that suit their skill level more often.
- The whole school should help pupils to use technology to learn, think and create.

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

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