An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige
Department of Education and Youth

Curriculum Evaluation: English

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Castlesampson National School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Bealnamulla Athlone County Roscommon
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	12003V
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	21/04/2026
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	04/09/2026

What is a curriculum evaluation?

Curriculum evaluations currently report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects and curriculum areas of the *Primary School Curriculum* (1999), and the redeveloped *Primary Curriculum* (2025). They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of the subject or curriculum area 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 school self-evaluation (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

<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>Bí Cineálta</td></tr>
<tr><td>1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) are prominently displayed near the main door of the school / in the reception area. Following the school's adoption of the updated procedures 2025, it is also required to display a student-friendly version incorporating the name of the DLP beside the CSS.
2. The school's child safeguarding statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited were aware of who to go to if they had a child protection concern.</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy using Appendix A of Bí Cineálta, it is reviewed annually (or earlier if required) and includes a student/pupil friendly version that is displayed where students/pupils and the school community can see it.
2. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, staff, parents and students/pupils.
3. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides an update to the board at each ordinary board meeting that meets the requirements of Bí Cineálta</td></tr>
</table>

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

Curriculum evaluation

Date of inspection	21/04/2026
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

Castlesampson National School (Scoil Náisiúnta Rónáin) is a rural, co-educational primary school located in the parish of Taughmaconnell, County Roscommon. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Clonfert. The school has two mainstream class teachers, one full-time special education teacher and one who was shared with other local schools. At the time of the evaluation, the mainstream teachers were serving as acting principal and acting deputy principal. There were thirty-four pupils enrolled in the school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of pupils' learning in English was good.
- Overall, the quality of pupils' learning experiences was good; all pupils engaged in meaningful and purposeful learning activities in the lessons observed.
- The overall quality of teaching was good.
- The quality of support for pupils with identified needs was very good.
- The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning in English was appropriate, although some possibilities for improvement existed.

Recommendations

- To deepen pupils' understanding of genres, teachers should adopt a co-ordinated whole-school approach that explicitly develops spoken text types alongside writing genres.
- Teachers should further develop formative assessment practices, including self-assessment and peer-assessment, to support pupils' ownership of their learning.
- The school should ensure that whole-school planning for English clearly informs teachers' individual preparation, so that agreed approaches are used consistently in classrooms and pupils' learning progresses across all class levels.

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The overall quality of pupils' learning outcomes in English was good. During the lessons observed, the pupils demonstrated positive dispositions towards learning and a willingness to engage actively in a wide range of literacy activities.

Almost all pupils demonstrated good oral language skills. Most pupils were able to articulate ideas clearly, express opinions and respond to texts with confidence. Some senior class pupils had opportunities to participate in debating competitions, which supported the development of their speaking and listening skills. Overall, however, there was scope to extend the pupils' understanding of a wider range of spoken text types. To provide pupils with more structured opportunities to refine their oral language skills, teachers should make more explicit links between spoken text types and the corresponding writing genres.

Pupils at each class level demonstrated a positive attitude to reading and engaged enthusiastically with a wide range of texts, including class novels and structured reading materials. Almost all pupils demonstrated effective word-attack strategies and decoded unfamiliar words with confidence. In the senior classes, pupils explored word morphology effectively and applied this knowledge independently when encountering new vocabulary. Some pupils used comprehension strategies, such as prediction and making connections, when discussing texts.

The pupils produced written work across a variety of genres, including recount, narrative and report writing. Examples of pupils' work, including a book made by the junior class pupils, showed that they took pride in their work and were interested in writing. There was scope, however, to further develop pupils' understanding of the distinctive features of different genres. To build a stronger and more coherent understanding of genres, and to support progression from junior infants to sixth class, it is recommended that teachers focus on one genre at a time throughout the school, as outlined in the school's English plan. This genre could then be explored in depth across the three strands *Oral language, Reading* and *Writing*.

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

The overall quality of pupils' learning experiences was good. Interactions between teachers and pupils, and among the pupils themselves, were consistently respectful and supportive. Pupils actively engaged in a range of meaningful learning experiences and demonstrated positive attitudes to learning at each class level. The pupils who participated in the focus group discussion reported that they enjoyed their English lessons. They spoke enthusiastically about literacy games,debating activities, a visit from a local author and a school trip where they experienced live theatre, all of which added to their enjoyment of English lessons.

The learning environments were well organised, with libraries and reading areas evident in all classrooms. It is recommended, however, that classroom libraries be developed to be more visually inviting and closely aligned with pupils' interests, to foster intrinsic motivation and a love of reading.

During some lessons observed, digital devices were used effectively to support research for report-writing tasks, contributing positively to pupils' engagement and motivation. Pupils reported that they used digital technologies to consolidate learning, as well as for research and for the presentation of their work. To further develop the pupils' literacy skills, teachers should place more emphasis on showing pupils how to source, evaluate and assess the reliability of online information.

Station teaching featured prominently during the lessons observed. This approach supported strong pupil engagement and facilitated effective differentiation in the multi-grade classes. Where practice was highly effective, station activities had a clear learning focus and offered variety and choice for pupils. These activities supported the practice and consolidation of comprehension, word study and writing skills. In some cases, there needed to be a balance between teacher-led and pupil-led learning experiences. While the pupils had some opportunities to work in pairs and small groups, for example, these should be expanded to further encourage pupil-led talk and discussion.

The overall quality of teachers' practice was good. Teachers established well-managed, respectful learning environments that supported positive pupil engagement. Commendably, novels were used at each class level to enhance pupils' motivation and to develop their reading skills. The teachers modelled fluency and prosody effectively through both whole-class and small-group shared reading.

The quality of support provided for pupils with identified needs was very good. Teachers demonstrated a strong knowledge of pupils' skills, needs and abilities. This supported the effective inclusion of those pupils prioritised for additional support. The Student Support Files reviewed during the evaluation contained detailed logs of actions to support the pupils' learning. These were regularly reviewed, and included ongoing consultation with parents.

Teachers used a range of assessment approaches to monitor pupils' progress in English. These included teacher observation, teacher-designed tasks and tests, checklists and standardised assessments. The self-assessment strategy, *Two Stars and a Wish*, was observed in most settings. Teachers should further develop formative assessment practices, including self-assessment and peer-assessment, to support pupils' ownership of their learning.

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

The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning in English was appropriate, although there were some possibilities for improvement. A whole-school English plan was in place, which set out agreed approaches to the implementation of the strands and elements of the *Primary Language Curriculum* (2019). There was limited evidence, however, that the plan consistently informed classroom practice. Greater alignment is required between agreed whole-school approaches and teachers' individual planning to ensure that pupils' learning in English is broad, balanced and progressive at each class level.

An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige
Department of Education and Youth

For the pupils of Castlesampson National School about their learning in English

Date of inspection: 21/04/2026

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.

What did the inspector do during the visit?

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:

- The pupils were doing well in English.
- Lessons were interesting and this helped pupils to enjoy learning English.
- Teachers were good at teaching English.
- The school was very good at helping pupils who needed extra support in English.

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

- The teachers should link the teaching of spoken and written genres, for example teaching debates and persuasive writing together.
- The teachers should help pupils be more responsible for their own learning and to learn with and from each other.
- The teachers should use the agreed whole-school approaches when teaching English.

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

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of Castlesampson NS accept the recommendations of the Inspectorate and we will endeavour to implement their recommendations in full over the next academic terms.

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