An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: English
Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil Eoghan
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Bath Terrace Lane Moville County Donegal
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	20054L
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	21/02/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	05/04/2024

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 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.

The board of management 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>Anti-bullying</td></tr>
<tr><td>1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement were prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement had been ratified by the board and included an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they had read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they were aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.</td><td>1. The school had developed an anti-bullying policy that met the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013) or Bí Cineálta (2024) and this policy was reviewed annually.
2. The school's current anti-bullying policy was published on its website and/or was 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	21/02/2024
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 Eoghain is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Derry. The teaching staff comprises an administrative principal, ten mainstream class teachers, six support teachers comprising five special education teachers (SETs) and one teacher for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL). During the evaluation, inspectors observed teaching and learning in eight mainstream classes and four support-teaching settings. There were 241 pupils enrolled in the school. The school participates in Delivering Quality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), an action plan of the Department of Education for educational inclusion.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of pupil's learning outcomes was very good; pupils engaged in activities both individually and collaboratively which developed their knowledge, skills and dispositions and allowed them opportunities to develop solutions to literacy tasks.
- The overall quality of learning experiences was very good; pupils engaged purposefully in meaningful learning activities.
- The quality of teaching was very good; where excellent practice was observed teachers used the progression continua when preparing and delivering activities and experiences to support pupils' language learning.
- The overall quality of assessment was very good; teachers used a range of assessment methods including questioning to a very high standard.
- The overall quality of school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE) in progressing pupils' learning was very good.

Recommendations

- Teachers should provide pupils with more opportunities to engage in developmental peer and self-assessment skills to help clarify objectives, to set new differentiated learning targets and to allow pupils to reflect on their learning on a more consistent basis.
- Teachers and leaders should ensure that target-setting in relevant plans, including the DEIS plan and continuum of support plans, should be specific and measurable and aligned to the priority learning needs of all pupils.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The overall quality of pupil's learning outcomes was very good. Pupils enjoyed their learning and were motivated to learn. They had a clear sense of attainable and challenging tasks and the progress which they experienced contributed to their overall wellbeing and their positive image of themselves. Learning dispositions and attitudes were cultivated as pupils engaged with their learning. They participated in activities both individually and collaboratively which developed their knowledge, skills and dispositions and allowed them opportunities to develop solutions to literacy tasks.

Pupils demonstrated very good quality handwriting as evidenced from their copybooks and displays throughout the school and they had a very good understanding of the various writing genres. In the strand of *Reading*, pupils in the junior classes displayed an understanding of phonological awareness, which was developed systematically. Pupils read with confidence and enthusiasm and they were able to analyse characters in novels and justify their reading preferences.

Pupils from the senior classes who participated in the focus-group discussion spoke very positively and confidently about their learning in English and what made the subject interesting for them. Almost all pupils liked learning English. They spoke enthusiastically about using digital learning technologies (DLTs) in their learning in English and they valued using DLTs to access the books assigned to them for project work and for the presentation of this work to their class. They also appreciated interacting with authors who visited their school and participating in national initiatives, which promoted the development of their literacy skills.

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

The overall quality of learning experiences was very good. Pupils engaged purposefully in meaningful learning experiences. They participated in thematic integrated language experiences across the curriculum including play and rhyme, which allowed for the repetition and consolidation of new language learning. Where very good practice was observed, appropriately differentiated activities were provided for pupils of all abilities including higher ability pupils. This very good practice should be extended to all classrooms.

The learning environments were print rich and pupils had access to a well-stocked whole-school library, which was bright, colourful and very comfortable. The pupils in the focus-group spoke enthusiastically about their participation in choosing books for the library.

Pupils demonstrated independence and confidence during English lessons. They were given choice during lessons and allowed to make their own decisions when involved in literacy tasks. Interactions among pupils and between pupils and teachers were respectful and conducive to wellbeing. Pupils were motivated to learn. They suggested possible solutions confidently and they collaborated productively. Pupils took responsibility for their own language learning and used resources including DLTs very effectively to develop their skills and apply their understanding and expand their knowledge in the subject.

The quality of teaching was very good. Professional dialogue and teachers' recorded preparation demonstrated their knowledge of the curriculum, and the approaches to teaching and learning were supported by the *Primary Language Curriculum (2019).* Where excellent practice was observed, teachers used the progression continua when preparing and delivering activities and experiences to support pupils' language learning. Teachers set and communicated high expectations for learning. They prepared learning environments, which promoted an appreciation of language. Teachers adapted the learning experiences to support the needs, interest and abilities of all pupils. Teachers identified suitable multi-modal resources

for language lessons and pupils used these to support their learning. Linguistic and cultural diversity was supported and celebrated very well.

The overall quality of assessment was very good. Teachers used a range of assessment methods including questioning to a very high standard. They were very successful in challenging pupils' thinking and in eliciting good quality pupil responses. They regularly monitored pupils' learning and provided constructive feedback. Pupils would benefit from more opportunities to engage in developmental peer and self-assessment skills to help clarify objectives, to set new differentiated learning targets and to allow pupils to reflect on their learning on a more consistent basis.

The overall quality of teachers' collective and collaborative practice was very good. Where very good practice was observed, teachers' individual and collaborative preparation of activities was informed by assessment results. All teachers implemented the continuum of support. Where very good practice was observed target-setting in the plans was specific and measureable and aligned to the priority learning needs of all pupils.

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

The overall quality of whole-school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning was very good. The leadership team had worked very effectively to update the whole-school plan for English. This plan informed and reflected practice in the school including teachers' individual preparation and their approaches in the classroom.

While the DEIS plan provided an overview of the actions for implementation, the plan would benefit from having an enhanced structure with a very clear identified focus on improvement so as to track specific progress. Target-setting in relevant plans, including the DEIS plan and continuum of support plans, should be specific and measurable and aligned to the priority learning needs of all pupils.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of Scoil Eoghain welcomes this extremely positive report on the teaching of English in our school. It recognises and consolidates the Board of Management's appreciation of the impeccable high standards of work and the excellent quality of literacy teaching within our school.
We commend that the pupils were recognised for their motivation and enthusiasm, their digital learning prowess and their contribution to the rejuvenation of the whole-school library.
The board appreciates the high quality of teaching that was recognised and highlighted, particularly regarding preparation and also the setting and communicating of high expectations for learning.

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

The Board of Management of Scoil Eoghain welcomes the guidance, both oral and written from the Inspectorate. Therefore, building on the already recognised and commendable focus on these areas, we will seek to use any recommendations as a basis for positive self-evaluative progression utilisiing a strength-led approach and evidence-led planning.

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