An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: English
Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	St Edan's National School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Clone Road Ferns Enniscorthy
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	18714P
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	16/01/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	28/04/2025

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 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

<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	15/01/2025 – 16/01/2025
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

St. Edan's National School is a rural co-educational primary school that caters for pupils from junior infants to sixth class. It operates under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory. At the time of the evaluation, there were thirty pupils enrolled in the school. The teaching staff comprised two mainstream class teachers, of whom one was the principal, and a special education teacher.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of pupils' learning in English was very good. Pupils presented as highly motivated and conscientious learners who engaged positively and constructively in their learning activities.
- The quality of pupils' learning experiences was very good. Pupils were enabled to engage in playful pedagogies and in purposeful writing activities.
- The quality of teaching was very good; lessons observed were stimulating and made explicit provision for new learning.
- The overall quality of assessment was very good; teachers used assessment information effectively to inform their preparation.
- The overall quality of school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE), in progressing pupils' learning was very good.

Recommendations

- To further enhance the quality of the pupils' writing, teachers should extend their provision for the emergent writing process in the infant classes and enable the older pupils to revise their writing in response to formative feedback.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The overall quality of pupils' learning in English was very good. Pupils presented as highly motivated, enthusiastic and conscientious learners. They listened attentively and engaged positively and constructively in their learning activities. There was some variation in the oral language skills of pupils. Most pupils expressed themselves confidently and articulately, with some pupils presenting as more reticent and with a less enriched vocabulary. Across the school, pupils were commended on their recitation of poetry which displayed a keen sense of audience. Pupils' reading skills were very good overall. They employed a range of strategies, including phonic and context cues, competently and read fluently and expressively. They also displayed very good comprehension of the text content. Pupils engaged in the writing process to plan, draft and produce written work of a good quality in a range of genres. To further enhance the quality of the pupils' published writing, teachers were advised to extend their provision for

the revision stage of the writing process. Overall, pupils' handwriting in both their copybooks and on displays was very well formed and presented neatly.

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

Pupils' learning experiences were very good overall. Teachers had cultivated affirming and nurturing classroom atmospheres and their interactions with pupils were very respectful. All classroom environments and the school corridor were print rich, and aesthetically-pleasing displays both supported and celebrated pupils' learning. A particularly commendable display in the junior room incorporated pupils' handwritten questions about a story and their own answers as the story unfolded.

All classrooms promoted children's engagement in purposeful writing. Attractive writing stations in the infant room were linked to *Aistear* themes and pupils in the senior classroom were enabled to use digital technologies to conduct research that informed their genre writing and project work. Pupils were also enabled to present their learning to audiences, including their peers, to other classes and, in the senior classroom, to their parents via digital technology. The school was very well stocked with books in various genres that were readily accessible to the pupils. During the pupil focus group, pupils shared that they enjoyed learning in English. They noted that they particularly enjoyed silent reading time, debating and using digital technologies to research and publish. They also advised that they welcomed opportunities to share their learning with the other classes and to read aloud to an audience.

The overall quality of teaching was very good. The lessons observed, which were very well-structured and very well-resourced, made explicit provision for new learning. Teachers were very good communicators and modelled enriched vocabulary. They provided stimulating opportunities for the pupils to engage in focused talk and discussion and also in collaborative learning activities. They made good provision for cross-curricular links and enabled pupils to make links between their learning and everyday life.

Across the school, teachers made very good provision for playful pedagogies and lessons were lively and engaging. They paid due regard to the development of the pupils' phonological awareness and fostered fluent and expressive reading skills. In both classrooms, teachers made skilful provision for differentiated teaching and learning both within and across their multi-grade classes. They presented stimulating writing lessons and enabled the pupils to write creatively and for a purpose. While ample opportunities were made for shared writing, teachers were encouraged to extend their provision for the development of the infant pupils' independent writing skills. To complement their dutiful monitoring of pupils' writing, teachers were also encouraged to enable older pupils to revise their writing in response to formative feedback.

Support for pupils with additional needs was provided through both withdrawal and in-class approaches. Effective collaboration between the special education teacher and classroom teachers helped to ensure that support was targeted towards the learning needs of the pupils with the greatest level of need. The lessons observed were clear, purposeful and very well structured. Pupils were enabled to explain their new learning and how they would apply new strategies when reading and writing.

The overall quality of assessment was very good. Teachers made very effective use of a good range of assessment methods including observation, standardised tests and samples of pupils' work to gather information about their learning. Teachers used this information to inform their planning, including provision for differentiated teaching and learning. They also enabled pupils to reflect on their own learning each week, selecting pieces for inclusion in their individual portfolios and identifying other aspects that they could improve. Teachers were encouraged to extend their provision for formative assessment during the writing process.

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

The overall quality of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning was very good. Teachers had participated purposefully in the school self-evaluation process to review their provision for literacy. Having identified oral language as an area for development, classroom teachers had made provision for discrete oral language lessons related to each curriculum topic. A focus on language enrichment was also evident in the lessons observed. The school had prioritised spelling as an area of focus for a future SSE cycle and, in preparation, teachers had availed of related professional learning opportunities.

The whole-school plan for English, produced collaboratively by the teachers, was informed appropriately by the Primary Language Curriculum. It made good provision for continuity and progression in pupils' learning and informed teachers' individual planning. The plan also helpfully included whole-school approaches to assessment, teaching methodologies and the use of digital technologies to enhance learning in literacy.

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

For the pupils of St Edan's N S about their learning in English
Date of inspection: 16/01/2025

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. An 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. Pupils wanted to learn and did their best in all learning activities.
- Pupils had interesting and fun lessons and had lots of opportunities to write for a purpose.
- Teaching was very good. The teachers helped the pupils to learn something new in every lesson.

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

- Teachers should give the pupils in infants more opportunities to write by themselves. They should also encourage the older pupils to revise their drafts after suggesting how they could improve them.

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

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The staff of St. Edan's National School were delighted to welcome the evaluation on the 15th and 16th January 2025. We all felt that it was a wonderful opportunity to showcase the wide variety of work that has been going on throughout the school in literacy. We feel that the inspection report perfectly captures all the teaching and learning that is continually developing and the many different experiences that all the children are exposed to. The report encompasses the varied teaching methodologies that are used across the school, in particular in our multi-grade classrooms. The information reported on teacher planning, assessment and SSE is reflective of all the hard work and dedication that the staff members show each and every day.

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

Following on from the recommendations from the inspector, the school will endeavour to address them in the following ways:

1. In the Junior Room, emergent writing is supported by providing varied writing materials e.g. letter stamps, whiteboards, coloured paper etc. to make writing engaging and accessible for different ability levels. During 'play' I encourage emergent writing by creating areas such as 'the Post Office', I celebrate all writing attempts, provide constructive feedback and foster a supportive atmosphere where children feel confident exploring writing at their own pace in a mixed ability setting.

2. In the Senior room, the children will continue to be supported in revisiting their work on a regular basis to review, redraft and improve on their own creative and genre writing prior to the publishing stage. This may be looking at sentence structure, adding in adjectives, adverbs etc. to improve the writing or it could be further developing an idea to draw it out more, to give the audience more detail or to further grab their attention depending on the genre being explored. The children will use highlighting and selection tools to identify areas of their own writing that they want to develop or improve on throughout the writing process. This formative assessment including both teacher and peer feedback will help to build on and encourage children to develop their thoughts and writing more. The children will continue to use a variety of traditional and ICT based methods when engaging with the writing process.