An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige
Department of Education and Youth

Curriculum Evaluation: English

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil Náisiúnta An Aird
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Ardfield Clonakilty Co. Cork
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	12147W
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	24/09/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	04/12/2025

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 of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

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

Curriculum evaluation

Date of inspection	23/09/2025 and 24/09/2025
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 Náisiúnta an Aird is a rural co-educational school situated close to Clonakilty, Co. Cork. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross. At the time of the evaluation, 111 pupils were enrolled in the school. The teaching staff consisted of five mainstream class teachers and three special education teaching posts, one of whom was shared with another school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of pupils' learning in English was very good. Pupils participated confidently and with enjoyment in playful and engaging oral language, reading, and writing activities.
- Learning experiences were of a very high quality and the pupils participated actively in a wide range of meaningful activities.
- The overall quality of teaching in both mainstream and special education settings was very good. Teachers held high expectations for pupils' learning and lessons were generally well structured.
- The quality of assessment was effective; teachers maintained a broad range of assessment information for all pupils, to track progress and inform future learning.
- The effectiveness of whole-school planning, including School Self-Evaluation (SSE), in progressing pupils' learning was good overall.

Recommendations

- Teachers should extend the range of assessment strategies to include pupil self-assessment and peer-assessment. These approaches would help pupils take greater ownership of their learning and develop the language and skills needed to reflect on their progress.
- School leaders and teachers should further develop the whole-school English plan to ensure that it is fully reflective of the *Primary Language Curriculum (2019)*.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The overall quality of pupils' learning in English was very good. Pupils participated confidently and with enjoyment in playful and engaging oral language, reading, and writing activities. During oral language activities, pupils participated enthusiastically in familiar rhymes, songs, and games. They demonstrated active listening skills and engaged competently in discussions, showing a very good understanding of stories, characters, and vocabulary. They identified and generated rhyming words, and confidently used their knowledge of letter patterns, sounds, and word-identification strategies. Pupils enjoyed listening to audiobooks, and stories read aloud by their teachers. They engaged in reading and reflection on texts, making meaningful connections

between the text and their real-life experiences. In general, the pupils read with good pace, phrasing, expression and understanding. During writing activities, they explored the structure of report writing and used topic-specific vocabulary to write a report about hedgehogs. Most pupils successfully achieved the intended learning outcomes of the lessons observed.

Pupils in the senior classes who took part in the focus group spoke positively about their learning in English. They said they enjoyed developing their oral language skills, reading novels, creating stories, and making their own board games. They discussed a range of learning experiences such as presenting project work, taking part in World Book Day, and visiting the library. They showed a very good awareness of how they used their learning in English in other subject areas, including Maths, Drama, Art, and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE).

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

Learning experiences were of a very high quality overall and the pupils participated in a wide range of meaningful activities. They engaged in both independent and collaborative learning during English lessons, and extended their literacy skills through cross-curricular project work. Interactions between pupils and teachers were respectful and positive. The school and classroom environments were print-rich, colourful, and promoted an appreciation of language. Pupils read a broad range of novels, and teachers nurtured pupils' personal reading through access to well-stocked class libraries and a mobile library service. Commendably, pupils had opportunities to request additional authors and genres of interest to them. It was reported that pupils participated in a range of activities to enhance their learning including an annual school Readathon, and engagement with visiting authors.

The overall quality of teachers' practice in mainstream and special education settings was very good. Teachers held high expectations for pupils' learning and structured their lessons effectively. They prepared well for lessons, and in some settings, they shared the focus of new learning with pupils at the start of the lesson. Teachers used a broad range of questioning to activate pupils' prior knowledge and support them to make connections with their learning. Some teachers explicitly drew pupils' attention to the transfer of skills to enable them to make connections between languages. While recorded preparation referenced the *Primary Language Curriculum (2019)*, the *Preparation for Teaching and Learning* guidance would be a useful resource to further inform teaching and learning.

Special education teachers provided additional support for pupils with identified needs in warm and supportive learning environments. In some settings, they used digital devices effectively to support and enhance communication. To address each learner's individual needs, special education teachers planned and prepared on a weekly basis, and they developed student support plans for pupils on the school's continuum of support. In-class literacy interventions took place in some settings. To further enhance these initiatives, mainstream and special education teachers are advised to ensure that all interventions are time-bound, informed and monitored by pre and post-assessment, and planned collaboratively. Use of the *Primary Language Curriculum (2019)* progression continua would further support teachers in refining the specificity of learning targets and monitoring pupils' development over time.

The quality of assessment was effective overall. Teachers maintained a broad range of assessment information for all pupils which included standardised assessments, checklists, teacher-designed tasks and tests, weekly and termly assessments, and samples of pupils' work. To build on this good practice, teachers should extend the range of assessment strategies to include pupil self-assessment and peer-assessment. These approaches would help pupils take greater ownership of their learning and develop the language and skills needed to reflect on their progress.

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

The overall effectiveness of whole-school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning was good. School leadership reported that professional dialogue and discussion took place regularly during staff meetings, fostering a collaborative approach to school improvement. While a whole-school English plan was in place, it is recommended that it should be further developed by school leaders and teachers to ensure that it is fully reflective of the *Primary Language Curriculum (2019)*. Furthermore, the plan should be contextualised to the school, and used to inform daily classroom practice. Current good practice should also be documented in the school plan.

Previous cycles of SSE focused on aspects of wellbeing and numeracy. The current school improvement plan addressed priorities related to leadership, digital literacy, wellbeing, and numeracy. To enhance the impact of the SSE process, school leaders should involve parents and pupils more actively in the six-step process, thereby strengthening community collaboration and shared ownership of school improvement.

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For the pupils of S N An Aird about their learning in English

Date of inspection: 24/09/2025

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 in English was very good.
- The pupils enjoyed discussing their learning in English, especially books and writing stories.
- The pupils had opportunities to do lots of interesting learning activities in English.

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

- Teachers should encourage pupils to use self-assessment and peer-assessment to help them think about their own work and the work of others, and share ideas to help them to improve.
- Teachers should continue to develop the school English plan, and include the good ways that they teach English.

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