An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige
Department of Education and Youth

Curriculum Evaluation: PE
REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil Náisiúnta Déaglán
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Water Street Waterford
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	16976M
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	21/05/2026
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	25/09/2026

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 inspectors evaluated learning and teaching in PE 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>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	20/05/2026 – 21/05/2026
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

Scoil Naisiúnta Déaglán is an urban primary school in Waterford City that caters for boys from infants to sixth class. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Diocese of Waterford and Lismore. At the time of the evaluation, there were 394 pupils enrolled in the school. The teaching staff comprised an administrative principal, sixteen mainstream class teachers and nine special education teachers.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning in Physical Education (PE) was very good, with excellent outcomes also observed. Pupils demonstrated a highly positive disposition towards PE and presented as motivated, focused and engaged learners.
- The quality of pupils' learning experiences was excellent. Teachers were commended on enriching pupils' learning experiences with a very broad range of co-curricular activities in which all pupils were enabled to participate.
- The overall quality of teaching was very good, with aspects of exemplary practice also observed.
- The quality of assessment was very good; teachers employed a suitable range of assessment practices to gather information about pupils' learning in PE.
- The overall quality of school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE), in progressing pupils' learning in PE was excellent.

Recommendations

- To strengthen assessment for learning approaches, teachers should collate exemplars of formative feedback, including peer assessment underpinned by explicit success criteria and assessment supported by digital technologies, and embed these in whole-school practice.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The overall quality of pupils' learning in PE was very good, with some excellent outcomes observed. Pupils demonstrated a highly positive disposition towards PE and presented as motivated, focused and engaged learners. They described their previous learning articulately, with most using appropriate subject-specific terminology proficiently.

Pupils were able to demonstrate skills in the curriculum strands *Athletics* and *Games* and explain how these could be applied in different contexts. Some pupils also explained how skills learned in one curriculum strand could transfer to others. When enabled, pupils designed their own games, establishing clear rules that they and their peers followed. Middle and senior pupils were able to describe strokes in swimming and demonstrated appropriate awareness of water safety. Pupils exhibited an increasingly complex range of movements in gymnastics,

demonstrating very good control, balance and coordination. In *Dance*, they performed a range of steps and movements to music and collaborated effectively to develop sequences with a partner. Pupils demonstrated keen interest in sports and appreciated the value of different sports. They also recognised the benefits and relevance of PE in their daily lives.

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

The quality of pupils' learning experiences in PE was excellent. Teachers' interactions with pupils were very respectful and affirming, and they encouraged and supported them to experience success and enjoyment in PE. The school provided a broad and balanced PE curriculum. Pupils had access to a wide range of resources that were stored in convenient locations. To complement the school facilities, teachers availed of the nearby People's Park and other areas in the vicinity, particularly for the curriculum strands *Athletics* and *Outdoor and Adventure Activities*. As part of the *Aquatics* strand, pupils from first class to sixth class availed of swimming lessons in the local pool.

To enable pupils experience a broad range of sports and activities, the school had established very positive links with local clubs, providing pupils with opportunities to engage in Gaelic games, cricket, basketball, badminton and rugby. It also availed of the support of external coaches. The school's attractive Hall of Fame display celebrated pupils' and staff's achievements in sporting activities outside school. While acknowledging pupils' achievements, the school emphasised participation and enjoyment for all pupils; to this end, all pupils were enabled to join teams and to participate in internal school leagues, as well as represent the school in competitions with other schools. The teachers were commended on providing a very extensive range of co-curricular activities that they enabled all pupils to access, and for organising in-school leagues. The school participated in national initiatives including Active Schools and *Gaelbhratach*, and performed whole-school dances annually.

During the focus-group discussion, pupils shared that they enjoyed their learning in PE. They noted that they enjoyed being active, and learning and applying new skills. They welcomed the broad curriculum, including the range of games from which they were enabled to select the ones in which they wished to specialise. They spoke very positively about their engagement in co-curricular activities, noting that all pupils were treated fairly and enabled to join teams. They also welcomed the in-school tournaments and shared that an annual highlight was the rounders match between sixth class and the staff.

The overall quality of teaching was very good, with examples of exemplary practice also observed. Teachers had prepared very well for the lessons observed, which incorporated purposeful activities that supported the progression of pupils' learning. Lessons were well structured and appropriately paced, incorporating warm-up activities, new learning, and opportunities for consolidation and application. With support from pupils where appropriate, teachers ensured that the necessary equipment was organised and set up efficiently.

Most teachers were highly effective communicators; they explained the intended learning outcomes clearly and provided explicit instructions using subject-specific vocabulary. To enhance pupils' understanding, they modelled the skills to be practised. Teachers sequenced activities skilfully and made very good provision for independent learning and collaborative activities. They also made meaningful links between pupils' learning in PE and wider areas including wellbeing, health, and other curriculum strands. In the most effective practice observed, teachers differentiated lessons appropriately to maximise learning opportunities for all pupils. These teachers also provided opportunities to pupils to apply their skills creatively, make choices and take decisions.

The overall qualify of assessment was very good. Teachers employed a suitable range of teacher-led assessment approaches including observation, questioning and commercially produced checklists to gather information about pupils' learning. Some teachers also made

effective use of digital technologies to record the development of pupils' skills, and the school was encouraged to extend this practice. In the best instances, teachers made success criteria explicit and enabled pupils to monitor and improve their performance in response to formative feedback, including from peers.

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

The overall quality of school planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE), in progressing pupils' learning in PE was excellent. School leaders and teachers had engaged collaboratively, comprehensively and constructively in the SSE process. Arising from a previous cycle of SSE that had focused on PE, the school had identified gymnastics as an area for development. To progress identified targets, the school had invested in additional equipment and also engaged the support of an external coach who had worked alongside teachers for one year to further develop their practice. The leader with responsibility for PE monitored the implementation of the improvement plan on pupils' learning, providing additional support to teachers as requested.

As part of the SSE process, leaders and teachers had revised the school plan for PE. The plan provided clear and helpful guidance to teachers in relation to agreed whole-school approaches and supported the progressive development of pupils' knowledge and skills. Teachers at each class level planned collaboratively and this helped ensure clarity and coherence in the delivery of the curriculum. Teachers were supported to engage in professional learning and enabled to share their learning at staff meetings. An update on professional learning undertaken by teachers was included at each board meeting.

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For the pupils of Scoil Náisiúnta Déaglán about their learning in PE

Date of inspection: 20/05/2026 – 21/05/2026

Introduction

Your school had an inspection of PE 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 PE was very good and sometimes excellent. Pupils enjoyed PE and put their best into their learning.
- Pupils had excellent learning experiences in PE. The teachers organised lots of activities and sports that pupils were welcome to join.
- The teachers taught the pupils very well and explained new skills and activities clearly.

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

- The teachers could share the very good ways they have of finding out what pupils have learnt so that all teachers can use them.

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 welcomes the positive findings of the Physical Education Curriculum Evaluation, which provide an accurate reflection of the very good quality of pupils' learning and the excellent outcomes they achieve at St. Declan's. The Board commends the staff for their professionalism. We are delighted this was reflected in the quality of teaching being very good, while recognising the exemplary practice observed.

The quality of assessment was found to be very good, and this is an area that we will further strengthen. The excellent quality of school planning and SSE was pleasing. As a Board, we recognise the commitment of staff in ensuring that pupils at St. Declan's are given every opportunity to progress and achieve. These findings affirm the commitment of the community to providing a broad, inclusive and high-quality Physical Education programme which supports pupils to develop their skills, knowledge, confidence and enjoyment of physical activity.

Area 2 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 welcomes the very positive findings of the evaluation, including the finding that the overall quality of assessment was very good.

The Board acknowledges the recommendation to strengthen assessment-for-learning approaches and views this as an opportunity to build on the strong practice already in place. The staff are building on existing effective practice by developing a shared collection of exemplars of assessment for learning including peer and self-assessment approaches. These exemplars highlight the use of clear and explicit success criteria to support pupils in understanding the learning intentions and in monitoring and improving their own learning. The staff will also identify and share effective examples of the use of digital technologies to support assessment and to record pupils' progress and development.

Collaborative planning opportunities will be used to facilitate further professional dialogue and the sharing of effective practice among teachers. The agreed approaches and exemplars will inform the development of a more consistent whole-school approach to assessment for learning. Implementation will be monitored and reviewed with the aim of embedding these practices progressively and consistently throughout the school.

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