An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige
Department of Education and Youth

Curriculum Evaluation: SPHE
REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Monaghan Model School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	North Road Monaghan County Monaghan
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	07751K
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	29/05/2026
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	30/09/2026

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 SPHE 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 pupil-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 pupil-friendly version that is displayed where 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 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	29/05/2026
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

Monaghan Model School is a co-educational primary school in Monaghan town, County Monaghan which operates under the patronage of the Minister for Education and Youth. At the time of the evaluation, the school had eight mainstream class teachers and two teaching posts for pupils with identified needs. The pupils came from a wide catchment area and from different religious and ethnic backgrounds. There were 201 pupils enrolled.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) was at a very high level overall.
- The quality of learning experiences was very good. The school maintained a very positive and inclusive atmosphere that supported pupil health and wellbeing.
- The quality of teaching observed in SPHE was very high, with elements of exemplary practice also in evidence.
- The overall effectiveness of planning for SPHE, including SSE, was highly commendable.
- During the evaluation the pupils demonstrated a very commendable awareness of the importance of empathy in their interactions with others.

Recommendations

- In whole-school planning for Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), school leadership should include the specific RSE learning outcomes for each class level to better facilitate age-appropriate learning progression.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The quality of pupils' learning in SPHE was at a very high level overall. Pupils displayed strong listening skills, engaging respectfully with their peers and they valued differing perspectives. They were motivated to achieve as learners and were very respectful, attentive and courteous to each other and their teachers during lessons. The pupils demonstrated very good ability across a wide range of interpersonal skills, working together and communicating in ways that were effective and considerate. They also showed genuine appreciation for the diversity within the school, recognising the positive influence of the different cultural and social groups that make up the wider community. The pupils demonstrated a thorough understanding of the roles of regular physical activity and balanced nutrition in maintaining good health. Particularly strong learning outcomes were evident in the strand units of *Self-identity* and *Media education* and also in understanding individual and collective responsibilities within the concept of citizenship. Pupils demonstrated a clear ability to identify the different types of bullying, along with an understanding of preventative measures and a range of practical strategies to safeguard

themselves if faced with such situations. They also communicated very confidently about aspects of physical safety, including electricity, farm, and water safety. Pupils exhibited a strong awareness of human growth and development, alongside a well-developed understanding of environmental responsibility. They demonstrated a very commendable awareness of the importance of empathy in their interactions with others.

During the inspection, a focus group of pupils spoke about their learning in SPHE with impressive confidence and maturity. All of the pupils who participated indicated they really liked and derived benefit from their learning in SPHE. They explained ideas like healthy eating, staying active, and how to manage their emotions clearly, linking these lessons easily to their own daily lives and choices. It was clear that the school was giving pupils the real-world knowledge they need to take charge of their own wellbeing. The pupils demonstrated deep understanding through articulating clearly how their learning supported their wellbeing. They spoke knowledgeably about topics from the Stay Safe programme and demonstrated a clear understanding of personal safety, help-seeking behaviours and safeguarding practices. The pupils acknowledged that some aspects of RSE lessons were sensitive and challenging to discuss, but that they very much understood their importance and relevance. It was evident from the pupils' responses that much of the delivery of sensitive topics focused on the senior classes and was often facilitated by an external tutor. The pupils had a deep awareness of the influence of advertising from the mass media on their lives. They also had a very commendable understanding of the concept of citizenship and the rights and responsibilities conferred on them as citizens.

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

The quality of learning experiences was very good. The school maintained a very positive, supportive and inclusive atmosphere that promoted pupils' sense of belonging, health and wellbeing. Caring and respectful relationships were evident throughout the entire school community. Additionally, the school prioritised strong home-school links, ensuring that parents and teachers worked collaboratively in supporting pupils' wellbeing and holistic development. In the focus group, the pupils commended their teachers for the quality of the learning experiences they received in SPHE. They praised their teachers highly for their use of active learning approaches and project work where the pupils learned to work collaboratively. They expressed great satisfaction with the school assemblies and the school's recent variety concert. Classroom activities included a variety of practical methods, including circle time, group and pair tasks, and cooperative games. Teachers enriched pupils' learning further by using pictures, video clips, stories, poems and songs. In all settings, lessons were well structured and moved at an appropriate pace, keeping pupils active in their learning and providing meaningful opportunities for the pupils to contribute, reflect and apply their learning.

The quality of teaching observed in SPHE was very effective, with elements of exemplary practice also in evidence. Teachers held high expectations for their pupils' learning, and staff and pupil interactions were consistently highly respectful. Teachers came to lessons very well-prepared with well-chosen resources and they communicated the learning intentions of lessons clearly to their pupils. Every teacher successfully built an effective learning environment, filling both individual classrooms and common areas with engaging, supportive displays. Teachers used active learning methods like drama, role-play, and think-pair-share strategies widely, which led to exemplary examples of teaching across multiple classrooms. Teachers fostered very inquisitive behaviour among pupils during lessons. The quality of the collective teaching of SPHE across settings was consistently high. The staff participated in relevant continuing professional development courses regularly.

Overall, assessment approaches in SPHE were successful. Assessment for learning strategies were employed regularly during the lessons and teachers used effective questioning strategies to monitor pupils' understanding and their progressive grasp of concepts and nuances of meaning. To build upon these strengths, there is scope to implement opportunities for pupils to further self-reflect, discuss and document the specific insights and skills they have acquired in

SPHE within a multi-school year portfolio format that records the development of their SPHE learning.

In the focus-group discussion, the volunteer pupils demonstrated a strong sense of agency and shared their views with confidence, insight and maturity. The school's plan to establish a student council is highly commended, as it will provide pupils with a meaningful, formal, and sustained voice in school planning and decision-making

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

The overall effectiveness of planning for Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), including SSE, was highly commendable. The overarching whole-school plan outlined the curriculum across the three strands and included details of the two-year delivery cycle for the Stay Safe programme, as well as the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme. While this document offered solid guidance and identified key resources, initiatives and supplementary programmes, further refinement is possible. To build on the work already done, the leadership team should include specific learning outcomes for RSE topics for each class level, in order to support the natural delivery of sensitive topics, as pupils progress through primary school. All of the teachers prepared comprehensive long-term and short-term written preparation. Their practical preparation for lessons was very good. Some long-term written preparation was organised according to the structure of the commercially produced scheme used by the school to support learning in SPHE. Going forward, all teachers should ensure that all long-term written preparation for SPHE is based upon the primary curriculum framework specifications. School leadership was commended highly for the support provided for the wellbeing of both pupils and staff.

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Department of Education and Youth

For the pupils of Monaghan Model School about their learning in SPHE
Date of inspection: 29/05/2026

Introduction

Your school had an inspection of SPHE 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 inspectors find?

Here are some of the main things:

- The quality of pupils' learning in SPHE was very high.
- The quality of learner experiences was very good and the school had a very positive and inclusive atmosphere.
- The quality of teaching of SPHE was very effective, with elements of exemplary practice also in evidence.

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

- In the school's plan for Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), the school's leadership team should outline the expected learning for each class level.

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 Board of Management welcomes the findings of the Inspectorate and acknowledges the positive affirmation of the quality of provision and practice in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in Monaghan Model School. The Board are particularly pleased that the report recognises the high quality of pupil' learning, the effectiveness of teaching, and the positive, inclusive and supportive environment promoted throughout the school. The Board welcomes the recognition of pupil's strong interpersonal skills, empathy, respect for diversity, understanding of personal safety and commitment to their health and wellbeing, The acknowledgement of the quality of whole school planning, including School Self Evaluation is also welcomed. The Board notes the recommendation concerning Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) and is committed to addressing this recommendation in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.

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, in conjunction with the Principal and teaching staff, will ensure the recommendation relating to whole school planning for RSE is addressed as part of the school's ongoing curriculum planning.

The existing whole school RSE plan will be reviewed and further developed to identify clearly the specific RSE learning outcomes to be addressed at each class level. This will provide greater clarity regarding the content to be covered at each class level and will support the development of a coherent, age appropriate and progressive programme of learning that ensures pupils build appropriately on their previous learning as they progress through the school.

The Board also welcomes the Inspectorate's commendation of the school's plans to establish a student council. This initiative will provide pupils with a meaningful and sustained opportunity to contribute their views to school planning and decision making and will further strengthen the culture of pupil voice and participation within the school.