



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: English Report

REPORT

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| Ainm na scoile/School name | Inch National School |
| Seoladh na scoile/School address | Ennis Co Clare |
| Uimhir rolla/Roll number | 16186G |
| Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation | 17-05-2023 |
| Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report | 04/10/2023 |

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 inspector evaluated learning and teaching in English under the following headings:

1. Quality of pupils' learning
2. Supporting pupils' learning through learner 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 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

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| During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted: | |
| <i>Child Protection</i> | <i>Anti-bullying</i> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">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. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)</i> and this policy is reviewed annually.2. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides a report to the board at least once a term on the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template provided in the <i>Procedures</i>) since the previous report to the board.3. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils. |

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

Curriculum evaluation

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| Date of inspection | 17-05-2023 |
| Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal and teachers• Review of relevant documents• Pupil focus-group interview | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal and teachers |

School context

Inch National School is a co-educational primary school located in the village of Inch, County Clare. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Killaloe. At the time of the evaluation, the school had four mainstream class teachers and two special education teachers (SETs), one of whom is based in another school. There were ninety-three pupils enrolled in the school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning in English was very good.
- The learner experiences in English were of a very high quality.
- The quality of teaching was very good.
- The quality of assessment was good.
- School planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE), was very effective in progressing pupils' learning.

Recommendations

- Teachers should provide pupils with more opportunities to use a range of pupil-led assessment strategies in order to further develop their sense of themselves as competent and capable learners.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

The quality of pupils' learning was very good. Pupils demonstrated motivation and enjoyment in their learning. They listened actively and engaged positively in learning activities. They experienced success in challenging tasks and were aware of their progress in language learning. Pupils' learner outcomes across the elements of communicating, understanding, and exploring and using language, were very good. Pupils' oral language skills were well-developed. They communicated with each other very effectively and many pupils were able to speak about their points of view and use topic-specific vocabulary.

Reading attainment was very good overall. Pupils' early literacy skills were developed to a high standard. A systematic approach to phonological awareness and phonics was in place. Pupils recited a range of poems and rhymes confidently. They were able to apply their learning in playful contexts. Pupils read with fluency and expression. In the focus-group discussion, pupils reported that they had a leadership role in the school. For example, the students' council completed an audit of the school library and choose a wide variety of new texts, including graphic novels and non-fiction texts, which were then purchased by the board of management.

Pupils' understanding and use of the components of language were developed progressively. They engaged in functional writing tasks and free-writing activities, as well as writing in a variety

of genres. Samples of writing in copybooks and on display were of a very high standard. Many pupils created their own texts and shared these with each other.

2. Supporting pupils' learning: Learner experiences and teachers' practice

Learner experiences in English were of a very high quality. Classroom environments were supportive of pupils' learning. There were word walls in all rooms which were used very effectively during lessons. All pupils participated in small group and pair work. During the focus-group discussion, pupils spoke about their enjoyment of working together and engaging in discussions. Appropriately playful learning opportunities were used to promote aspects of literacy for all pupils. *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* was implemented very effectively in the junior classes. There was an emphasis on disciplinary literacy across the curriculum, with pupils in the focus-group discussion speaking about their enjoyment of project work.

A culture of reading for pleasure was fostered by all staff. A buddy reading initiative, whereby pupils in senior classes engaged in reading with pupils in junior classes, was implemented effectively. Reading materials were aligned to the prioritised learning needs of pupils. Technology was used very effectively to develop digital literacy. Pupils presented their work using digital tools, including creating videos.

The quality of teaching was very good. Teachers planned for and prepared interesting lessons which were differentiated appropriately. They engaged purposefully with the Primary Language Curriculum to ensure high quality learner experiences were provided for all pupils. Teachers modelled very high-quality language for pupils. They were skilful in their questioning to assess and enhance pupils' learning. All teachers used resources very effectively to encourage and enhance pupils' critical thinking skills. They ensured pupils were provided with a variety of texts.

The quality of provision for pupils with special education needs was very good. A range of in-class support models was implemented very effectively. Initiatives in literacy, including *Literacy Lift Off* and guided reading, were closely monitored to ensure they were meeting the prioritised needs of the pupils. Student Support Files included targets which were based on assessment data.

The quality of assessment was good. Teachers used a variety of assessment methods to monitor the implementation of initiatives and to track pupils' mastery of language skills. Pupils' work was carefully monitored, with some examples of very high quality feedback evident in copybooks. Where very good practice was observed, pupils were encouraged to self-assess their work and they also engaged in peer-assessment of each other's work. This ensured that pupils had a strong sense of their achievements in reading and writing. Some pupils spoke about their use of these strategies to assess their learning and identify next steps. This practice should be extended to ensure that all pupils are provided with opportunities to further develop their sense of themselves as competent and capable learners.

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

School planning for English was very effective in progressing pupils' learning. The whole school plan for English was recently reviewed and was used to support teachers' individual planning. The plan outlined whole-school approaches to the teaching of reading, comprehension strategies and writing genres. The plan would benefit from further development to include an explicit focus on oral language development.

The school had used previous cycles of the SSE process to monitor and develop various aspects of literacy. Improvements had been recognised and new approaches were embedded in practice. All teachers had monitored assessment data to ensure the improvements achieved were maintained. In the current cycle of SSE, the school had identified a focus on wellbeing.

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 Inch NS welcomes this very positive report on the teaching of English in our school. It recognises the very high standard of work and the very high quality of literacy teaching being undertaken in our school.

Our pupils were recognised for their well-developed and confident communicating skills, for their enthusiasm and motivation to learn and their ability to listen actively and engage purposefully with others.

Our staff were recognised for very good quality teaching, very effective planning and very good quality provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs.

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 BOM welcomes the guidance on further developing pupils' self-assessment skills to enable them to further develop their sense of themselves as competent and capable learners. While there is a commendable focus on self-assessment and peer assessment in evidence, the teachers will look to embed these strategies more systematically in their planning and classroom practice.

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 | Example of descriptive terms |
|--------------|---|---|
| Very Good | <i>Very good</i> applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is <i>outstanding</i> and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision. | Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary |
| Good | <i>Good</i> applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard. | Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement |
| Satisfactory | <i>Satisfactory</i> applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard. | Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas |
| Fair | <i>Fair</i> applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better. | Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve |
| Weak | <i>Weak</i> applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements. | Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties; |