



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

# Curriculum Evaluation: English Report

## REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Sn Muine Chonallain
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Bonniconlon Ballina Co. Mayo
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	13667H
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	16/10/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	10/12/2024

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## 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 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

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"><li>1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.</li><li>2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.</li><li>3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>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> or <i>Bí Cineálta (2024)</i> and this policy is reviewed annually.</li><li>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.</li></ol>

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

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# Curriculum evaluation

<b>Date of inspection</b>	16/10/2024
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Pupil focus-group interview</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

## School context

Bonniconlon National School is a co-educational primary school located in the village of Bonniconlon County Mayo. The school operates under the patronage of the Apostolic Administrator bishop of Achonry. At the time of the evaluation, it had five mainstream class teachers, including the teaching principal. It also had two full-time special education teachers (SETs) and three special needs assistants (SNAs). There were 116 pupils enrolled in the school. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education for educational inclusion.

## Summary of main findings and recommendations:

### Findings

- Overall the quality of learning was very good; pupils demonstrated very high levels of motivation and engagement in English.
- Learner experiences were excellent; pupils engaged purposefully individually and collaboratively in a diverse range of meaningful, productive and challenging learning experiences.
- Overall, in the lessons observed teaching was excellent; teachers created lessons that reflected a developmental and incremental approach to progressing pupils' learning.
- Assessment was very good overall; a variety of self- and peer-assessment strategies were evident across the school.
- Overall whole school planning was excellent; the implementation of consistent whole school approaches were observed across classrooms.

### Recommendations

- To support consistency and progression across classes, teachers should develop a whole-school approach to the assessment of pupils' skills in oral language.

## Detailed findings and recommendations

### 1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

Overall the quality of learning was very good. Pupils demonstrated very high levels of motivation and engagement in English throughout the evaluation. Pupils responded confidently to questions and participated enthusiastically in classroom discussions. As they progressed, pupils used high quality target language with accuracy, demonstrating incremental improvements in their vocabulary and fluency. Pupils demonstrated active listening skills and contributed thoughtfully to classroom discussions. In all classes, pupils recited a range of poetry with fluency and expression, and senior pupils could also identify and explain different genres of poetry. Pupils had regular opportunity to present their work to peers, fostering a sense of ownership and collaboration. Pupils in the focus groups stated they enjoyed these opportunities.

Pupils in the focus group expressed a very positive attitude towards reading. Pupils in junior classes were making very good progress in the areas of phonemic and phonological awareness. Senior pupils were able to articulate various strategies that supported effective

reading and demonstrated a strong understanding of the characteristics of good reading practice. Pupils in the senior classes could describe the key characteristics of good reading accurately. Pupils frequently used dictionaries and thesauruses to develop their vocabulary.

Across classes, some highly commendable writing samples in various genres, including typed samples, were on display. Throughout the school pupils demonstrated a very good understanding of different writing genres and could describe with confidence the various steps involved in the writing process. Pupils effectively transferred their writing skills across the curriculum and oral text types and writing genres were experienced in an integrated manner. Teachers should develop a whole-school approach to the creation and maintenance of individual writing portfolios for pupils to support progression as they move through the school to support continuity of learning. Pupils had regular opportunities for free writing which allowed them to engage creatively and independently.

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

Overall learner experiences were excellent. Pupils were provided with a diverse range of meaningful learning experiences, which were fostered through respectful interactions. Pupils had regular opportunities to engage in collaborative learning opportunities in all learning settings. Digital technologies were very skilfully integrated into teaching in some instances, enhancing and extending pupils' learning. The use of small whiteboards facilitated active participation, allowing pupils to share and consolidate their learning. Pupils in all classes frequently accessed high-quality reading materials, including levelled and shared readers. A whole school approach to thematic learning on an annual basis further enriched pupils' educational experiences in English and across the curriculum. Pupils participated in a buddy system, where senior pupils read to junior pupils. Pupils had opportunities to regularly visit local libraries which further boosted their interest in reading.

Overall, teaching was excellent in the lessons observed, with very high levels of consistency across classes. Teaching practice was highly organised, with thorough preparation that reflected teachers' strong understanding of both the pupils' needs and the curriculum. Teachers identified relevant learning outcomes to create lessons that reflected a developmental and incremental approach to progressing pupils' learning. Lessons were very well-structured and paced, with a strong emphasis on differentiation to meet the diverse learning needs within the multi-grade classroom. Tasks were thoughtfully designed towards the intended learning outcomes. Teachers provided individual support, ensuring that pupils were engaged and progressing. A focus on vocabulary development was evident, with teachers modelling high-quality language and introducing new concepts in a supportive environment. Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision was in place both in class and through withdrawal in highly supportive environments, with interventions such as Literacy Lift-Off evident. School support plans adhered to SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) targets to ensure focused and measurable progress.

Assessment was very good overall. All teachers shared learning intentions at the start of lessons and revisited them at the end. A variety of self- and peer-assessment strategies were used to encourage pupil reflection and ownership of learning. In one setting pupils used AI (artificial intelligence) tools to further enhance self-assessment skills. In another setting pupils used recordings of themselves to develop their ability to assess their own mastery of an aspect of English. All pupils completed questionnaires to gauge their enjoyment of reading. Standardised and diagnostic testing informed whole-school planning. Teachers used early screening for phonemic awareness to ensure timely intervention where necessary. A range of approaches were observed in relation to the assessment of oral language. To support consistency and progression across classes, teachers should develop a whole-school approach to the assessment of pupils' skills in oral language.

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

Overall whole school planning was excellent. School planning demonstrated a high level of organisation and coherence, clearly aligning with the Primary Language Curriculum (PLC). Whole-school planning was embedded across the curriculum, with strong evidence of collaboration among staff. The implementation of consistent whole school approaches was observed across classrooms, including in the areas of writing genres, reading, oral text types, preparation and assessment practices; and this helped ensure continuity in pupils' learning experiences. A culture of continuous improvement was evident, as staff regularly engaged with sustained professional support to deepen their understanding and application of the PLC. The school's commitment to enhancing pupils' learning outcomes was further supported by significant investment in relevant, high-quality resources. DEIS planning was of a very high standard. A range of evidence was used to develop targets which informed the implementation of a range of actions. Some targets were not sufficiently SMART and the school should ensure all targets are specific and measurable to ensure maximum impact. Progress was regularly monitored, which allowed for adjustment to ensure the effectiveness of interventions.



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

## For the pupils of SN Muine Chonallain about their learning in English

Date of inspection: 16/10/2024



### 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.



### Meeting with pupils

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:

- Learning was very good in English; pupils were very interested and worked hard.
- Pupils learned on their own and in groups on interesting and fun activities.
- Teachers were excellent at teaching English.
- The school's way of checking how the pupils were doing in English was very good.



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

Teachers should work together to find the best way to check how well students are doing with speaking and listening skills across the whole school.

**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**

## **Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board of Management of St. Joseph's NS Bonniconlon welcomes the very positive report on the teaching of English in our school. The Board of Management is satisfied to learn that all regulations in relation to Child Protection and Safeguarding and Anti-Bullying have been met.

We appreciate the recognition in the report of the very high levels of motivation and engagement in English demonstrated by the pupils and their ability to respond confidently to questions and participate enthusiastically in classroom discussions.

The Board welcome the acknowledgement of the overall levels of teaching and learning as being excellent with high levels of consistency across all classes.

Overall whole school planning involves high levels of organisation, coherence and collaboration among staff and the Board of Management appreciate the report's acknowledgement of this planning as being excellent.

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

In Bonniconlon NS we value and promote a culture of continuous self-evaluation and improvement and therefore the Board of Management and staff accepts the guidance outlined within the report and is committed to implementing the recommendation.

The process of developing a whole school approach to the assessment of pupils' skills in oral language will be our focus this school year. This will be done through staff planning in conjunction with PDST/Oide and the inspectors advisory role.

School staff will design an oral language skills rubric and carry out regular assessments with target pupils. The use of recordings and podcasts will be implemented throughout our pupil's journey in primary school as a means of assessment and identifying progress.

The Board of Management will continue to support the staff in achieving high quality teaching and learning throughout the school, while the school management team will look at the best ways to implement the inspector's recommendation.



## 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
<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Provision that is excellent</b> 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
<b>Very good</b>	<b>Provision that is very good</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Provision that is good</b> 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
<b>Requires improvement to achieve a good standard</b>	<b>Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard</b> 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
<b>Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard</b>	<b>Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard</b> 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