



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: English Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	St Brigid's Kildare Town Primary School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Grey Abbey Road Kildare Town Co. Kildare
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	20427B
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	18-01-2023
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	22/05/2023

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 inspectors 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

The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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.

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">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

Date of inspection	18-01-2023
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 deputy principal

School context

St. Brigid's Kildare Town Primary School is a large, urban, co-educational school in Kildare, Co. Kildare. It operates under the patronage of the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. The staff comprises of an administrative principal and deputy principal, a Home School Community Liaison Coordinator (HSCL), forty-one mainstream class teachers, two special class teachers and eighteen special education teachers (SETs). The school participates in *Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS)*, the action plan of the Department of Education for educational inclusion. At the time of the evaluation, there were 982 pupils enrolled in the school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of the pupils' learning outcomes was very good.
- The quality of learner experiences was of a very high standard with pupils engaging in a wide range of purposeful learning activities.
- Teachers' practice was very effective; they used a wide range of approaches to stimulate pupil response and engagement.
- The quality of school planning, including SSE, was good.
- Teachers were committed to the care and holistic development of all pupils.

Recommendations

- Teachers should provide pupils with additional opportunities to exercise autonomy and choice in their creative writing.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

The quality of pupils' learning in English was very good. Pupils presented as motivated and engaged learners who applied themselves very well to their assigned tasks and activities. They demonstrated positive dispositions towards language learning, including curiosity, confidence and pride. During the focus-group discussion, pupils stated that they enjoyed their learning in English, playing oral language games and going on trips to the local library. They expressed an interest in having additional opportunities to present their work to a variety of audiences and other classes.

Pupils in all classes had opportunities to engage in talk and discussion and shared their ideas with their classmates. They listened attentively and engaged positively in oral language activities. Teachers explicitly taught and modelled specific vocabulary and language structures and pupils were afforded opportunities to use and apply the new language during lessons. Pupils were willing to problem-solve and pose possible solutions confidently.

Pupils had access to a wide range of reading materials and their reading skills were competently developed. They demonstrated good phonological awareness and word recognition skills. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding of the reading process were developed effectively through consistent engagement in differentiated reading experiences. Overall, pupils read confidently at their own instructional level and applied comprehension skills independently with competence.

The whole-school approach to teaching specific writing genres was commended. Pupils showed good understanding of the components and associated language of genres. In the main, topics and themes for pupils' writing were selected by teachers. Pupils would benefit from more autonomy in their choice of creative writing topics. This would further develop ownership of their learning and the development of independence in language use. While pupils' handwriting skills were developed systematically in most classes, there was some variation in the quality of handwriting overall in terms of the style, penmanship and presentation of work. It is advised that the agreed whole-school approach to penmanship and presentation of work should be implemented systematically across the school.

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

The quality of learner experiences was very good with pupils engaging in a wide range of purposeful learning activities. Pupils made meaningful and authentic connections between their learning in English and other curricular areas. Interactions among pupils and teachers were very positive and respectful. In the lessons observed, pupils had access to suitable learning resources, including a wide range of books, literacy games, concrete materials and visuals. In a minority of lessons observed, digital technologies were used as a tool for literacy development. There is scope for teachers to consider how they could make enhanced use of digital technologies to support the development of pupils' literacy skills.

The quality of teachers' practice was very good. Teachers used a wide range of approaches such as whole-class teaching, pair and group work to provide pupils with opportunities to be active agents in their own learning. They delivered well-structured and suitably paced lessons designed to support the integration of oral, reading and writing activities. They selected topics relevant to the needs and interests of the pupils and related them to real-life situations. Teachers adopted meaningful assessment practices and they used this information purposefully to plan for pupils' next steps in language learning. Teachers created linguistically diverse and language-rich environments which celebrated pupils' learning. Professional dialogue and teachers' recorded preparation demonstrated their knowledge of their curriculum. They engaged purposefully with the *Primary Language Curriculum* and have accessed supports to ensure that very high quality learning experiences were provided for the pupils.

High quality support was provided for pupils with additional learning needs by all teachers. They were committed to the care and holistic development of all pupils. SETs and mainstream class teachers worked collaboratively to support pupils. They delivered well-planned interventions designed to meet the learning needs of each pupil at all levels of the Continuum of Support.

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

The quality of school planning, including SSE, was good. The whole-school plan for English was reviewed collaboratively by school leaders and teachers. It effectively informed and reflected practice in the school, including teachers' individual preparation and their work in classrooms. Teachers have engaged in professional development in English and they have shared their learning to enrich teachers' collective practice.

School leaders and teachers engaged meaningfully with DEIS action planning and SSE as a structured process. They had clearly identified areas for improvement. This has impacted positively on the development of the school's English policy.

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;