An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Evaluation: English
Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Rathgar N S
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Rathgar Avenue Dublin 6
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	14717B
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	15-03-2023
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	19/05/2023

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 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

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:	
Child Protection	*Anti-bullying*
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.	1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)* 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 *Procedures*) 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	15-03-2023
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

Rathgar National School is a co-educational primary school situated close to the village of Rathgar in Dublin 6. The school is under the patronage of the Methodist Church in Ireland. At the time of the evaluation, there were ninety-four pupils enrolled at the school. Staff allocation consisted of four mainstream teachers and one full-time special education teacher (SET). A SET, based in another school, filled the small number of additional resource teaching hours allocated to the school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning in English was very good; pupils' enjoyment in learning was very evident.
- The overall quality of pupils' learner experiences in English was very good.
- The quality of the teaching of English was very good overall.
- Assessment practices were of a very good quality.
- The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning was good.

Recommendations

- Teachers should design and implement an agreed whole-school approach to the teaching of creative writing genres.
- Teachers should ensure that pupils in each classroom setting verbally memorise an appropriate selection of poetry.
- School leaders should ensure that the whole-school plan for English is fully aligned with the Primary Language Curriculum and that agreed whole-school approaches to the teaching of poetry and creative writing genres are included in the plan.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

The quality of pupils' learning in English was very good. During the lessons observed, pupils' enjoyment in learning English was very evident. They demonstrated high levels of engagement with their lessons and learning and this was contributing to to their overall sense of wellbeing. Pupils were highly motivated to learn English and their knowledge and skills in the areas of oral language, reading and writing were effectvely developed as they progressed through the school. The oral language skills of the pupils were very well supported; pupils in each setting were enabled to speak competently and confidently, drawing on a very good range of vocabulary, to a range of audiences in the course of the lessons. Teachers ensured that pupils' early literacy skills were well embedded in their learning and pupils in all settings demonstrated very good levels of reading fluency and comprehension. Pupils engaged in a variety of writing tasks and the quality of their written work was very good overall. Pupils who participated in the group discussion were very confident regarding their overall learning in English; they

communicated a positive image of themelves as learners and a sense of pride with regard to their learning achievements. Overall, during the lessons, pupils with special educational needs were making good progress in English in line with their abilities.

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

The overall quality of pupils' learner experiences in English was very good. The school successsfully promoted pupils' interest in literacy through the provision of a wide range of reading resources, and through initiatives such as visits to the local library and paired reading activities. In each classroom setting, teachers had created attractive learning environments that were supportive of pupils' learning in English. Classroom displays included a good range of pupils' writing. Pupils experienced opportunities to engage in a range of functional and creative writing tasks; pupils in the group discussion indicated that teachers encourage them to engage in the tasks of drafting, editing and redrafting their written work. Teachers ensured that the pupils' efforts were affirmed and supported through the provision of assessment-for-learning commentary in their copybooks. To support the breadth of creative writing tasks experienced by pupils at each class level, teachers should now design and implement an agreed whole-school approach to the teaching of creative writing genres to support pupil progression and a higher level of consistency with regard to the learning experience. Pupils in each setting positively experienced poetry as part of their learning experience. To build on this aspect of learning, teachers should ensure that pupils in each classroom setting verbally memorise an appropriate selection of poetry.

The quality of the teaching of English was very good overall. All teachers demonstrated very high levels of preparedness to teach and classroom management was very effective; each teacher ensured that positive and mutually respectful interactions prevailed in each setting. Teachers paced and structures their lessons well and consistently shared learning intentions with the pupils at the start of lessons. All teachers ensured that pupils had opportunities to work collaboratively in the course of their learning. Teachers' collaborative practice was very good. They have recognised the value of building whole-staff capacity and have been given regular opportunities during staff meetings to share their expertise with other teachers in the school. Teachers' assessment practices were of a very good quality; they utilised a range of assessment strategies to build profiles of pupils' learning and to inform ongoing teaching and learning in English.

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

The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning was good. The whole-school plan for English gave good overall guidance to teachers' classroom practice. School staff was in the process of reviewing this plan. This review should ensure that the plan is fully aligned with the Primary Language Curriculum and that agreed whole-school approaches to the teaching of poetry and creative writing genres are included. School leaders ensured that sufficient resources for the teaching of English, including digital technologies, were provided in each learning setting. The practice of withdrawing a full class from a mixed class setting for the teaching of literacy should be reviewed in light of Department Circular 13/17.The school had engaged effectively in the SSE process and actions taken have had a positive impact on pupils' learning in English.

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, Rathgar NS have read and discussed the findings and recommendations of the Curriculum Evaluation in English carried out on 15th March 2023. The Board are satisfied with the quality statements listed relating to:

1. Quality of pupils' learning in English
2. Overall quality of pupils' learner experiences and teachers' practice in English
3. The effectiveness of school planning

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 Principal, on behalf of the Board of Management, working in conjunction with the in-school management team and staff, will endeavour that recommendations listed in the curriculum evaluation report will be addressed, in order to further improve learning experiences and outcomes for all pupils in Rathgar National 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	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	*Very good* 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 *outstanding* 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	*Good* 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 *very good* standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	*Satisfactory* 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	*Fair* 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	*Weak* 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;