

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Curriculum Evaluation**  
**English**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Scoil Sinéad National School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Patrician College Campus Deanstown Finglas Dublin 11
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	20502M

**Date of inspection: 03-12-2019**



## **WHAT IS A CURRICULUM EVALUATION?**

Curriculum Evaluations report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects of the *Primary School Curriculum* (1999). 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 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.

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

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.

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

## Curriculum Evaluation

<b>Date of inspection</b>	03-12-2019
<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>• Observation of teaching and learning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Sinéad National School is a co-educational primary school located in Finglas, Dublin 11. It is a recently established school and currently consists of two mainstream classes catering for pupils from junior infants to second class and two special classes for pupils with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). The school operates under the patronage of Scoil Sinéad Limited. Staffing includes two mainstream class teachers, two teachers in the special classes and one teacher for pupils with special educational needs (SEN), who is allocated to the school on a part-time basis. There are 30 pupils enrolled currently.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning in English is fair; in half of the lessons observed during the evaluation pupils' behaviour impacted negatively on observed teaching and learning.
- Overall the quality of pupils' learning experiences in English is satisfactory; regular, meaningful and purposeful opportunities for pupils to access the wider community are highly commendable.
- The overall quality of teaching in English is satisfactory; some elements of good practice were noted.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is fair overall; the National Educational Psychological Support Service's (NEPS) Continuum of Support has not been implemented and many individualised education plans (IEPs) are not in place.
- Assessment practices are satisfactory overall; while very good practice was noted in one setting, a whole-school policy to guide assessment approaches is not in place.
- The quality of school planning is fair; a number of key plans and policies are absent.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Support for pupils with SEN should be reviewed as a priority to ensure pupils with the greatest level of need receive the greatest level of support.
- The National Educational Psychological Support Service's (NEPS) Continuum of Support should be implemented as a priority in all settings in order to guide provision for pupils with SEN, and IEPs should be completed as early as possible in the term.
- The most effective behaviour management strategies should be agreed and implemented consistently to ensure better learner experiences and outcomes for all pupils.
- A whole-school approach to assessment should be developed to monitor pupils' progress and to plan for their future learning.

- Management and teachers should collaborate more effectively to devise and implement relevant school plans and policies to inform teaching and learning practices in order to bring about the necessary improvements in pupils' learning experiences and outcomes.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING**

The overall quality of pupils' learning in English is fair. The learner outcomes from the English lessons observed ranged from good to weak. In some of the lessons observed the behaviour of a significant minority of pupils impacted negatively on pupils' learning experiences and on the achievement of expected outcomes. A reading programme is implemented in all classrooms and pupils are making progress in their development of their sight vocabulary and knowledge of phonics. Commendably, in half of the settings observed, pupils' reading progression is tracked appropriately. There is scope to extend the range of reading programmes being used to meet the various needs of the learners. A wider range of differentiated graded readers and novels should be provided for pupils.

A limited range of samples of pupils' independent writing was observed during the evaluation. An increased focus should be placed on the development of writing across the school. A more systematic approach to the collation of pupils' work is required in order to demonstrate progression in writing and inform teachers' practice.

Pupils' confidence and competence in oral language is fair overall. Effective language-focused social interactions based on the routines of the school day were observed. While aspects of interventions and resources including the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), digital technologies and a manual sign system, LÁMH were observed in a small minority of settings, they were not being maximised and the school should ensure greater use of these systems in order to support meaningful communication for all pupils. *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* has been commendably introduced in one setting. Continuing professional development (CPD) to extend the development of play-based pedagogies, which incorporate pupils' emerging interests, will promote and extend pupils as active agents in their learning.

### **2. SUPPORTING PUPILS' LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS' PRACTICE**

The quality of pupils' learning experiences in English is satisfactory. In half of the lessons observed the majority of pupils were not engaged in meaningful and purposeful learning activities and did not demonstrate appropriate levels of interest and participation in their learning. A lack of effective methods to communicate with pupils was observed in half of the settings. Almost all teachers have been provided with a range of CPD on effective behaviour management skills. All teachers should access this training. The management of pupils' behaviour presents a significant challenge for the school and in half of the lessons observed during the evaluation pupils' behaviour impacted negatively on observed teaching and learning.

A key aspect of provision is enabling pupils to access the wider community and it is highly commendable that the school regularly organises whole-school outings based on the themes of *Aistear*. Such opportunities provide meaningful and purposeful opportunities for pupils to communicate. Pupils undertake shopping trips, visit the post office, restaurants and local playgrounds.

The sensory rooms and school garden provide important and necessary experiences for pupils. While commendable efforts to create effective learning environments are ongoing, most notably classroom libraries, further development is required in order to meet the various needs of all pupils. The quality of displays in support of the learning of language should be developed. The school building's acoustic profiles are not in keeping with the needs of many of the pupils and the level of noise across the school at times impacted negatively on pupils' learning.

Overall the quality of teaching was satisfactory with elements of good and fair practice also observed. In many lessons observed much time was spent addressing behavioural issues and therefore teaching and learning time was reduced. Where aspects of teaching were effective, learning intentions were communicated clearly and the lesson was well structured allowing pupils to engage and enjoy their learning. The allocation of SEN provision is not addressing the prioritised learning needs of cohorts of pupils. SEN support should be reviewed immediately to ensure pupils with the greatest level of need receive the greatest level of support. The National Educational Psychological Support Services (NEPs) Continuum of Support should be implemented as a priority in order to provide support for pupils with SEN. At the time of the inspection IEPs were either not in place or only in draft form for pupils with SEN. Every effort should be made to ensure that IEPs are completed as early as possible in the term. The school should ensure the targets in all pupils' support plans are specific, measureable and relevant to their priority learning needs.

Assessment is satisfactory overall. Assessment practices observed ranged from weak to very good. The absence of a whole-school policy on assessment is impacting negatively on the whole-school approach to assessment. Assessment data is not used sufficiently well across the school to inform teaching and learning. A range of screening and diagnostic tests should be used for ongoing tracking of the learning achievements of pupils with SEN. Where highly effective practice was observed a systematic use of digital technology recordings, observation windows, systemic tracking of reading progression provided meaningful insights to pupil progression and achievement. A whole-school approach to assessment should be developed to monitor pupils' progress and to support planning for their future learning.

### **3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS' LEARNING**

The quality of school planning is fair. The school is without policies on provision for pupils with SEN, on assessment, or on Language and Communication. School self-evaluation is not comprehensively implemented and no resulting school improvement plan is in place. While there is a whole-school English plan, it is not reflective of the context of the school. As a recently established school, it is commendable that management has developed a strategic plan for the development and review of policies and school plans; however, the current lack of planning and policy at whole-school level have led to a significant lack of cohesion in the school's approach to the teaching and learning of English. The school should continue to seek support from the Department's support agencies in working to improve its overall provision for English.

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

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

Scoil Sinéad Ltd acknowledges receipt of, & recommendations contained in the report of the evaluation conducted in the tenth instructional week of the academic year. Pleased to work with the Inspectorate to continually work to improve the outcomes for children in our school, we note that the Inspection commended the regular, meaningful & purposeful opportunities for pupils to access the wider community which is one of our five pillars of education. We also note acknowledgement of our strategic plan for development & review of school policies and plans.

## **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 respect of the specific recommendations of the Inspectorate we wish to advise the following:

Support for children with SEN has, & continues to be reviewed to ensure the pupils with greatest need receive the greatest level of support. A formal plan in respect of SEN provision has been developed & the Continuum of Support is being fully implemented. Effective behaviour management strategies have been agreed & implemented to ensure better outcomes for all students, supported by a review of the Code of Behaviour, developing a positive behaviour management plan, significant training of all staff supported by both the Patron & the NCSE, recruitment of additional SNA support & the in house transfer to a more appropriate educational setting for one pupil. Whole school assessment duplicates the good practice observed in two settings across the whole school & formalised for guidance in an Assessment Policy specific to Scoil Sinéad National School.

Management and Teachers continue to collaborate and strive for improvement in developing school plans/policies necessary to improve pupils' learning experiences and outcomes. Training received in October 2019 led to the development of an English language curriculum plan related to the new P.L.C. The training provided by the inspectorate in late June has brought about a structured approach to S.S.E. We note & share concern 'the school's building acoustic profiles are not in keeping with the needs of many pupils and the level of noise'. This concern is shared. The building is rented by the DES & this limits the schools ability to effect change. However, we are pleased to advise that a refurbishment is due to take place in Summer 2020 and we earnestly hope that the works will address this matter.

## 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
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;