

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
English

REPORT

School name	Holy Trinity National School
School address	Glencairn Leopardstown Dublin 18
Roll number	20190T

Date of inspection: 25-10-2017



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 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

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.

Curriculum Evaluation

Date of inspection	25-10-2017
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

Holy Trinity National School is a co-educational vertical school in Glencairn, Leopardstown, Co. Dublin. The school was established in 2005 and operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin. Since opening, the school has grown rapidly; at the time of the evaluation there were 518 pupils enrolled in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- High quality learning outcomes are being achieved by pupils including pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in English.
- The quality of learner experiences is very good and pupils are given opportunities to work both collaboratively and independently on a range of meaningful and interesting tasks.
- The quality of assessment in English is commendable, with particularly effective practice noted in the assessment of reading; however, there was scope to enhance assessment of writing and of oral language.
- The quality of teaching in literacy is very good; teachers' collaborative practice is a particular strength of the school.
- The quality of planning, including School Self-Evaluation (SSE) is very good although aspects of the whole-school plan could be further embedded in classroom practice.
- The principal and management team are praised for their very effective curricular leadership.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should consider how to create stronger links between whole-school approaches and methodologies and their individual planning and practice.
- The school should now identify how assessment of writing and oral language can be more meaningfully used to inform teaching and learning experiences for pupils.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- High quality learning outcomes are being achieved by pupils, including pupils with SEN in English. Pupils present as articulate and interested learners who enjoy their learning in English. They show pride in their work and during the focus group interview they displayed positive attitudes and enthusiasm for reading and writing.
- Pupils' achievements in reading are particularly high, with pupils competently and confidently reading at their own level and applying several comprehension strategies independently. In school, pupils have access to a wide range of reading material and early reading skills are particularly strong.
- Pupils demonstrate particular interest in writing. They learn to write in a variety of genres and show good understanding of the components and associated language of genres. Spelling is well developed and pupils can competently apply a number of strategies when spelling words. Pupils learn to write in a cursive script from infant level and copybooks are well maintained. Some very effective practice was observed in developing pupils' ability to edit and revise their work, although there is scope to develop a consistent approach to this across the school.
- Pupils' oral language is well developed and they use vocabulary, particularly subject-specific vocabulary, confidently. *Aistear* effectively supports the development of pupils' early language skills. They show an interest in reciting poetry. There is scope to develop the breadth and range of poems taught across the school.

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

- The quality of learner experiences is very good. Pupils are given opportunities to work both collaboratively and independently on a range of meaningful and interesting tasks. Classroom environments are interesting and interactive places where pupil participation is prioritised. During classroom observations, pupils were very engaged in their learning and demonstrated high levels of persistence when completing assigned work.
- There is very high quality teaching in the school. Overall, teachers were clear communicators who were well prepared and reflective. They demonstrated very good understanding of how to support pupils' literacy skills and many teachers referred to the positive impact of continuing professional development (CPD) on their practice.
- Teachers utilise a number of curricular-appropriate methodologies when teaching English including teacher-modelling, information and communication technology (ICT), games, guided reading and guided discovery.
- Teachers work and plan very effectively together. A culture of collaborative planning and shared decision-making in the school leads to highly effective provision for pupils, particularly those with SEN who receive both withdrawal and in-class support.
- The quality of assessment in English is commendable. A variety of assessment tools are used to track pupils' progress including standardised test results, teacher observation, work samples and running records. Highly effective assessment practices are in place for reading where data is analysed to support differentiated teaching and learning experiences for pupils. Assessment in oral and written English is primarily used to track pupils' progress. The school should now identify how assessment of writing and oral

language can be more meaningfully used to inform teaching and learning experiences for pupils.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS' LEARNING

- School planning for English, including SSE, is of a very high quality. At management level there is a very clear understanding of the various components involved in teaching English and the principal is praised for his very effective curricular leadership. The whole-school plan for English is highly commendable. It is based on research but contextualised to the specific needs of the school. It is a flexible document reflecting current thinking about English in the school and is regularly updated.
- Considerable effort has been invested in the dissemination of the plan across the school. There are significant links between the whole-school plan and topics covered in classroom practice. However, links between methodologies and approaches to teaching English as outlined in the whole-school plan and classroom practice were not as robust. In order to further develop the effectiveness of school planning, teachers should now consider how to create stronger links between whole-school approaches and methodologies and their individual planning and practice.

5. CHILD PROTECTION

The following aspects of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools* were checked during the evaluation

1. Teachers' access to a copy of the school's Child Protection policy
2. The prominent display of the name of Designated Liaison Person near the main entrance

The school was fully compliant with both aspects.

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 welcomes the publication of this Curriculum Evaluation Report on the teaching of English in Holy Trinity NS. The Board welcomes the acknowledgement of our very high quality of literacy teaching as outlined below:

- the high quality of learning outcomes being achieved by pupils;
- the interesting, interactive and very good quality of learner experiences provided;
- the particularly effective practices in our assessment of reading;
- the particularly high pupil achievements in reading;
- the very high quality of planning and for School Self Evaluation;
- the very effective curricular leadership provided by the principal and management team.

The Board appreciates the Report's appraisal of how our teachers work and plan very effectively together, leading to our culture of collaborative planning and shared decision-making which, we agree, leads to highly effective provision for our pupils.

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 Board of Management welcomes the two recommendations made in the Report and the school is happy to adopt these. Stronger links between whole-school approaches and individual teacher planning and practice will be the focus of ongoing teacher planning and the assessment of writing and oral language is already being incorporated into the school's approach to the Primary Language Curriculum.

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 <i>very good</i> 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;