



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Curriculum Evaluation: SPHE REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Rush and Lusk Educate Together National School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Raheny Lane Rathmore Road Lusk County Dublin.
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	20176C
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	28/05/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	05/11/2025

What is a curriculum evaluation?

Curriculum evaluations report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects of the *Primary School Curriculum (1999)*, the *Primary Language Curriculum (2019)* and the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum*. 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(s) evaluated learning and teaching in **SPHE** 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">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> or <i>Bí Cineálta (2024)</i> and this policy is reviewed annually.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.

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

Curriculum evaluation

Date of inspection	27/05/2025 - 28/05/2025
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 teachers

School context

Rush and Lusk Educate Together National School operates under the patronage of Educate Together and caters for pupils from junior infants to sixth class. The school also has two special classes for pupils with autism. At the time of the evaluation, there were 414 pupils enrolled in the school. In addition to an administrative school principal, the teaching staff comprised seventeen mainstream teachers and nine special education teachers.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of the pupils' learning in Social Personal Health Education (SPHE) was very good. In the lessons observed, pupils were supported to be ready for their learning, which promoted very high levels of engagement and motivation.
- The quality of the learning experiences provided for pupils was very good. There was a whole-school positive, supportive atmosphere in place, which focused on developing all pupils' wellbeing.
- The teaching of SPHE observed during the evaluation was of a very high standard overall; teachers employed a wide range of active methodologies.
- The quality of planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE), and the contribution of the whole-school planning processes to progressing pupils' learning in SPHE, were very good.

Recommendations

- All teachers should establish a pupil portfolio system to capture their learning in SPHE. This can act as a personal aide for pupils and provide opportunities for teachers to use as a stimulus to progress pupils' incremental learning.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning outcomes

The overall quality of pupils' learning in SPHE was very good. In the lessons observed, pupils were supported to be ready for their learning. This promoted very high levels of engagement and motivation. Many pupils spoke confidently using subject-specific language and terms to express their opinions, feelings, thoughts, and to convey understanding of topics and concepts. Pupils demonstrated clearly their familiarity with the strategies taught in Stay Safe and they had a very good knowledge and understanding of various strands of the SPHE curriculum. The pupils had a well-developed understanding of their feelings and demonstrated familiarity with a range of strategies for managing feelings and emotions. Pupils could talk confidently about creating and maintaining positive relationships between each other and members of the school community. They were mindful of other pupils and listened to and respected different points of view. Teachers created opportunities for pupils to develop the social skills of co-operation and conflict resolution.

Whole-school approaches, including pupils' daily check-ins, were very well embedded in all classrooms. Learning was greatly enhanced by the meaningful opportunities provided for pupils to reflect on their learning at the end of lessons. The school has adopted a value for each month and all pupils demonstrated understanding, meaningful connections to and application of these values to their everyday lives. In the focus group carried out during the evaluation, all pupils could identify and discuss confidently the types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They demonstrated awareness of strategies needed to respond to bullying behaviour. Pupils in the special class were supported effectively to develop healthy relationships both in school and in the wider school community. The excellent use of visuals promoted independence, playful interactions and the celebration of learning.

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

The quality of the learning experiences provided for pupils was very good. Teachers were very successful in creating a positive and supportive school environment, which focused on developing all pupils' wellbeing. Pupils described their strong sense of belonging to the school community. They indicated that the school provided excellent opportunities for pupil leadership through the student council, wellbeing, and Green Flag committees. The school also has an assembly committee who actively planned, organised, presented and reviewed school assemblies with the principal. Pupil voice was given due weight, and the pupils gave examples of how their views and opinions had impacted on decision making in the school. The collaborative agreement of classroom rules further promoted pupil voice and fostered their understanding of the democratic process.

The teaching of SPHE was very good overall. Teachers employed a wide range of active-learning methodologies. Lessons were very well structured and appropriately paced. Teachers used purposeful resources to enhance the learning experience for pupils. They used a very effective range of methodologies, including circle time, drama, role-play, song, pair work, group work, scenarios, stories and games. Where best practice was observed, lessons were characterised by rich language displays, which had been constructed with pupils. Teachers' skilful facilitation of group work encouraged and supported all pupils to share, discuss, hypothesise and problem solve using subject-specific language during lessons. This best practice should be extended across the school. All pupils should be supported to contribute to their lessons through effective language supports and pair and group work approaches.

Teachers' collective practice was very effective. It was highly commendable that the school piloted a programme to support pupils' self-regulation, relationships and growth mindset. Evidence was used to support the positive impact of this programme on pupils' outcomes. All staff engaged in professional learning opportunities to extend the positive practices across the school. Other evidence-based programmes were also implemented with consistency across classes. There was high quality collaboration between the mainstream class teachers, the special class teachers and the special education teachers in supporting the wellbeing of all pupils in the school.

Teachers used a range of questioning techniques to extend the quality of pupils' responses. They placed a praiseworthy emphasis on pupils developing an understanding of themselves through peer and self-assessment. This afforded pupils the opportunity to reflect on their learning. Some teachers shared learning intentions with pupils. This should be encouraged across the school. Pupils' learning was captured through worksheets or copybooks. All teachers should establish a pupil portfolio system to capture their learning in SPHE. This would serve as a personal aide for pupils and provide opportunities for teachers to use it as a stimulus to progress pupils' incremental learning. In some settings, written feedback was provided by teachers in pupils' copybooks. As part of a whole-school approach to assessment, teachers should consistently provide constructive feedback to pupils on their learning in SPHE.

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

Whole-school planning was very effective and provided clear guidance to almost all teachers in progressing pupils' learning in SPHE. It supported the delivery of a balanced programme of learning and reflected teachers' practice in the delivery of the Stay Safe programme, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) and all three strands of the SPHE curriculum. Some pupils from the special classes were integrated into mainstream classes for SPHE lessons. It is now timely to ensure that provision for SPHE, including Stay Safe and RSE, is clearly outlined to support provision in the special classes.

Work on identifying school priorities, with a focus on wellbeing and PE, was part of the current iteration of the SSE action-planning process. A clear rationale for improvement, targets and actions was observed, and it was highly commendable that this was reflected in teachers' monthly progress reports. It was also very good practice that the school had discussed plans to build this into staff meeting discussions. Whole-staff training was provided and strategies on trauma-informed practice were in place. Targeted programmes, such as those designed to support social-emotional competence and resilience, were implemented effectively. Their selection was commendable, as it was based on the priority areas identified through the SSE process, and is now being monitored to measure its impact. Leadership, distributed leadership and the school systems implemented to support future developments in the school were very efficient and highly effective.



For the pupils of Rush and Lusk Educate Together NS about their learning in SPHE

Date of inspection: 28/05/2025

Introduction



Your school had an inspection of Social Personal Health Education (SPHE) recently. This page for pupils describes what the inspectors found and gives ideas about what the school should do to make learning better.

What did the inspectors do during the visit?



The inspectors 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(s) find?



Here are some of the main things:

- In lessons, pupils were helped to get ready for learning, which made them excited and interested.
- Teachers used lots of fun and active ways to teach.
- The whole school had a happy and supportive atmosphere, focusing on making each pupil feel good.

What the inspector(s) said the school should do to make learning better



- Each pupil should have a SPHE journal. This can help pupils remember what they've learned and give teachers ideas to help them learn even more.

Thank you for taking the time to read this page.
A special thank you to pupils who took part in the focus group.

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
Excellent	Provision that is excellent 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
Very good	Provision that is very good 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
Good	Provision that is good 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
Requires improvement to achieve a good standard	Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard 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
Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard	Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard 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

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

The school has begun to work on the recommendations.

A pupil portfolio system has been established to capture children's learning in SPHE. This will highlight progress in pupils' incremental learning.

Provision for SPHE, including stay Safe and RSE for children in the special classes will be outlined more clearly.