



An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Óige  
Department of Education  
and Youth

# Subject Inspection: English

## REPORT

|                                                       |                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ainm na scoile/School name                            | Scoil Pól                 |
| Seoladh na scoile/School address                      | Kilfinane<br>Co. Limerick |
| Uimhir rolla/Roll number                              | 64130W                    |
| Dáta na cigireachta/<br>Date of evaluation            | 03/10/2025                |
| Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/<br>Date of issue of report | 07/01/2026                |

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# What is a subject inspection?

Subject Inspections report on the quality of work in individual curriculum areas within a school. 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 English under the following headings:

1. Teaching, learning and assessment
2. Subject provision and whole-school support
3. Planning and preparation

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 subject inspection 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 on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

## 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:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
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| <i>Child Protection</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <i>Bí Cineálta</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) are prominently displayed near the main door of the school / in the reception area. <i>Following the school's adoption of the updated procedures 2025, it is also required to display a student-friendly version incorporating the name of the DLP beside the CSS.</i></li><li>2. The school's child safeguarding statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.</li><li>3. All teachers visited were aware of who to go to if they had a child protection concern.</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy using Appendix A of <i>Bí Cineálta</i>, <i>it is reviewed annually (or earlier if required) and includes a student/pupil friendly version that is displayed where students/pupils and the school community can see it.</i></li><li>2. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, staff, parents and students/pupils.</li><li>3. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides an update to the board at each ordinary board meeting that meets the requirements of <i>Bí Cineálta</i></li></ol> |

The school met all the requirements in relation to child protection checks.

The school met the requirements in relation to check 2 and 3 of the anti-bullying checks above. The school did not meet the requirements in relation to check 1 of the anti-bullying checks. However, the school has since met the requirements of check 1.

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# Subject inspection

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| Date of inspection                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 03/10/2025                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review of relevant documents</li><li>Discussion with principal and key staff</li><li>Interaction with students, including a focus group</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Observation of teaching and learning during 8 lessons</li><li>Examination of students' work</li><li>Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul> |

## School context

Scoil Pól is a co-educational Catholic voluntary secondary school. The school is under the trusteeship of the Le Chéile Schools Trust. At the time of the evaluation the school had an enrolment of 716 students. It offered the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year programme (TY), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), and the Leaving Certificate (Established) (LCE).

## Summary of main findings and recommendations:

### Findings

- The overall standard of teaching, learning and assessment was very good. This included examples of excellent practice.
- There was very good use of digital technology across the English department, including its use to support the modelling of writing.
- There were a number of instances where the English department demonstrated a thoughtful approach to the selection of texts, with a number of unusual and worthwhile choices.
- There was very good subject provision and whole-school support for English.
- An attractive library space had been developed with a wide range of texts available.
- The overall standard of planning and preparation was very good; lessons were carefully prepared and transacted smoothly.

### Recommendations

- Descriptors of students' achievement in classroom-based assessments (CBAs) should be communicated to them and their parents as soon as possible following the holding of the relevant subject learning and assessment review (SLAR) meeting.
- In the context of good work already evident in the subject plan, adjustments to the schemes of work which are outlined in this report should be undertaken to further support student learning and assessment.

## Detailed findings and recommendations

### 1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The overall standard of teaching, learning and assessment was very good. This included examples of excellent practice. Relationships between teachers and students were very good, while classroom management was of a very high standard.
- The learning underway in lessons was clear and this was frequently underpinned by very good use of learning intentions. In one instance, further clarity with regard to the role different texts might play in students' certificate examinations could have been of benefit.

- Digital technology was a frequent feature of English lessons observed. This included very regular use of the school's digital learning platform. In the focus group, students were positive regarding this aspect of the department's work. Particularly good practice was observed where student work was submitted to a teacher through the digital platform and feedback was subsequently provided in written format. The use of oral feedback through the digital platform also formed part of some teachers' practice. This was worthwhile, both as a means of saving time on assessing students' work, but also because it had the potential to enhance the impact of teachers' feedback for students. In another instance, a teacher modelled writing in a particular genre, while students supported the editing and redrafting of the teacher's work. This was exemplary practice.
- Groupwork and pair work were frequently observed. This added to students' enjoyment of lessons and students engaged with this work enthusiastically. On occasion, the possibility of 'flipping' a lesson, so that students' inputs were sought prior to the teacher input was suggested. As a further development of the department's approach to the teaching of oral language, it is suggested that a common approach to this area from first year might be explored so that there is consistency in how students approach both exploratory and presentational talk.
- Reading activities frequently featured in English lessons. Very good practice was observed where teachers used comprehension strategies to further expand students' understanding. These included guided reading, prediction, visualisation, and notemaking activities. Consideration by the department of how these might be organically highlighted to students as skills they are learning would be worthwhile.
- Writing was regularly assigned to students and formative feedback was evident. Students in the focus group were familiar with the process writing approach. To further underpin students' learning in this regard, the development of a writing collection should be included as a key strategy in the English department and reflected in the department's common schemes of work. This will consolidate much of the very good work underway, while also highlighting the skills necessary for the development of students' writing.
- In a number of instances, classroom environments were of a very high standard, with a particularly well-thought-out approach incorporated in the school library, which was used as an English classroom. In these instances, variously, there was an emphasis on subject-specific vocabulary, motivational posters, synonyms and other supports for the study of English. English teachers did not have baserooms, which made the development of print-rich environments in other classrooms challenging. However, an English 'hub' had been created in a new part of the building. In this context, the department is encouraged to consider ways in which these classrooms might be further used to support English, particularly in the area of vocabulary displays.

## 2. Subject provision and whole-school support

- There was very good subject provision and whole-school support for English. Timetabled provision for English was very good. This included concurrent timetabling for classes in a number of year groups which facilitated movement between levels for students.
- It was positive to note that classes in first year and in second year were of mixed ability. This was generally also the case for classes in third year, although an ordinary level class group had been created to support particular needs as a once-off measure. TY classes were of mixed ability, while fifth-year and sixth-year class groups were formed on the basis of mixed ability within levels.
- CBAs were completed and SLAR meetings were held by the department. It was notable that the record of the most recent SLAR meeting in English incorporated a focus on professional learning, alongside the discussion of descriptors to be awarded to students' work. This was positive and this focus on professional learning as a key aspect of SLAR meetings should be maintained. Teachers communicated formative feedback to their students following assessment of their CBAs.

- At the time of the evaluation, descriptors for students' achievement in their CBAs were not communicated to the students and their parents until they received their overall junior cycle examination results in TY. This approach should be adjusted so that descriptors are communicated to students and their parents as soon as possible following the holding of the relevant SLAR meeting. In addition, the awarding of students' Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) should form part of a celebratory event in their TY as it will appropriately mark the end of their junior cycle journey and all its different learning elements.
- The school had focused on wellbeing as part of its school self-evaluation process and this was reflected in the English subject plan. A new focus for SSE was in the process of being identified. The English department was well-placed to engage with new developments in teaching and learning on a whole-school basis through SSE.
- English teachers visited during the evaluation were clear with regard to the specific needs of different students in their classrooms. In addition, it was positive to note that there was acknowledgement in the subject plan of the need to cater for students who were undertaking L2LPs. Going forward, where such students are included in mainstream class groups, the department should consider the inclusion of learning outcomes from relevant Priority Learning Units (PLUs) in its common schemes of work.
- An attractive library had been developed which presented as a 'different' space. The library was open to students at lunchtime and was also used as a support for a creative writing club. The English department was also considering the introduction of a book-sharing app through the public library service as a further addition to library services for students.

### 3. Planning and preparation

- The overall standard of planning and preparation was very good. All lessons were carefully prepared and transacted smoothly in classrooms.
- Substantial work had been undertaken in developing a subject plan for English. Particular good practice was observed where the department had identified short, medium and long-term goals, including plans regarding the setting of homework to best facilitate student needs, and approaches to artificial intelligence. This action plan approach should continue and, ultimately, engage with whole-school SSE as one of its focus points each year.
- In addition, the department had developed time-linked common schemes of work. In junior cycle these schemes of work were unit-based. In the context of this good work, a number of adjustments to the schemes are recommended. The number of learning outcomes linked to each unit should be limited so that the key learning from each unit of work is identified, while learning intentions for units should be delineated. While common assessment tasks had been identified at the end of units, these should now be collaboratively designed so that they link clearly to the key learning for the unit and are supported by agreed common success criteria, while their design should also incorporate specific elements indicating purpose and audience. Such exercises should form part of students' collection of texts from first year and undergo a draft/redraft process leading to 'publication' in the collection, following feedback. Students' collection of texts could then be retained on the digital learning platform to develop over their junior cycle.
- Comprehensive schemes of work had been developed for fifth year and sixth year and for LCA English and Communications.
- A very good scheme of work had been developed for TY, incorporating an interesting range of texts, along with clear learning outcomes and links to an eportfolio of work. The use of an eportfolio specific to English was very worthwhile and was viewed as a core element of students' writing and oral work in TY, forming an element in students' overall marks for the year in English.
- There were a number of instances where the English department displayed a thoughtful approach to the selection of texts for students to study with a number of unusual and

worthwhile choices. In the context of the collegial and collaborative culture which was evident in the department, it is suggested that approaches to drama and fiction might be discussed, so that new ideas and best practice can be shared between teachers.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.



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For the students of **Scoil Pól** about their  
learning in **English**

Date of inspection:

03/10/2025

### What kind of inspection did your school have?



A subject inspection was completed in your school. The inspector observed lessons and spoke with the principal and teachers. The inspector met with a group of students to talk to them about their learning in **English**.

### What were the main findings of the inspection?



- The overall standard of teaching and learning was very good.
- A thoughtful approach was adopted by English teachers in choosing interesting texts for their students to study.
- An attractive library space had been developed.

### What did the inspector recommend to make teaching and learning better in **English**?



- Students should be given the descriptors for their CBAs more rapidly following their completion.
- Teachers should adjust some aspects of their planning.

Thank you for taking the time to read this page.  
Special thanks to the students who participated 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                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Excellent</b>                                                   | <b>Provision that is excellent</b> 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                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Very good</b>                                                   | <b>Provision that is very good</b> 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                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Good</b>                                                        | <b>Provision that is good</b> 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                    |
| <b>Requires improvement to achieve a good standard</b>             | <b>Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard</b> 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 |
| <b>Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard</b> | <b>Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard</b> 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        |