

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	S N Naomh Colmain
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Clarach Higginstown Co Kilkenny
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	16116I

Date of inspection: 23-01-2019



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

WHAT IS WHOLE- EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING?

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning reports on the quality of teaching and learning and on the quality of management and leadership in a school. It affirms good practice and makes recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of educational provision in the school.

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.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector(s) evaluated and reported under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

1. The quality of pupils' learning
2. The quality of teaching
3. The quality of support for pupils' well-being
4. The quality of leadership and management
5. The quality of school self-evaluation

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.

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.
4. The Child Safeguarding Statement meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.
5. The records of the last three board of management meetings record a child protection oversight report that meet the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2017.
6. The board of management has ensured that arrangements are in place to provide information to all school personnel on the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2017
7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE, Wellbeing).
8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.

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

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

Dates of inspection	21-01-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meetings with principal and in-school leadership team• Meeting with representatives of the board of management• Meeting with parent representatives• Meeting with teachers• Review of relevant documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives

CONTEXT

Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Colmain is located in Clara, Co. Kilkenny. It is a rural, mainstream co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ossory with eight mainstream class teachers and two special education teachers. 216 pupils are enrolled in the school and pupil attendance is very good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning is of a very high standard and pupils demonstrate notable attainment, motivation and enthusiasm for learning.
- Very high levels of pupil participation during Irish lessons were observed during the evaluation; there is scope to extend these notable practices.
- The quality of teaching overall is commendable with exemplary practice observed; there is scope to develop a more systematic approach to the teaching and assessment of writing genres and comprehension strategies.
- Support for pupil well-being is of a very high standard, with a warm, inclusive and supportive atmosphere evident in the school; very effective strategies are in place to address pupils' social, emotional and behavioural needs in mainstream and SEN classes.
- The quality of school management and leadership is very good; an orderly, structured learning environment is evident.
- The quality of school self-evaluation is very good; it is embedded with great success and is clearly visible in pupil learning outcomes and pupil learning experiences in problem solving and handwriting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A whole-school approach to the teaching and assessment of genre writing and comprehension skills should be developed to ensure consistent learning experiences and learning outcomes for all pupils.
- Pupil participation should be further extended through the provision of regular group work, pair work, team teaching, self-assessment, and opportunities for pupil leadership within the school community.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupil learning is of a very good standard; pupils demonstrate very high attainment in reading, numeracy and Irish. Pupils are very motivated to learn and they show very positive attitudes to all tasks assigned. In the lessons observed, the learning outcomes were achieved and, in many lessons, surpassed expectations.
- *Tá muinín d'ardchaigheán as an ngnáth ag na daltaí i labhairt na Gaeilge. Tá na daltaí in ann abairtí a chumadh, ceisteanna a chur agus a fhreagairt, agus briathra a láimhseáil. Is léir go bhfuil dul chun cinn san fhoghlaim ó rang go rang. Tugtar faoi deara an-chuid rannpháirtíocht le linn na ceachtanna Gaeilge.*
- Pupils' confidence in speaking Irish is of an exceptionally high standard. They can construct sentences, pose and answer questions and use verbs correctly. Progression of learning from class level to class level is evident. Notably, high levels of pupil participation were observed in Irish lessons.
- Pupils show high levels of competence and progression in problem solving in Mathematics. They generate and discuss problems across all strands of the curriculum with ease and engage enthusiastically with mental Mathematics both individually and collaboratively.
- Pupils read fluently and demonstrate well developed phonological awareness. While pupils engage in functional writing consistently with very high quality handwriting observed in all settings, further consideration should be given to ensuring pupils have consistent learning outcomes in genre writing and comprehension strategies.
- Knowledge of local history and geography is of a particularly high quality.
- Pupils have very good recall of previous learning and copybooks are very well maintained with pupils demonstrating very high levels of consistency in recording their learning.
- The quality of the pupil's artwork, poetry, song singing, drama and instrumental playing is noteworthy.
- Interactions between teachers and pupils and among pupils in all settings is very positive and respectful. While pupils are very confident at contributing their opinions to teachers' questions, further scope exists for pupils to ask questions, work in pairs, work collaboratively, and discuss their learning in all lessons.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching is commendable with exemplary practice observed during the evaluation. Teachers were very well prepared for all lessons observed. High expectations for all pupils are evident. Lessons are well-structured and paced appropriately. Classroom displays are stimulating and supported pupil learning. In the most effective lessons, modelling of group activities, pair work and guided discovery were evident. Where teachers relied solely on whole class instruction and teacher-led questioning, pupils' participation in the learning was reduced. The school should systematically introduce an agreed range of pupil-led collaborative teaching approaches which maximise pupil opportunities to actively engage in lessons.
- Support for pupils with SEN is provided through a combination of in-class support and withdrawal. Support is provided in an exceptionally warm and caring environment. Guided discovery methods and the effective use of concrete materials are evident. Pupils engage in meaningful activities and can discuss their learning and progress. All pupils have support plans. Clear learning targets are provided in Mathematics. A more consistent approach to the use of diagnostic information to set measurable targets in literacy and record pupil progress is required.

- *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is implemented effectively in infant classes to support the promotion of the pupils' social, language and communication skills.
- The school is praised for the recent introduction of guided reading. High levels of pupil engagement and enjoyment were observed during guided reading. During these lessons, pupils read differentiated texts and class novels. Teachers' focus on the explicit teaching of comprehension skills is commended. Practices in team teaching in Mathematics are at a developmental stage. In order to enhance provision, the school should develop collaborative planning based on learning outcomes and use pre and post assessment. Practices should then be reviewed to identify the most effective approaches with a view to extending and embedding effective practices across all settings.
- The quality of assessment is good. Highly effective tracking and monitoring of pupil attainment in Mathematics, Irish and English reading is in place. Formative feedback is used in some settings. Classroom based, pre and post learning assessments are used in some settings to identify gaps in pupil learning and plan for teaching; these practices should be extended. The school should also investigate how to include peer- and self-assessment to all lessons in order to increase pupils' ability to reflect on their learning.

3. THE QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELL-BEING

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is very good. A wide range of competitive and non-competitive, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities is in place. Pupils demonstrate highly commendable pride in their school community and wider locality. Very strong links between professional agencies, sporting organisations and parents are fostered. Parental questionnaires indicate that all parents agree there is a good atmosphere in the school, that the school is well run, and consider that their child is doing well in school. All staff demonstrate high levels of commitment to the holistic development of the pupils in their care. Pupil questionnaires indicate that all children feel safe in their class and almost all indicate that this is a good school. A majority of pupils do not think, or do not know if they have a say in how things are done in the school. In order to enhance the very good provision for pupil well-being, the school should investigate and implement structures to facilitate authentic pupil-voice and opportunities for pupil leadership within the school community.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The overall quality of leadership and management in the school is very good. The board of management is highly committed to the development and maintenance of the school. The chairperson is a regular visitor to the school. The board complies with current legislative responsibilities; it meets regularly and works effectively to support the school. The issuing of an annual report is commended. While the board is involved in policy development, there is scope to increase parental input at the policy formation stage.
- The principal manages and leads the school very effectively. He is very committed to leading, maintaining and improving standards of pupil learning. Teachers are praised for their high level of team work and collegiality which enhance the work of the school considerably.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The overall quality of school self-evaluation is very good. Hand writing and problem solving were identified as areas for improvement. There is ample evidence in classrooms and in the wider school community of agreed actions having a positive impact on pupil learning outcomes and pupil learning experiences. Consideration should be given to providing further opportunity to reflect on strengths and identify areas for improvement in teaching and

learning among all stakeholders. Teaching and pupils' learning experiences should be considered alongside pupils' learning outcomes in any area identified for improvement.

Appendix

TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management welcomes this very positive affirmation of the learning, teaching, management and leadership in our school.

We are particularly pleased that the inspectorate observed, evaluated and confirmed that:

- The quality of pupils' learning is of a very high standard and pupils learning outcomes in many lessons often exceed expectations
- The overall quality of teaching is commendable with exemplary practice observed and the teachers' high level of team work and collegiality enhances the work of the school considerably
- Support for pupil well-being is of a very high standard, with a warm, inclusive and supportive atmosphere evident in the school and interactions between teachers and pupils and among pupils in all settings are very positive and respectful
- Parental questionnaires indicate that all parents agree there is a good atmosphere in the school, the school is well run, and consider that their child is doing well in school.
- Very strong links with our parents are cultivated. The Board regards the support of the Parents Association as a very significant strength of our school community
- School self-evaluation projects have been incorporated successfully
- The management and leadership of the school continuously encourages the development of the school environs and promotes high expectations and high standards of learning for all pupils to reach their full potential

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 Inspectorate has noted that the pupils demonstrate very high attainment in reading and engage consistently in functional writing with very high quality handwriting observed in all settings. In line with the recommendations and to further enhance pupil learning, a whole-school approach to the teaching and assessment of genre writing and comprehension skills will now be developed to ensure consistent learning experiences and learning outcomes for all pupils.
- The inspectorate has confirmed that the quality of pupils' learning is of a very high standard and pupils demonstrate notable attainment, motivation and enthusiasm for learning. Very high levels of pupil participation during Irish lessons were observed during the evaluation. In line with the recommendations and in order to extend these notable practices, pupil participation will be further extended through the provision of regular group work, pair work, team teaching and self-assessment. There will also be opportunities provided for pupil leadership within the school community.

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 of quality 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;