

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Sn Oilibhéar Naofa
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Béal Átha Longphuirt Co Chiarraí
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	19492F

Date of inspection: 04-12-2018



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WHAT IS WHOLE-SCHOOL 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.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector 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.

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.

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.
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	04-12-2018
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 teachers• Review of relevant documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of parent and questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers, and to board of management representatives

SCHOOL CONTEXT

SN Oilibhéar Naofa, Ballylongford is a Catholic, co-educational mainstream school. School staff consists of three mainstream class teachers and one education support teacher. There are 68 pupils enrolled in the school and pupil attendance is very good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning across the curriculum areas evaluated is generally very good; increased focus on enabling pupils to read at age-appropriate levels would enhance provision in English reading.
- Very high quality teaching was observed in all lessons observed but the organisation of support for pupils with special education needs merits review.
- While the quality of assessment is good, there is a need to extend assessment practices to each curriculum area and to further promote pupil self-assessment.
- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is very good and the school is highly praised for the active promotion of pupil voice.
- Very high quality practices are evident in the leadership and management of the school.
- School self-evaluation practices are very successfully embedded in the school and have the explicit purpose of improving the quality of pupils' experiences and attainment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Age-appropriate reading texts should be provided for pupils for longer periods of the school year.
- The organisation of support for pupils with special education needs should be reconfigured to ensure that, where appropriate, the needs of these pupils are met within the classroom context.
- Current assessment practices should be reviewed to ensure assessment of pupil progress across the curriculum and the further promotion of pupil self-assessment.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The quality of pupils' learning across the curriculum areas evaluated is generally very good. Pupils' understanding is clearly reflected in their ability to question, in their responses to questions and in their oral and written work. They display the capacity to use higher-order thinking skills and apply what they have learned in a variety of contexts. Carefully judged provision is made for individuals and groups of pupils with differing aptitudes. This ensures that pupils are challenged at an appropriate level and are making incremental progress in their learning commensurate with their abilities.

Pupil attainment in literacy is very good. Pupils communicate confidently and competently in both English and Irish. Samples of their written work reflect the very high standards that they have achieved. However, the further promotion of independent and creative writing in Irish is advised. Pupils read new and unfamiliar texts with fluency and understanding with some scope to develop their accuracy when reading in Irish. In all classes, pupils are awarded the opportunity to read texts at age-appropriate levels; the extension of this practice for longer periods is recommended.

In Mathematics, pupils' attainment is of a very high quality. They are accurate at computation work and they can discuss, analyse and solve a range of mathematical problems in each of the strands.

Pupils' work in Arts education, Social, Environmental, Scientific Education (SESE), Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) illustrates very good learning outcomes. Pupils display a commendable ability to use critical thinking skills to solve problems and construct new meanings and understanding. They are encouraged to express views, share ideas and knowledge and are provided with contexts for learning which include creative and investigative activities. Personal and creative responses are encouraged in the Visual Arts, musical performances are of an exceptionally high quality and pupils have regular opportunities to engage in purposeful drama activities. The local environment and the expertise of community personnel are utilised to very good effect to promote and extend pupils' learning in History, Geography and Science.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

The quality of teaching in the lessons observed is very high. There is a strong sense of care and purpose in the classrooms and teachers are affirming and encouraging in their interactions with pupils. The learning environment, both indoor and outdoor, is very well laid out to ensure safe, pleasant and stimulating surroundings. Displays of pupils' work feature prominently throughout the school and attest to the high standards expected and achieved.

Teachers in all settings plan and prepare very well for their lessons. They ensure that the content, teaching approaches, learning tasks, activities and resources provided support and challenge the diversity of pupils' learning needs. Pupils with additional learning needs are very well-supported through purposeful differentiated activities which enable them to engage with lesson content and to experience success. Teachers ensure that pupils master basic concepts and skills before moving on to the next steps of learning so that they can use these skills and competencies to access other areas of the curriculum. Under the teachers' careful guidance, the pupils are developing their skills of working independently and are skilfully facilitated to work with others in collaborative learning activities.

Pupils with special education needs are very well supported. Individual education plans are carefully and collaboratively drafted and clearly outline the nature of pupils' learning difficulties, specific teaching and learning targets and timescales for review. The organisation of support for pupils, however, merits review. Consideration should be given to addressing the needs of these pupils in a variety of ways and in a manner that is not reliant on withdrawal from class for one-to-one tuition. It is recommended that the configuration of support be reviewed and that, where appropriate, the needs of these children should be met within the context of the classroom through focused intervention. As necessary, this can be combined with withdrawal for intensive teaching of specific skills, based on level of need.

The quality of assessment of pupil learning is good. Teachers effectively use a range of approaches to evaluate the quality of pupils' learning outcomes and to improve teaching. Pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy is tracked but there is scope to develop the assessment of their progress in other curriculum areas. There is a need also to further promote pupils' assessment of their own learning and progress so that they are clear about their strengths and the steps that they need to take to improve.

3. THE QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELLBEING

The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is very good. A very orderly, secure and healthy learning atmosphere is created throughout the school. High expectations of the pupils' behaviour and engagement in learning are set. Classroom routines are organised very efficiently and interactions with teachers and between pupils are respectful and affirming. In responses to questionnaires issued, almost all parent agree that the school helps their child's social and personal development and that they know who to talk to if they have a problem.

The school is highly praised for the organisation of a very wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities for pupils. They are facilitated to explore themes such as enterprise, citizenship, sustainable development and healthy life styles through their engagement in a wide range of initiatives. This has contributed greatly to their sense of self-worth and their capacity to become active and responsible citizens in society.

Pupil voice is purposefully developed. Their involvement in various committees has enabled them to make a positive contribution to the life of the school and its community and to develop the ability to represent various view-points. Their views are regularly sought in regard to school improvement initiatives and they are encouraged to play a meaningful part in their community.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Very high quality practices are evident in the leadership and management of the school. The board of management works in a highly effective manner and is praised for the systematic approach it takes to ensuring very high quality provision for the pupils. School policies and plans are cyclically reviewed following discussion. The board is advised however, to prepare a budget to assist them in the future management of the school's financial resources. Responses to questionnaires issued to parents indicate that almost all agree that the school is well run and that they their child is doing well.

A very active parents' association is highly supportive of the school. High quality monthly newsletters keep parents informed of the work of the association, the board and the school.

The principal's work in leading and managing the school is highly effective. She exemplifies excellent professional standards and sets high expectations for the staff and the pupils. The in-school leadership team has a very clear and purposeful range of duties which they discharge in a very efficient manner. Together with the principal, they collaboratively place a focus on leading improvement and innovation and building and sustaining a positive school climate.

The school regularly provides placements for student teachers. This engagement in initial teacher education programmes is highly praised and provides valuable professional benefits to teachers, student teachers, pupils and the teacher education institution.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

School self-evaluation practices are very successfully embedded in this school. Teachers meet regularly and work collaboratively to bring about improvement in pupil learning outcomes, experiences and teachers' practice. Improvement plans are drafted annually. These plans outline clear actions to be taken to ensure effective implementation of targets set and they are reviewed regularly and systematically. Successful initiatives are embedded in teachers' practice and are impacting very positively on raising of pupil attainment. Continuous professional opportunities are identified and availed of to support the implementation of the improvement plan.

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;

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 of St. Oliver's N. S. welcomes this very positive WSE-MLL Report. It is pleased that the report acknowledges:

- the very high quality of teaching that exists in the school
- the effectiveness of management and leadership in the school
- the value the school places on pupil participation and well-being
- the successful use of School Self-Evaluation practices in improving the quality of pupil experiences and attainment.

The Board of Management also confirms the report's praise for the importance of the very active parents' association which is highly supportive of the school.

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 is happy to oversee the implementation of the recommendations made by the Inspectorate.

The school is committed to introducing new age-appropriate reading texts in a phased basis over the coming three years. The board is committed to making funds available for this. Suitable material is being assessed presently by staff.

The timetable for pupils with special educational needs has been reviewed and following consultation with parents, the needs of pupils will be met where it is beneficial within the classroom context going forward. At all times, decisions will be made with the best interests of the pupils being paramount.

Assessment strategies will be reviewed to ensure pupils are assessed across the curriculum. CPD will be sought if deemed necessary. New changes will be added to the School Assessment policy.