



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Whole School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	S N Naomh Iosef
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Ardkill Templeboy Co. Sligo
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	18592E
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	25/01/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	11/06/2024

What is a 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(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' wellbeing
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.

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>
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 (revised 2023). 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 (revised 2023).	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. 3. The school has appropriate initiatives in place to promote a positive and inclusive school culture and environment in line with their current policy. 4. All teachers visited report that they have read the school's current policy on anti-bullying and that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities in preventing and tackling bullying.

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, (revised 2023). 7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE). 8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.	
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Whole-school evaluation – management, leadership and learning

Date of inspection	25/01/2024
Inspection activities undertaken • 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 • Pupil focus group	• Analysis of parent and pupil questionnaires • Observation of teaching and learning • Examination of pupils' work • Interaction with pupils • Feedback to principal, deputy principal and board of management representative

School context

St. Joseph's National School is a co-educational, rural primary school located in Templeboy, approximately four kilometres from Dromore West, Co. Sligo. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Killala. At the time of the evaluation, it had two mainstream class teachers, including the teaching principal based in the school. It also had the services of two part-time special education teachers (SETs), based elsewhere, who provided support to pupils with special and additional learning needs. There were 41 pupils enrolled in the school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of pupils' learning was excellent.
- The overall quality of teaching was excellent.
- The school provided very high quality support for pupils' wellbeing.
- The overall quality of leadership and management was very good.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) was very good.

Recommendations

- The in-school management should provide parents and pupils with greater opportunities to input into policy development and the school self-evaluation process.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

- The overall quality of pupils' learning was excellent. Pupils demonstrated exceptional levels of engagement in their learning. They were highly motivated and co-operated enthusiastically with a range of challenging and purposeful learning tasks. They had developed a sense of ownership for their learning and were able to reflect on and recall their learning across different subject areas competently and confidently.
- In English, the evidence from assessment data showed that most pupils were functioning at well above average levels in reading. Additionally, results indicated that most pupils were achieving well above average in spelling.
- Pupils used digital technologies frequently, adeptly, independently and collaboratively to enhance their learning across many curricular areas. They undertook numerous projects

in a variety of subject areas. They engaged collaboratively with peers and presented their finished projects to the other pupils in the school. A number of senior pupils have undertaken coding classes online and have presented their learning to other pupils, and to the parent body.

- Classroom libraries were well stocked with age-appropriate reading materials in a variety of genres. In the junior classroom, pupils used picture books and other high quality books very successfully to practise and demonstrate their knowledge of comprehension strategies. In the senior end, pupils read a range of novels and engaged in group discussions and both oral and written review of the materials. Reading for pleasure was extensively promoted across the school. Pupils expressed themselves in an engaging and assured manner and were able to recall their learning in poetry very competently.
- Pupils produced samples of genre writing of an exceptionally high standard. They had regular opportunities to engage in writing activities in other subject areas that developed their creative aspects of writing. They were able to describe the various writing genres very competently. The overall quality of pupils' copybooks was exemplary in terms of presentation and handwriting.
- *B'inmholta go mór gnóthachtáil na ndaltaí san éisteacht, sa ghramadach, sna briathra agus san fhoclóir sa Ghaeilge. Bhí eolas na ndaltaí ar ghnéithe áirithe den ghramadach eiseachtúil. Bhí cumas as cuimse acu ag freagairt ó bhéal do pháipéar neamhfheicthe ar réim theanga an-ard. D'fheagair siad na ceisteanna go léir ar an dtéacs dúshlánach go hinniúil agus léirigh siad tuiscint thar an ngnáth ar an bhfoclóir agus ar an ngramadach a bhain leis.* Pupils' attainment in listening, grammar, verbs and vocabulary in Irish was highly commendable. Their knowledge of some aspects of grammar was exceptional. Their ability to respond to an exceptionally high standard of an unseen script in Irish was outstanding. They answered all questions related to the challenging text very capably and they demonstrated their understanding of the vocabulary, grammar and verbs to a very high standard.
- In numeracy, the problem-solving strategies used by pupils had very significant strengths. Their recall of facts and familiarity with mathematical language was exceptional. They understood mathematical concepts across various strands and strand units of the curriculum. Their daily engagement with mental maths activities and online devices has supported them significantly to attain and retain the exemplary standard evident in the classroom. Analysis of pupils' assessments in Mathematics indicated that most children were achieving well-above average.

2. The quality of teaching

- The overall quality of the observed teaching was exemplary. All lessons observed were exceptionally well structured. The quality of questioning to elicit information and extend pupils' understanding and thinking was outstanding. All teachers displayed remarkable classroom management skills where pupils were at ease in an environment that supported them in their learning. Teachers' modelling of language across subject areas was notable.
- Teachers created pupil-centred, stimulating learning environments based on mutual trust where pupils worked at their assigned tasks and accessed supports around the room, as required. Their levels of preparation for teaching was outstanding, which included visible charts and prompts and exceptionally clear recorded preparation.
- Displays in all classrooms served to scaffold and demonstrate learning across the strands. The provision of a thematically integrated learning environment in the junior classroom was very useful as pupils had opportunities to engage with the prepared resources at intervals throughout the day.
- The overall quality of assessment was of an exceptionally high standard. A wide variety of assessments was used to track progress and inform students' progression in their learning. Work in all copybooks was carefully monitored and analysed by teachers.

Results of daily mental mathematical activities were recorded and reviewed and compared with other test results and standardised tests in Mathematics.

- The overall quality of support for pupils was of a very high standard. Support teachers maintained excellent progress records. Activities were focused and appropriate for the pupils' level of understanding and skills.

3. The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing

- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing was very good. The teachers organised numerous educational trips for their pupils which included historical tours, environmental and science field trips, theatre visits, school tours and football blitzes to supplement their learning in a variety of curricular areas. They also organised in-school events, including visitors to the school, to complement and enhance their school experiences.
- The respectful interactions and mutual respect evident between pupils and teachers and among pupils themselves was highly commendable. Pupils displayed exceptional patience and listening skills when peers were recounting learning or responding to questioning throughout the evaluation. The positive atmosphere in classrooms was excellent and was supported by an orderly, secure learning environment. In the focus group, some pupils expressed a view that they would like to work on projects individually, at times, rather than working collaboratively.
- Teachers working with the senior pupils had promoted and facilitated the development of pupil voice by seeking their views within the classroom and also by developing the role of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) ambassador for a number of senior pupils. The school should explore how the pupil voice could be further enhanced.
- Pupils in the focus-group meeting reported that all pupils were included in school activities. All the pupils who completed the pupil survey confirmed that their opinions were listened to in the school, that the pupils in their class treated everybody with respect and that the adults in the school treated everybody with respect. This concurred with the parental survey where all parents confirmed that their child was treated fairly and respectfully in the school. They all noted that the school was well run, that there was a good atmosphere in the school and that the school helped their child's social and personal development.

4. The quality of leadership and management

- The overall quality of leadership and management was very good. The board of management has provided very well-maintained teaching and learning spaces throughout the school building. It has also delivered excellent outdoor facilities to facilitate pupils participating in a wide choice of physical activities. The provision of an impressive range of equipment in a highly organised manner to support the implementation of Physical Education (PE) was highly commendable.
- The board of management met regularly and was very supportive of staff. The parents who attended a meeting as part of the inspection highly commended the pupils' ability to make presentations and the exceptional manner in which the school operates.
- The principal has undertaken all her administrative duties to an exceptionally high standard. She has been ably supported in her role by a highly committed deputy principal who undertakes a wide range of duties.
- The school website has provided a platform for very good communication between home and school. Pupils' activities were celebrated and policies were made available to the school community. These policies were developed to a very high standard.
- In parental surveys, the majority of parents confirmed that parents' views on school matters were sought. The review of policies should involve the meaningful participation and voice of all relevant parties, including parents and pupils. It is recommended that parents should be provided with greater opportunities to input into policy development.

- The school commendably engaged with Initial Teacher Education colleges and provided placement for student teachers.

5. The quality of school self-evaluation

- The overall quality of school self-evaluation was very good. Teachers devised a school improvement plan outlining targets in literacy and numeracy, wellbeing and leadership and management. They outlined their improvement targets very clearly, the required actions to implement them and the success criteria to measure their successful implementation. The actions documented were reflected in the work in classrooms and the school had achieved many of these targets. The plan challenged the staff to be self-reflective and the measurable outcomes in question format facilitated the teachers in outlining the impact of the plan.
- The parents who met with the inspector as part of the evaluation were unfamiliar with the school self-evaluation process. However, the school improvement plan (SIP) was shared with the parent community on the school website in the previous school term. Therefore, the school should develop structures for parents and pupils to have input into the systematic development, review and discussion of school self-evaluation work on a regular basis.

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 S N Naomh Iosef is extremely satisfied with the outcome of the WSE/MLL Inspection and are pleased that the excellent quality of our pupils' learning was affirmed. Our teaching staff work diligently in the knowledge that exceptional levels of engagement in the learning process coupled with enthusiastic cooperation with challenging and purposeful learning tasks, as exhibited by our pupils, facilitate their ownership of the learning process and their ability to competently and confidently recall their learning across different subject areas.

The exemplary quality of the observed teaching, the outstanding quality of questioning and remarkable classroom management skills, as noted in the report, reflect the extraordinary commitment and dedication of our teaching staff and their firm belief in outstanding levels of preparation to ensure the provision of well-structured lessons.

The highly commendable quality of support for pupils' wellbeing, respectful interactions and our pupils' ability to display exceptional patience and listening skills when peers are recounting learning or responding to questioning is indicative of the positive atmosphere and orderly, secure learning environments which have been created in our school.

The recognition of high-quality leadership and management is testament to the collaborative culture within our school and the importance attached to the provision of very well-maintained teaching and learning spaces.

The highly-effective practice noted in SSE is welcome as it reflects our belief in the SSE as a collaborative, inclusive process which aims to bring about school improvements through dialogue to elicit clear targets and required actions, followed by a process of collective review, and self-reflection.

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

We believe in the importance of collaboration and dialogue between all stakeholders in our school in the knowledge that such collaboration helps to facilitate the provision of supportive learning environments in addition to fostering a sense of shared responsibility and ownership.

To provide parents with greater opportunities to input into policy development and the school self-evaluation process, we will encourage parents to view relevant draft policies on our school website and to provide any relevant feedback through the school website or through communications with staff. As appropriate, we will invite parents to complete relevant surveys or feedback forms. If sufficient interest is shown, we will conduct focus group sessions or information sessions with parents during which we will encourage parents to share their insights, and actively get involved in shaping our future policies.

To provide pupils with greater opportunities to input into policy development and the school self-evaluation process, as appropriate, we will use informal and formal classroom discussions, surveys, suggestion boxes and pupil focus groups to gather pupil ideas, and their feedback on school policies and educational experiences.

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