

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil Barr Dubh
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Barraduff Headford Co. Kerry
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	05970M

Date of inspection: 21-03-2019



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

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	19 th March – 21 st March 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 and pupil questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Barr Dubh is one of four Catholic, mainstream schools in the parish of Glenflesk. It has a staffing of four mainstream teachers and two special education teachers, one of whom is shared with a neighbouring school. Currently 87 pupils attend the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupil learning is good with scope to develop the range of learning experiences provided.
- The overall quality of teaching observed in all settings is very good but there is a need to review the organisation of in-class support.
- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is very good.
- The overall quality of leadership and management is good; leadership of teaching and learning as it relates to ensuring the delivery of a balanced curriculum and continuity and progression in pupil learning is an area for development.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is good.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should collectively identify a broader range of learning experiences for pupils across the curriculum areas with an emphasis on the promotion of collaborative work.
- The school should review the organisation of in-class support to ensure that pupils with the greatest need benefit most from organised interventions.
- The school leadership team should monitor the implementation of the curriculum to ensure a balance in the cyclical coverage of each strand and strand-unit and continuity and progression in pupils' learning experiences.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of pupil learning outcomes and experiences across the curriculum areas is good. Pupils were observed to actively engage in and derive benefit and enjoyment from the lessons organised. Their interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are well developed and they display high levels of self-esteem and confidence.
- Good quality experiences are provided to enrich the pupils' learning. In the infant classes, pupils very effectively engage in integrated play-based activities. Pupil participation in initiatives such as the Green Flag, Active School and Junior Entrepreneur Programme has successfully promoted their ability to: present to a range of audiences; develop active citizen skills and to apply their learning to a variety of practical activities. The majority of pupils in their responses to questionnaires issued, state that they enjoy their lessons and their learning. However, there is scope to extend the range of opportunities for pupils to collaborate in designing and making and to engage in experiments and discovery-based learning. The school should implement a range of strategies to enhance pupils' learning experiences. Greater use should be made of group work, the environment, and information and communications technology along with increased provision for pupil-led learning activities. It is recommended that teachers collectively identify a broader range of learning experiences for pupils across the curriculum areas.
- Pupils are making good progress in English. They are exposed to a suitable variety of reading experiences. The provision of a greater range and quantity of texts for independent reading is advised. Pupils' oral language skills are well developed although increased emphasis should be placed on facilitating them to connect, communicate and express their learning across curriculum areas. Pupils write competently in a variety of genres and the whole-school focus on punctuation and grammar is impacting positively on writing outcomes. Consideration should be given to the presentation of written work in some classes and to extending presentation styles. The school is highly praised for the promotion of poetry in English and Irish and the pupils capably recite a wide range of poems.
- LÉIRIÓNN NA DALTAÍ DEARCADH AN-DEARFACH I LEITH FHOGHLAIM NA GAELIGE AGUS TÁ CÁIGHDEAN AN-ARD SCROICHTE ACU Ó THAOBH ÉISTEACHTA AGUS LABHARTHA DE. *Pupils demonstrate a very positive attitude to learning Irish and the quality of their learning in listening and speaking is very good.*
- In Mathematics, pupils ably demonstrate their understanding of mathematical concepts and skills using appropriate language. They have a comprehensive knowledge of number facts and complete number operations with ease.
- Pupil learning in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education is of a good quality. Interesting, well-resourced lessons successfully engage the pupils and progress their awareness and understanding of the natural, human, social and historical dimensions of life. The provision of opportunities for them to work as historians, geographers and scientists would significantly add to the quality of their learning.
- Pupil learning outcomes and experiences in Arts education are of a high standard and particularly good in Music. All pupils are facilitated to play tin whistle and traditional music is very well developed. Drama is appropriately integrated across the curriculum and opportunities are provided for pupils to participate in drama productions. Attractive displays of pupils' art work attest to the high standards achieved. Increased attention to the concepts and elements of these subjects would further enhance pupil learning.
- All strands of the Physical Education programme are comprehensively addressed. The engagement of pupils in organised lessons and in after-school activities has impacted very positively on their awareness of the benefits of an active lifestyle.

- Very good provision is made for pupils in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE). Pupils have developed a keen sense of care and respect for themselves and for other people.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching observed in all settings was very good. Teachers are highly committed to their work and to developing and extending their practice through engaging in a range of continued professional development opportunities. They prepare high quality long and short-term plans to support their teaching and as a result, lessons are well structured, paced and presented. While a variety of teaching methodologies is employed by all teachers, it is advised that collaborative and open-ended learning be strengthened further to provide greater opportunities to extend pupils' learning. In questionnaires issued, all parents agreed that teaching is good in the school.
- Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is very good. Support is organised through a combination of in-class interventions and withdrawal of pupils individually and in small groups. Planning to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties is very comprehensive. Using a broad range of assessment data, specific targets which address their identified needs are outlined and pupil progress is systematically recorded. There is a need, however, to regularly review the organisation of in-class support to ensure that pupils with the greatest need benefit most from organised interventions. This will require a comprehensive assessment of pupil attainment prior to support being provided and an assessment of the impact of the intervention following an identified period of time.
- The overall quality of assessment is good with some exemplary practices noted. These good practices should be extended to all classrooms and across all curriculum areas to further guide approaches to differentiation. Teachers provide high-quality developmental feedback to pupils about how to improve their work. This good practice is praised.

3. THE QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELLBEING

- Very high quality support is provided for pupils' wellbeing. The school is praised for its adoption of a whole-school approach to pupil wellbeing and for its reflection on current practices in this area. Care is taken to adopt an integrated approach to the development of pupils' social, emotional, spiritual and physical health. An improvement plan has been devised to enhance present provision. Friendship benches, yard games, programmes including Zippy's Friends, Friends for Life and a comprehensive coverage of the SPHE curriculum, support an atmosphere of inclusivity, care and respect in the school. In questionnaires issued, almost all parents agreed that the school deals effectively with their child's social and personal development.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The overall quality of leadership and management is good. A pro-active board of management meets regularly and is well informed regarding curriculum issues and pupil standards. Resources are skilfully managed in the best interests of the pupils and the school and its environs are very well maintained. The board is advised to develop a strategic plan to prepare for a possible increase in enrolment in light of the current development of residential properties in the village.
- Very good relationships have been established between the school and the local community, notably with the Tidy Towns committee, sports organisations and the Mens' Shed. Communication with parents is of a high standard. Social-media, text-alerts, newsletters and

parent-teacher meetings are features of good practices established. Representatives of the Parents' Association report that the school is central to the community and that good relationships exist between the association and the board. The further inclusion of parents in school matters would enhance the provision that the school makes for its pupils.

- The principal's work in leading and managing the school is very good and she is ably assisted in this process by the members of the school leadership team. Collaboratively, they discharge their duties in a highly conscientious manner. It is recommended, however, that in leading teaching and learning, the school leadership team monitor the implementation of the curriculum to ensure a balance in the cyclical coverage of each strand and strand-unit and continuity and development in pupils' learning experiences.
- 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

- The quality of school self-evaluation is good. Evidence has been gathered from a range of sources to identify areas which require development and a draft improvement plan has been formulated. There is a strong sense of teamwork reflected in plans devised indicating that all teachers are facilitated to play leadership roles in the improvement process. This practice is highly praised. The school is advised however, to ensure that identified targets are specific and measurable and that actions for improvement are clearly stated. This should assist in evaluating the success of the improvement plan and its impact on pupil learning outcomes.

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 Scoil Barr Dubh welcomes the positive feedback in the WSE-MLL Report. The Board of Management is pleased that the report acknowledged:

- The overall quality of pupils' learning
- The high quality of teaching that exists in the school
- The effectiveness of management and leadership in the school
- The very high standard of support for pupils' wellbeing
- The high quality support provided to pupils with additional learning needs
- The high standard of School Self- Evaluation
- In questionnaires issued, all parents agreed that teaching is good in 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 and staff of Scoil Barr Dubh have considered the key recommendations of the report and are currently working together to facilitate their effective implementation. These include:

- The board will develop a strategic plan to prepare for a probable future increase in enrolment.
- Teachers will adopt a whole school approach to curriculum planning to ensure balance and continuity in the cyclical coverage of each strand and strand unit.
- The school will place a greater emphasis on promoting collaborative work in class and creating a broader range of learning experiences, including learning experiences outside of the classroom setting.
- The SEN team and the class teachers will assess in-class support on an ongoing basis both before and after interventions have been made to ensure that supports provided in-class are proving effective, especially for those in most need.