

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Holy Family Senior School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Station Road Ennis County Clare
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	07315N

Date of inspection: 11-01-2019



**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 inspectors 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

Date of inspection	11-01-2019
Inspection activities undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with home-school-community liaison (HSCL) co-ordinator • Review of relevant documents • 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with principal and in-school leadership team • Meeting with chairperson of the board of management • Meeting with representatives of the parents' association • Meeting with special educational teachers 	

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Holy Family Senior School is a co-educational primary school located in Ennis, County Clare operating under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Killaloe. It participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), an action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. The school enrolls pupils from second to sixth class and there is a special class for pupils with specific reading difficulties and a recently opened special class for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs). The staff comprises an administrative acting principal, thirteen mainstream class teachers and two special class teachers. There are eleven special education teachers (SETs), one of whom is shared with the Holy Family Junior School. The school has two home-school-community liaison (HSCL) co-ordinators, one of whom is shared with a local post-primary school. At the time of the evaluation, there were 324 pupils enrolled, the majority of whom speak English as an additional language (EAL). Overall, school attendance levels are very good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is very good; during the evaluation, pupils in certain settings demonstrated a lack of confidence and competence in spoken Irish.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good and teachers have a strong record of engagement with continuing professional development (CPD).
- The provision of support for pupils through team teaching is highly commendable; most of the support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in Mathematics is organised through the withdrawal of pupils from their whole-class group.
- The pupils' wellbeing is supported very effectively.
- Overall, the quality of leadership and management is highly commendable.
- The overall quality of DEIS action planning for school improvement is very good.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ba chóir don scoil leanúnachas agus dul chun cinn i bhfoghlaim na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge ó bhéal a fhorbairt a thuilleadh. *The school should further develop continuity and progression in pupils' learning in oral Irish.*
- Pupils with SEN in Mathematics should be provided with more frequent opportunities to learn Mathematics with their whole-class group.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- Overall, the quality of pupils' learning is very good. During the evaluation, most pupils demonstrated very positive attitudes to their learning. In particular, the pupils' musical performance skills are developed to a very high standard.
- Very high-quality displays of pupils' work were presented in classrooms and in the school corridors.
- In the lessons observed, pupils' reading skills in English were developed very effectively. The whole-school focus on linking oral and writing genres is commendable. All pupils engage in reading at a differentiated level. To build on this good practice, class novels should be explored more regularly in the senior classes.
- During the evaluation, it was evident that the learning of pupils with EAL is being progressed very effectively in classrooms and through withdrawal support.
- Léirigh na daltaí dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge i bhformhór na gceachtanna a breathnaíodh. Bhí na daltaí in ann stór leathan rann a aithris agus amhráin a chanadh go bríomhar. I suíomhanna áirithe, léirigh na daltaí mímhúinín agus easpa inniúlachta sa Ghaeilge labhartha. Ní mór scileanna labhartha na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge a fhorbairt a thuilleadh go córasach ar bhonn scoile-uile. *A positive attitude to Irish was demonstrated by pupils in the majority of the lessons observed. The pupils could recite rhymes and sing songs with enthusiasm. In certain settings, pupils demonstrated a lack of confidence and competence in spoken Irish. Pupils' language skills in Irish should be further developed systematically at whole-school level.*
- Pupils' learning in Mathematics is supported very effectively through high-quality concrete mathematical resources. Mathematical vocabulary and problem-solving skills in numeracy are being developed to a very good standard.
- In the lessons observed, the reading and comprehension skills of the pupils in the special class for reading were developed very effectively. In the ASD class, pupils' learning was fostered in a calm and structured environment. Pupils in the special classes participate regularly in activities in the mainstream classes.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- Overall, the quality of the teaching observed was very good, with evidence of exemplary practice in a number of settings. It is praiseworthy that teachers provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities for pupils on a voluntary basis. In questionnaires, almost all parents agreed that teaching is good in the school.
- Overall, teachers plan and prepare very effectively for lessons. During the evaluation, the teachers used a wide range of teaching approaches to motivate and challenge pupils. The teachers displayed highly effective classroom management skills. It is highly commendable that teachers engage in a wide range of CPD. In questionnaires, most pupils agreed that their teachers explain things clearly.
- The National Educational Psychological Service's (NEPS) *Continuum of Support* has been embedded very effectively. Almost all targets for pupils with SEN are specific, time-bound and are reviewed in collaboration with parents.
- The provision of support to pupils through team teaching is highly commendable. In English, this support is provided both on an in-class and withdrawal basis. Most of the support for pupils with SEN in Mathematics is organised through the withdrawal of pupils from their

class group. Pupils with SEN in Mathematics should be provided with more frequent opportunities to learn Mathematics with their whole-class group.

- Overall, the quality of assessment is very good. Teachers use a wide range of assessment strategies to assess and track pupils' learning. A very good emphasis has been placed on supporting pupils in reflecting on their learning.

3. THE QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELLBEING

- Overall, pupils' wellbeing is supported very effectively. Pupils' achievements, attendance and behaviour are celebrated and rewarded at school assemblies.
- The school breakfast and homework clubs, facilitated by the School Completion Programme (SCP), support pupils' daily transitions to and from school. A formal programme to support transition to post-primary school is organised for sixth-class pupils.
- Pupil voice is promoted through the Green Flag and Active Flag programmes. The student council meets regularly with the principal and with the parents' association to discuss issues relevant to the pupils.
- Multi-culturalism is celebrated through inter-cultural days and the Yellow Flag programme.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Overall, the quality of leadership and management is very good.
- The board of management carries out its oversight role very effectively. The school infrastructure is maintained to a very high standard. An agreed report is published after board meetings. To build on this effective practice, the board should consider publishing an annual report to the school community.
- School leadership promotes parental involvement in learning through a wide range of activities including Maths for Fun, Science for Fun and parent classes in literacy, including Irish. The parents' association is very active in school life and contributes to policy development.
- The acting principal carries out his leadership role in a highly efficient and organised manner. He sustains an established culture of improvement, innovation and creativity in learning, teaching and assessment. He fosters a highly collegial atmosphere and empowers all staff in engaging in leadership roles. In questionnaires, all teachers agreed that the views of teachers are valued in school decision-making processes.
- The in-school management team, including the principal, supports the board very effectively. The roles of the in-school management team are reviewed regularly.
- The school reported that it regularly provides placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and is included among the standards in the Teaching Council's *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers* as it can provide valuable professional benefits for teachers, student teachers and pupils.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The overall quality of the school improvement process is very good. The school has published DEIS action plans for all DEIS themes. The members of the in-school management team lead the planning and implementation of a wide range of agreed initiatives in relation to these action plans.
- Targets for the DEIS action planning process are specific, measurable and time-bound. It was evident during the evaluation that the agreed strategies are impacting positively on pupils' learning in classrooms.

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 Holy Family Senior School welcomes the WSE-MLL Report from the Inspectorate and notes that the report commends the school to the highest commendable level in all six findings. The Board is particularly pleased that the report highly commends the quality of leadership and management in sustaining an established culture of improvement in innovation and creativity in learning, teaching and assessment and that the report validates the highly collegial atmosphere and empowerment of all staff fostered by the Acting Principal.

The Board is very pleased that the report commends the effectiveness of team teaching and the high quality provision for children with additional needs and, in addition, that the very effective support for pupil wellbeing, noting the praiseworthy commitment of staff to providing a wide range of extra-curricular activities for pupils on a voluntary basis, is also acknowledged. The Board notes that the report recognises the strong tradition of arts education, in particular musical performance skills, which continue to be developed to a very high standard. The Board further acknowledges that the report notes that the school improvement process is of very high quality, reflecting that agreed initiatives are impacting positively on pupils learning in classrooms.

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 welcomes the Inspectorate's acknowledgement of the very effective support and quality of teaching and learning in Mathematics, noting that mathematical vocabulary and problem solving skills, in numeracy in particular, are being developed to a very good standard. The Board will continue to support staff in maintaining these very effective practices and will support increased opportunities for Mathematics teaching for SEN children in their base class.

The Board is delighted with the Inspectorate's acknowledgement of our pupils' positive attitude and enthusiasm for Irish and will continue to support staff in further developing continuity and progression in pupil learning in oral Irish.

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;