

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Bohermore National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Ballysimon County Limerick
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	08342V

Date of inspection: 02-05-2019



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 did not meet the requirements in relation to 5 and 7 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. The school has subsequently furnished evidence of compliance in relation to 5 above.

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

Dates of inspection	30-04-2019 — 02-05-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meetings with principal and assistant principal• Meeting with representative of the board of management• Meeting with parent representative• 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

Bohermore National School is a rural school situated in Bohermore, County Limerick and operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Cashel and Emly. The school has two mainstream class teachers and one school-based special education teacher (SET) who is shared with another local school. There were thirty-two pupils enrolled at the time of the evaluation and overall attendance for these pupils was very good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is very good.
- Teaching is good overall; all support teaching for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is currently provided outside of the mainstream classroom.
- Overall, support and care for pupils' wellbeing are good and a caring atmosphere has been cultivated successfully by school leadership.
- The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.
- Full provision is not being made for all aspects of relationships and sexuality education (RSE).
- Overall, the quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is satisfactory; school improvement targets are not sufficiently specific or measureable and there is limited evaluation of the impact of agreed initiatives.
- The pupils' engagement in peer tutoring is very commendable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The board should ensure that full provision is made for all aspects of RSE.
- The school should ensure that provision of support for pupils with SEN includes in-class support where appropriate.
- The SSE process should be further developed to ensure that the targets identified are specific, measureable and relevant.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- Overall, the quality of pupils' learning is very good. In the majority of lessons observed, pupils were engaged in meaningful learning activities. Pupils engaged very effectively in peer learning during lesson observations. In questionnaires, all pupils agreed that they like their lessons and learning.
- In English, the learning observed was of a very high standard overall. Teachers supported pupils in developing high-quality oral language and phonological skills during lessons. Most pupils read with fluency and expression. Pupils' writing skills are developed systematically. Notably, teachers link oral and writing genres to facilitate good-quality learner outcomes for pupils.
- Léiríodh formhór na ndaltaí dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge agus bhí tuiscint mhaith acu ar an teanga. Bhí stór mór focal ag na daltaí sna bunranganna agus bhí siad in ann raon rann agus amhrán a chanadh le muinín. Léirígh formhór na ndaltaí caighdeán ard sa léitheoireacht Ghaeilge. Cuirtear béim mhaith ar úsáid na teanga go neamhfhoirmiúil sa scoil. Chun líofacht teanga na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge a fhorbairt a thuilleadh, b'fhiú deiseanna a thabhairt dóibh an teanga a úsáid i ngnéithe d'ábhair eile. *The majority of pupils demonstrated a positive attitude to Irish and they had a good understanding of the language. In junior classes, pupils had a very broad store of vocabulary and they recited a wide range of rhymes and songs with confidence. The majority of pupils demonstrated a high standard in Irish reading. A good emphasis is placed on using the language informally in the school. To further develop pupils' fluency in Irish, it would be beneficial to provide opportunities for them to use the language in aspects of other subjects.*
- Pupils' learning achievements in Mathematics are of a very good quality overall. During the lessons observed, pupils' oral mathematics and problem-solving skills were developed effectively. There is scope for greater use of concrete resources during mathematics lessons in some settings. Pupils' overall achievements in summative assessments, including standardised tests, are very good.
- The use of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* was effective in the junior classes. In Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE), pupils participate in a range of projects and initiatives, including a robotics programme. Pupils in the senior classroom demonstrated very high levels of motivation in relation to the strand *Environmental awareness and care*.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- Overall, the quality of teaching observed was good, with elements of highly effective practice evident in a number of lessons. All teachers used a range of methodologies to support pupil engagement, including active learning, the use of information and communications technology (ICT) and collaborative group work.
- Teachers create attractive and stimulating learning environments. Commendably, teachers work collaboratively in some settings. In questionnaires, almost all parents agreed that teaching is good in the school.

- A few of the lessons observed were not sufficiently well structured to support high-quality learner outcomes. There was an over-reliance on textbooks by teachers during some lessons. These issues could be addressed in individual teachers' planning through clearer identification of intended learner outcomes and the learning activities through which pupils will be enabled to achieve these outcomes.
- The National Educational Psychological Support Services (NEPs) *Continuum of Support* has been introduced to provide support for pupils with SEN. Targets in pupils' support plans should be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are specific, measurable and relevant to their priority learning needs. A range of screening and diagnostic tests is used for on-going tracking of the learning achievements of pupils with SEN.
- All support teaching for pupils with SEN is provided outside of the mainstream classroom. This practice is not in accordance with guidance provided in *Guidelines for Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools*. In order to meet the needs of pupils with SEN more effectively, the school should ensure that in-class support is provided where appropriate.
- Overall, the quality of assessment is good. A range of assessment strategies is used to track and evaluate pupils' learning, including standardised testing, teacher-designed tests, observation of copybooks, and assessment tasks. There is some use of concept checklists and peer assessment. To build on current practice, pupils should be given further support in reflecting on their learning.

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

- Overall, the quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is good. In the lessons observed, relationships among pupils and between teachers and pupils were very respectful. In the majority of lessons observed, pupils contributed their opinions to class discussions and asked questions very confidently.
- Pupils engage in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Commendably, parents and local experts support co-curricular projects in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM), drama and sport. Pupils have opportunities to engage regularly in leadership roles through peer tutoring and through the Active Flag and Blue Flag programmes.
- In questionnaires, all pupils agreed that their teacher listens to them and pays attention to what they say. All parents agreed that their child feels safe and well looked after in the school.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Overall, the quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.
- The board of management is properly constituted and oversees the day-to-day running of the school appropriately. The board demonstrates good commitment to school development and to the provision of high-quality resources. In parent questionnaires, all parents agreed that the school is well run. The board should ensure that the number of board meetings held each year is in accordance with the *Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015*.
- School documentation indicates that full provision is not currently being made for all aspects of RSE. The board should, as a priority, ensure that full provision is made for all aspects of RSE.

- The teaching principal has promoted a culture of creativity and innovation in teaching and learning. She is supported by an assistant principal who carries out a range of duties diligently. The duties assigned to management posts should be aligned more effectively with the domains of leadership and management, as outlined in Department of Education and Skills *Circular 0070/2018*.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The overall quality of SSE is satisfactory. A school improvement plan (SIP) has been published by the school, which outlines actions to improve literacy, numeracy and pupils' wellbeing. Targets in the SIP are not sufficiently specific or measurable. There is limited analysis of the impact of SSE on teaching and learning.
- The current SIP should be reviewed to ensure that targets are specific, measurable and relevant. Analysis of whole-school assessment data should be conducted to monitor and evaluate school-improvement initiatives. School partners should be engaged more effectively in the SSE process. The legislative checklist for SSE should be completed annually by the board.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board acknowledges that the quality of pupils' learning is very good. The Board is delighted to note that the quality of teaching is rated as good in the report. The board agrees that a caring environment has been cultivated successfully by school leadership and staff, which in turn supports the wellbeing of all children attending the school.

- The board is happy that the practice of peer tutoring was commended.
- The provision of extra-curricular activities and opportunities afforded to the children to engage in leadership roles through the various projects engaged in was highly commended.
- The board is delighted to have been made aware that all the pupils who filled out questionnaires agreed that their teacher listens to them and pays attention to what they say.
- The board has acknowledged that 99% of parents responded to the questionnaires and this showed their interest and support of the school.
- All parents agreed that their children felt safe and well looked after in school. The board acknowledges and thanks those parents who took the time to fill out the questionnaire.
- The board agrees that the principal has promoted a culture of creativity and innovation in teaching and learning.

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 accepts the recommendations of the report and the board will ensure that the following actions will take place to address those recommendations.

R.S.E.

1. The Whole School Plan for R.S.E. is at draft level and will be in place and begin to be implemented by the Halloween break 2019.
2. A whole school policy has been drafted and will be ratified by the first board of management meeting on 26th September 2019.
3. The staff (3 members) have enrolled in R.S.E. courses run by PDST in L.E.C. in November 2019.
4. The R.S.E. plan will be circulated among the parents via newsletter in which the class appropriate terminology will be explained.

IN CLASS SUPPORT

1. In class support has been timetabled for the coming 2019/2020 year and withdrawal will continue also, as appropriate.

S.S.E.

1. The school has engaged in an advisory visit from the school inspector on 12/09/2019 to assist with S.S.E.
2. We will endeavour that all targets in the S.S.E. progress will be SMART going forward. Digital Literacy (DL) is the area the staff is focusing on for the 2019/2020 academic year. Members of staff have enrolled in two courses in L.E.C. run by PDST on D.L. in November 2019.

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 <i>very good</i> 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;