

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation**  
**Management, Leadership and Learning**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Doonbeg National School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Killard Road Doonbeg County Clare
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	11765U

**Date of inspection: 17-10-2019**



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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

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	15-10-2019 – 17-10-2019
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meetings with principal and deputy principal</li><li>• Meeting with representatives of the board of management</li><li>• Meeting with parent nominees on the board of management</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Analysis of parent and pupil questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Feedback to principal, teachers and board of management representative</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Doonbeg National School is a co-educational primary school located in the village of Doonbeg, County Clare. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Killaloe. The school has three mainstream class teachers, including a teaching principal. A special education teacher (SET) based in the school also works in other schools. There were fifty-eight pupils enrolled at the time of the evaluation. Overall, attendance levels are very good.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The pupils' overall learning is good, with room to improve early reading skills.
- The overall quality of teaching was good in the lessons observed; pupils' skills in Social Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) are not developed systematically.
- Support for pupils' wellbeing is of a very high standard, and teachers are committed to nurturing pupils' holistic development.
- The overall quality of leadership and management is good, and the teaching principal demonstrates high levels of commitment to the school.
- School self-evaluation (SSE) is of a good standard.
- Improvement is needed in elements of the provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pupils' early reading skills in English, including phonemic awareness, word attack skills and fluency, should be improved.
- All teachers should ensure that whole-school approaches to the progression of pupils' skills in SESE are agreed and implemented.
- Provision for pupils with SEN should be reviewed, and teaching approaches, including target setting and assessment strategies, should be improved.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is good. Almost all pupils demonstrate a positive disposition towards learning. In most of the lessons observed, pupils had opportunities to work both collaboratively and individually.
- In the majority of lessons observed, the pupils were engaged in their learning and motivated to learn. In a few lessons, however, the lack of an appropriate structure and meaningful activities impacted on pupil engagement. All teachers should ensure that lessons are structured carefully and meaningful learning activities are prepared to maximise pupil engagement.
- Learner outcomes from the lessons observed ranged from fair to good. Most pupils could explain the learning activities undertaken. While the majority of pupils could discuss their learning across the curriculum, their confidence and competence in talking about their learning should be further developed.
- Overall, pupils' learning achievements in Mathematics are good. The majority of pupils responded well to questioning across the strands of the mathematics curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving skills in oral mathematics should be extended.
- In English, the majority of pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the writing genres. Samples of their writing across a variety of genres, including poetry, were of a commendable standard. The majority of pupils recite poetry competently. The use of graded readers and novels to develop reading skills is highly commendable. Most pupils in the middle classes and the senior classes read with age-appropriate fluency. Pupils' early reading skills, however, need to be improved. Greater emphasis should be placed on the systematic development of phonemic awareness, word attack and fluency skills. Pupils' progress in this area should be monitored regularly.
- In the infant classes, pupils engage effectively in playful learning experiences as part of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.
- Léirigh formhór na ndaltaí dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge. I ngach rang aithrisíonn na daltaí rainn agus amhráin go taitneamhach. Léirigh formhór na ndaltaí tuiscint mhaith, bhí siad in ann ceisteanna a chur agus a fhreagairt agus bhí struchtúr na habairte acu. Is gá, áfach, léibhéil iniúilachta mionlach na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge labhartha a ardú. Bhí samplaí maithe de scríbhneoireacht na ndaltaí sna cóipleabhair agus ar na ballaí sna meánranganna agus sna hardranganna. B'fhiú clár céimniúil a chur i bhfeidhm chun scileanna scríbhneoireachta na ndaltaí a threisiú a thuilleadh. Ba chóir leis na múinteoirí agus na daltaí an Ghaeilge a úsáid níos rialta mar theanga chumarsáide an tseomra ranga. *The majority of pupils demonstrated a positive attitude to Irish. In all classes, pupils recite poems and sing songs pleasantly. The majority of pupils demonstrated good understanding, they were able to ask and answer questions and they knew the structure of the sentence. There is a need, however, to improve the ability of a minority of pupils in spoken Irish. There were good samples of pupils' writing in copybooks and on the walls in the middle classes and in the senior classes. It would be worthwhile implementing a progressive programme to further strengthen pupils' writing skills. Irish should be used more regularly by teachers and pupils as the language of communication in the classroom.*
- Overall, the pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work in copybooks are of a good standard. Creative samples of pupils' work across the curriculum are displayed attractively on corridors and in classrooms.

## **2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING**

- The overall quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good. Elements of the practice observed ranged from very good to fair.
- High-quality lessons were characterised by careful teacher preparation, very good structure, the use of a range of teaching methods, and appropriate learning activities. These effective strategies should be extended to all lessons.
- Commendably, teachers use the environment, project and investigative work to develop pupils' skills in SESE. However, these skills are not developed systematically. A whole-school approach to the progressive development of pupils' skills in SESE should be agreed and implemented.
- A variety of effective assessment practices was observed during the evaluation. Going forward, whole-school approaches to assessment across the curriculum, including assessment for learning, should be agreed and implemented.
- While all teachers provided planning documentation, the clearer identification of learning activities and intended learner outcomes would enhance the quality of teachers' individual planning.
- The overall management of pupils during the evaluation was good. In their questionnaire responses, all pupils agreed that their teachers listen to them and that they feel safe in their class.
- Support for pupils with SEN is provided using both in-class and withdrawal models of support. Improvement is needed in elements of the provision for pupils with SEN. While it is commendable that the National Educational Psychological Service's (NEPS) *Continuum of Support* has been adopted, each stage of the continuum needs to be further embedded. In a few instances, learning targets for pupils with SEN are clear and measurable. However, most of targets need to be reviewed to ensure they are specific and based on assessment data. Pupils' progress should be monitored and recorded regularly.

## **3. THE QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELLBEING**

- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is of a very high standard. Caring and respectful relationships were evident between the teachers and pupils, and among the pupils themselves. In response to questionnaires, all pupils indicated that they like their school and that if someone is bullying them they can get help from an adult in the school.
- All teachers are committed to nurturing pupils' holistic development and providing a broad range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities to support their learning and wellbeing. Mutually beneficial relationships have been established between the school and the wider community, including projects in the arts and care of the environment.
- The facilitation of pupils' involvement in decision-making through the SSE process and the student council is high commendable.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

- The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The board of management is very supportive. Board meetings are held regularly, members have availed of training, an annual report on the work of the board is published and the school accounts are certified annually. The school building and environment are maintained to a very high standard.
- The teaching principal demonstrates very high levels of commitment to the school and has established welcoming and inclusive practices. In response to questionnaires, all parents agreed that they feel welcome in the school and they know whom to talk to if there is a problem.

- The deputy principal works diligently and enthusiastically in the leadership and management of the school. While she completes a wide range of duties, these duties should now be aligned with the domains of leadership and management, as outlined in Department of Education and Skills *Circular 0044/2019*.

#### **5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION**

- Overall, the quality of SSE is good, and the school has engaged positively with the process. SSE reports and school improvement plans (SIPs) have been published for literacy, numeracy and Science. Most targets are specific and actions for improvement have been identified. There was evidence of the actions impacting positively on pupils' learning outcomes.
- Agreed actions for improvement are not implemented consistently in all classes. As the school continues to engage in the SSE process, all teachers should ensure that agreed actions are embedded in classroom practice.

# **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 Doonbeg NS acknowledges the WSE/MLL report affirming that the quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is of a very high standard.

We acknowledge that the staff are committed to nurturing pupils' holistic development by providing a broad range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities to support their learning and well being.

The Board is pleased that the quality of pupils' learning and the quality of teaching is rated as good in the report.

The Board of Management acknowledges that the overall quality of leadership and management is good and that the teaching principal demonstrates very high levels of commitment to the school and has established welcoming and inclusive practices.

The board accepts that the quality of School Self Evaluation is good and that the school has engaged positively with the process.

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

#### **Early Literacy**

In the area of Early Literacy, the BOM has invested considerably in literacy resources and has encouraged the introduction of Literacy Lift Off for targeted groups of children. This will be extended for the school year 2019 - 2020. Professional Development continues to be supported and encouraged by the BOM. The school has availed of the assistance of the NCSE and PDST in the past and will continue into the future.

#### **Skills in SESE**

The Board aims to ensure that the skills of SESE are developed systematically. School policies within the area of SESE were reviewed in 2018. Support will be provided to staff if needed, in order to develop the child's skills at the appropriate level.

#### **Special Educational Needs**

In relation to the provision of Special Educational Needs, the Board of Management continues to be supportive of Professional Development within this area. NCSE Support in the creation of support plans, target setting and assessment strategies has been provided in the past. The NCSE provided continued support in this area in November 2019. This will continue to be reviewed on an on-going basis.



## 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
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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 <b>very good</b> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;