

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

**Whole School Evaluation**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School Name</b>	Scoil Chóca Naofa
<b>Seoladh na scoile/ School Address</b>	Cill Chóca, Co. Chill Dara.
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	11976K

**Date of inspection: 21-09-2018**



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agus Scileanna**  
Department of  
Education and Skills

## **WHAT IS WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION?**

The Whole-School Evaluation model is used to provide whole-school evaluative information, advice and support to the school. These inspections affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of educational provision in the school. In addition to evaluating leadership and management, school planning and self-evaluation, and support for pupils, the inspectors typically examine the quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English, Gaeilge, Mathematics and one other subject.

## **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 leadership and management
2. The quality of school planning and school self-evaluation
3. The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement
4. The quality of support for pupils

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 1 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, the school has subsequently furnished evidence of compliance with these requirements.

## Whole-School Evaluation

<b>Date of inspection</b>	21-09-2018
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meetings with principal and in-school leadership team</li><li>• Meeting with representatives of the board of management</li><li>• Meeting with parent representatives</li><li>• Meeting with teachers</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Feedback to senior management team and teachers,</li><li>• Feedback to parent representatives</li><li>• Feedback to board of management</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Chóca Naofa is a Catholic co-educational school located in Kilcock, County Kildare that operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. While traditionally an all-girls school, founded by the Presentation Order, Scoil Chóca Naofa started the co-educational process in September 2015. The school has fourteen mainstream classes, one class for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) and six teachers provide additional supports for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). There were 381 pupils enrolled at the time of the evaluation and while most pupils attend very well, the school has been working on the challenge to improve the poor attendance of a small number of pupils. Provision for English, Irish, Mathematics and Geography was evaluated in a sample of settings during this whole-school evaluation.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The overall quality of leadership and management is very good; although distributed curriculum leadership could be developed further in some instances.
- The overall quality of teaching in English and Geography is very good.
- The overall quality of pupils' learning is good; however there is scope to improve co-ordination of in-class support in some cases.
- The school receives strong support from a very active parents' association and the wider school community.
- The overall quality of support for pupils' well-being is very good.
- The overall quality of School Self- Evaluation (SSE) is very good.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school should review the duties of the in-school management team to ensure that each member of the team has responsibility for curriculum leadership.
- Teachers should investigate how planning for in-class support and team teaching can be co-ordinated most effectively to maximise the benefits of assessment practices and pupils' learning outcomes.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

- The overall quality of school leadership and management is very good. The board of management meets regularly, is correctly constituted and discharges its financial, legislative and leadership duties very effectively. The board has a clear understanding of its role and adheres to principles of good governance. Members of the board have defined roles and responsibilities. They are very focused on the needs of the school and supportive of the principal and school staff. In light of Circular 0013/2017, the board should review and revise its admissions policy to reflect the inclusive nature of the school.
- Management and leadership within the school are of a very high quality. The principal has fostered a highly collaborative school culture, which facilitates rich professional conversations and the sharing of good practice among staff. She is highly organised, communicates a clear, shared vision and encourages the formation of teams to explore current school needs and address emerging priorities. She is ably assisted by the deputy principal and in-school management team whose members attend to a wide range of duties. Together they demonstrate a high level of commitment to inclusion and the holistic development of pupils. The principal and in-school management team meet regularly and work collaboratively to create an inclusive learning environment. Duties assigned to the in-school management team are currently under review and should be further developed to distribute responsibility for curriculum leadership to all members of the in-school management team.
- The school building and grounds are maintained to a very high standard. Significant work onsite and within the wider local community has been undertaken recently to ensure the safe entry of the school community to and from the school. The board has made significant investment in the provision of resources to support teaching and learning. Areas for further investment have been identified and prioritised.
- There is very good communication between the school and parents. The parents' association strongly supports the school. Almost all parent responses to the Inspectorate's questionnaires indicate that parents feel the school is well run, their children enjoy school, teaching is good in the school, and that overall they are happy with the school.

### **2. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL PLANNING AND SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION**

- The quality of school planning and SSE is very good. A broad range of administrative policies has been drawn up to support the management of the school. The collaborative practices and structures within the school facilitate the school's engagement in a continuous process of self-evaluation with specific areas identified for improvement.

- All teachers prepare useful long and short-term planning to guide their work in the classroom. Effective collaborative teacher planning was evident in many settings. Teachers are creatively supporting pupils through the use of team teaching, parallel teaching and station teaching. In some instances there is scope to improve the co-ordination and planning for in-class and team-teaching approaches to maximise the learning outcomes and learning experiences of all pupils.
- SSE reports and school improvement plans have impacted positively on teachers' practice and learner outcomes. Considerable work on a review of the current needs of the school has been completed to identify areas for further development. The process for the identification of school priorities takes cognisance of the recent changes in the school, for example, the phased transition from single-sex to co-educational provision, the language needs of international pupils and the establishment of the ASD class. This work reflects the commitment of the school to the promotion of staff collaboration and school improvement.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT**

- The overall quality of teaching is very good. Lessons observed were carefully planned and structured to support pupils' learning. *Aistear The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is being successfully implemented in the infant classrooms. Throughout the school there is a focus on discovery and active learning methodologies. There is a very strong emphasis on continuing professional development (CPD) with the management team and staff very willing to try out new methodologies and approaches. Pupils were consistently engaged, focused and motivated in lessons observed. Learner experiences and outcomes were rich and varied in most settings. Most pupils who responded to the questionnaires indicated that they enjoyed their lessons and their learning.
- The quality of pupils' learning is good. Pupils' learning experiences were highly effective where key vocabulary in English, Gaeilge and Mathematics was identified, taught and used in purposeful, meaningful activities appropriate to the pupils' level of ability. Assessment of learning and assessment for learning are features of teaching and learning in some settings. In-class support and approaches for pupils' learning needs is a whole-school approach that is used at all class levels. Where additional teachers are present in classrooms, roles need to be clearly defined and structured to maximize the benefits for pupils' learning experiences and outcomes.
- The overall quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is very good. Pupils' early literacy skills are developed very well. The introduction of graded reading texts in some classes, with plans in place to extend this good practice, to develop pupils' reading skills is highly commendable. Teachers focus on the development of good oral language skills through talk and discussion in all classes. Pupils are provided with purposeful opportunities to engage in independent and collaborative learning. Comprehension skills are developed with challenging and higher-order questioning in evidence in all settings. The school library is very well stocked with an extensive range of reading material and pupils visit the school library fortnightly to change their books. A whole-school approach to the development of handwriting is implemented. Opportunities are created for pupils to engage in free writing. Skills in literacy are further developed through the teaching of the different writing genres.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is good, overall, with exemplary practice noted in some settings. Throughout the school, teachers use concrete resources and materials to teach and consolidate mathematical concepts. Co-operative and discovery learning approaches are further supported through the comprehensive use of information and communications technology (ICT) in some settings. Pupils engage in mathematical activities in a confident manner and in some classes they are given opportunities to explain and discuss mathematical processes and problems. Strategies have been developed to support pupils' problem solving skills. Where exemplary practice was observed teachers placed a strong emphasis on mathematical language. Pupils have opportunities to engage in a range of mathematical activities including games, trails and maths week and they have opportunities to apply mathematical learning to real life situations.
- Tá cáilíocht an teagaisc, na foghlama agus ghnóthachtáil na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge go maith, ar an iomlán. Cothaítear dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge. Léiríonn na daltaí speis sa Ghaeilge. Déantar an-iarracht Gaeilge labharta na daltaí a chur chun cinn tríd an scoil. Léiríonn an chuid is mo de na ndaltaí cumas maith i labhairt agus i dtuiscint na teanga. Ba chóir deiseanna sa bhreis a chothú agus a thabhairt do dhaltaí go rialta i dtascanna comhoibritheacha chumarsáideacha chun an Ghaeilge atá acu a chleachtadh agus a úsáid. Tá moladh tuillte ag an scoil as an nGaeilge a úsáid go rialta mar theanga bhainisteoireachta ranga agus mar theanga chaidrimh ar fud na scoile. *The overall quality of teaching learning and pupil achievement in Irish is good. A positive approach to the language is cultivated. Pupils show an interest in Irish. Every effort is made to ensure the development of Irish spoken throughout the school. Most pupils demonstrate a good ability to speak and understand the language. Opportunities should be created regularly so pupils can engage in, practise and use Irish in co-operative communicative tasks. The school deserves praise for the manner in which Irish is used as the language of classroom management and communication throughout the school.*
- The overall quality of teaching learning and pupil achievement in Geography is very good. Active methodologies, ICT, project work, maps and aerial photography facilitate group work and develop investigative skills in Geography. Classrooms and the school environment promotes an appreciation of Geography and includes maps and photographs of the locality, Ireland, Europe and the world. Pupils in many classes have a well-developed sense of place and can describe features and landmarks of their local area though there is scope in some classes to reinforce pupil knowledge of their own immediate locality more effectively.
- The overall quality of assessment is very good. A range of assessment practices were used in all classrooms and these include teacher observations, teacher designed tasks and tests to monitor and record individual pupil progress. Pupils' work is regularly monitored throughout the school. Screening and standardised test in literacy and numeracy are administered and analysed annually.

#### **4. QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS**

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is a significant strength of the school. The school is very welcoming, with a commitment to inclusion evident. Some teachers have undertaken professional development to enable them to implement specific programmes to support pupils' emotional well-being and resilience.
- The school is committed to the holistic development of all pupils, with a key focus on the individual. Teachers have developed and maintain strong links with external agencies to support pupils' social and emotional needs. There are strong links in place to ensure smooth transitions to and from primary school.
- Highly respectful and positive interactions were observed in all settings throughout the evaluation. In response to questionnaires, pupils indicated that they feel safe in the classroom and have good relationships with other pupils.
- The quality of provision for pupils with SEN and pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) ranges from good to very good. Well-structured lessons were observed during the evaluation with supplementary teaching provided through a balance between in-class, withdrawal and station-teaching approaches. The practice of identifying and prioritising needs through the use of the continuum of support is well developed. In some instances there is scope to identify clearer targets in the individualised plans to reflect pupils changing learning needs.
- The school has a class for children with ASD. Calm and appropriate learning environments have been created to meet the learning needs of pupils. They are developing a range of spatial and life skills very effectively through interaction with the local environment. Teaching is characterised by a focus on learning needs and accessing the curriculum, where appropriate. Structured routines and the development of positive and caring relationships facilitate learning and social interaction. Pupils are developing a sense of place and engaging with everyday services such as the post office, supermarket and walks through the town affords real purposeful opportunities to develop key skills.

## 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	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 <i>very good</i> 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;

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

### **Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board of Management welcomes the report. We are very pleased that the key findings acknowledge the dedication and commitment of our staff, the very good quality of their teaching and that it reflects the positive and caring atmosphere in our school. It also conveys the effectiveness of the Board of Management and the Parents Association, the wonderful support of our parents, and, most importantly, the enthusiasm of our children.

### **Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.**

The Board is very appreciative of the recommendations for future development. Measures to implement them are already being considered and have been put in place so as to build upon our existing good practice.