

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Shinrone Mixed National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Shinrone Birr Co. Offaly
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	12343W

Date of inspection: 29-01-2020



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(s) 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).
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	29-01-2020
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, 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

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Shinrone Mixed National School is a rural, co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Killaloe. The school has five mainstream class teachers and two special education teachers, one of whom is shared with another school. The school caters for 121 pupils from junior infants to sixth class. The school participates in the rural band of Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion and pupil attendance levels are good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- Tá torthaí foghlama na ndaltaí ar chaighdeán maith; ó thaobh na Gaeilge de, níl sé de mhuintín ag daltaí i roinnt suíomh na scileanna atá foghlamtha acu sa cheacht Gaeilge a thraschur go suímh eile chun gnáthchumarsáid neamhspleách a dhéanamh.
The quality of pupils' learning outcomes is good; in relation to Irish, pupils in some settings are lacking the confidence necessary to transfer skills already learned in the Irish lesson to other contexts so that they can carry out conversations independently.
- The quality of teaching is commendable and teachers plan and deliver lessons effectively; pupils do not receive sufficient opportunities to reflect on their learning.
- The quality of teachers' individual assessment practices is good: summative assessment approaches are effective, formative assessment methods are not as well developed.
- Support for pupil wellbeing is of a very high quality.
- The quality of leadership and management is very good and the principal, with active support from the board of management and the in-school leadership team, has created an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.
- The quality of school self-evaluation is good.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ní mór do na múinteoirí tuilleadh deiseanna cumarsáide a chruthú do na daltaí an teanga nua-fhoghlamtha a chleachtadh agus a dhaingniú thar réimse chomhthéacsanna le go mbeidh siad in ann iad féin a chur in iúl go neamhspleách, féinmhuintíneach sa teanga.
- *Teachers should create more opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate their language learning so as to enable them to express themselves independently and confidently in the language.*
- Teachers should develop their formative assessment approaches further and, through the provision of feedback, assist pupils to reflect on their learning and encourage them to set meaningful, personalised learning goals.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of pupils' learning is good. Pupils present as motivated learners who enjoy school and have a respectful, positive relationship with their teachers. Pupils are proud of their learning achievements and demonstrate an enquiring approach to their learning.
- Pupils' learning achievements in English are good. Their early-literacy skills are nurtured systematically and supported through the effective implementation of early-intervention programmes. In the settings observed during the evaluation pupils read competently and with enjoyment. Their oral language skills are promoted through discrete lessons and opportunities are afforded them to consolidate their language learning through the social context of play.

- Tá cáilíocht foghlama na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge go maith. Tá réimse struchtúr agus foclóra cuí sealbhaithe ag na daltaí agus baineann siad taitneamh as na deiseanna cainte a thugtar dóibh le linn an cheachta. Níl sé de mhuintín ag daltaí i roinnt suíomh, áfach, gnáthchomhrá simplí a dhéanamh sa Ghaeilge lasmuigh de chomhthéacs an cheachta. Ní mór do na múinteoirí tuilleadh deiseanna cumarsáide a chruthú do na daltaí an teanga nua-fhoghlamtha a chleachtadh agus a dhaingniú thar réimse chomhthéacsanna le go mbeidh siad in ann iad féin a chur in iúl go neamhspleách, féinmhuinéach sa teanga.

The quality of pupils' learning in Irish is good. They have mastered an appropriate range of vocabulary and structures and enjoy the opportunities afforded them to speak the language during the lesson. In some settings, however, pupils are lacking the confidence to conduct ordinary, simple conversations in Irish outside of the lesson context. Teachers should create more opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate their language learning so as to enable them to express themselves independently and confidently in the language.

Pupils' writing skills are well developed and examples of high-quality written work indicate the provision of frequent opportunities for them to write creatively across a wide range of genres. Scope exists, however, to broaden pupils' language learning experience in Irish to incorporate more creative application of their writing skills.

- Pupils' learning in Mathematics is of a high quality. They are afforded opportunities to engage independently and collaboratively with concrete materials and relevant games. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on the development of problem-solving strategies and in some of the lessons observed, teachers and pupils engaged in valuable mathematical conversations in which pupils were challenged to clarify and share their mathematical thinking. This good practice should be a feature of all mathematics lessons, as should the collaborative approach to problem-solving that provided enjoyment in this aspect of pupils' learning.
- Pupils learning in the Visual Arts is of a high quality and they are given many opportunities to create art using a wide range of materials and techniques. Teachers stimulate pupils' interest in the subject through exposure to a variety of renowned artists' work and through the celebration of their own work, which is on display throughout the school.

- Pupils display a very good interest in History and, through opportunities given them to explore excellent artefacts and photographic evidence, they work as historians. They link these resources to their own life experiences and can interpret evidence as part of the human story.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The quality of teaching is commendable and teachers have created a caring, supportive atmosphere where pupils enjoy their learning and take pride in their achievements.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and share with them the desired learning outcomes of each lesson. Where practice was best, pupils were encouraged to reflect critically on their learning. This good practice should be developed and extended throughout the school so that pupils are enabled to take ownership of improving their learning through the setting of meaningful personalised learning goals.
- Teachers' planning is of a high quality and reflects a differentiated approach to teaching. In some classes the provision of open-ended, discovery-based, learning tasks is a praiseworthy feature of practice and an effective means of challenging all pupils.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers make effective use of the Continuum of Support at all levels to respond in an appropriate and flexible manner to their additional learning needs. Teachers engage in continuous professional development to build upon the school's capacity to meet the educational needs of all pupils.
- The quality of teachers' individual assessment practices is good: summative assessment approaches are effective, formative assessment methods are not as well developed. In some settings teachers make effective use of e-portfolios to facilitate the gathering of a broad range of assessment data. Teachers should develop their formative assessment approaches further and ensure that a whole-school approach to the gathering and use of data is implemented consistently.

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

- Support for pupils' wellbeing is of a very high quality and is a significant strength of the school. The board, principal and teachers have created a positive school culture that is welcoming, inclusive and reflective of the strong emphasis placed on promoting the holistic development of each child.
- The school works effectively to promote positive relationships among pupils and between teachers and pupils, and the attention given to the voice of the pupil forms an integral part of its approach to this. The scheduling of social, personal and health education activities so that they occur at the start of the week's work facilitates the creation of an atmosphere of respect for others and a collaborative engagement with learning.
- Teachers promote respectful relationships and pupil self-expression and regularly seek the opinions of pupils in matters of importance to them. It is praiseworthy that in some settings pupils are given the flexibility and freedom to choose, arrange and avail of classroom seating lay-out. Another commendable dimension to the pupils' voice in the learning process is the

recent establishment of a pupil council. The results of questionnaires completed as part of the evaluation indicate that the most pupils feel they have a say in how things are done in the school.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The leadership and management of the school is of a very high quality. The board discharges its financial, statutory and management duties effectively. It ensures the provision of a safe, attractive and welcoming learning environment. The questionnaires completed by parents as part of the evaluation indicate their satisfaction with how the school is run and almost all agree that they feel welcome in the school and that a good atmosphere exists therein.
- School leadership actively supports teachers' engagement in continuous professional development. The principal, with effective support from the in-school leadership team, demonstrates a highly professional, calm, and reflective approach to her role. She is successful in creating an atmosphere where all staff members work to improve upon the high standards already attained.
- The school values partnership with parents as a means of supporting pupils' learning and wellbeing. The school maintains effective systems of communication with parents and in the questionnaires completed as part of the evaluation, most parents agreed that they are consulted regarding school matters. Parents, through participation in relevant committees, contribute to the review and development of school policies. The parents' association provides a wide range of supports to the school especially in relation to extra-curricular activities.
- The school reported that it provides placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and is included among the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers as it can provide valuable professional benefits for student teachers and for the teacher education institution.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- School self-evaluation is of a good quality. The school undertakes a process of continuous improvement which is collaborative and reflective and responds to its own identified priority areas for development. The teachers are currently implementing a comprehensive school improvement plan to support pupil wellbeing and the actions undertaken to achieve targets set are having a worthwhile impact on pupils' learning experiences and on teachers' practice.

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
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

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

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

Re; Summary of Main Findings and Recommendations section, Bullet point 2;

The report states “pupils do not receive sufficient opportunities to reflect on their learning”.

The BOM wish to make the following response;

“Pupils receive some opportunities to reflect on their learning, but there is scope to develop this further. Actions that the school plans to take to address this recommendation are as follows;

1. Commencement of data-gathering on assessment practices throughout the school in September 2020
2. All teachers will outline Learning Outcomes at the start of each lesson and will convene a plenary at the end of lessons. During the plenary, teachers will cultivate children’s self-assessment by encouraging them to reflect on their learning during the lesson.
3. Teachers will include constructive feedback in copies.
4. By Feb 2021, it is envisaged that pupils in senior classes will set meaningful personalised learning goals for themselves.
5. By Feb 2021, it is hoped that the roll-out of e-portfolios in classes will be complete.
6. By commencement of academic year 2021, we hope that Pupil-teacher conferences will be a feature of our assessment practice in Shinrone National School.