Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

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<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Union Hall Mixed N S</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Union Hall</td>
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<td>Skibbereen, Co. Cork</td>
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<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>12383L</td>
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Date of inspection: 06-02-2018
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 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.
Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

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<tr>
<th>Dates of inspection</th>
<th>06-02-2018</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inspection activities undertaken</strong></td>
<td><strong>06-02-2018</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Meetings with principal</td>
<td>Analysis of parent and pupil questionnaires</td>
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<td>Meeting with representatives of the board of management</td>
<td>Observation of teaching and learning</td>
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<td>Meeting with parent representatives</td>
<td>Examination of pupils’ work</td>
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<td>Meeting with teachers</td>
<td>Interaction with pupils</td>
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<td>Review of relevant documents</td>
<td>Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives</td>
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SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Naomh Bhríde is a rural co-educational mainstream primary school located in Union Hall eleven kilometres east of Skibbereen in County Cork. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross. There are a total of eighty pupils and enrolment has been steadily rising in recent years. The staffing schedule consists of a teaching principal, two mainstream class teachers, one special education teacher and two visiting special education teachers who are based in nearby primary schools.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The overall quality of pupil learning is good; pupils’ presentation of work requires significant attention.
- The overall quality of teaching is good with some very good practice observed; there is scope to further develop mainstream class and special educational needs (SEN) planning and assessment practices.
- The quality of support for pupils’ well-being is very high, and during the evaluation, pupils were courteous, well behaved and positively engaged.
- The parents’ association and general parent body are very supportive of the school.
- While the quality of school management and leadership is satisfactory overall, a number of organisational and administrative issues require attention to ensure compliance with the relevant regulatory requirements.
- The principal and staff place a commendable emphasis on pastoral care and create a welcoming school community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Current arrangements whereby the school-based support teacher takes primary responsibility for teaching mainstream curricular subjects should be discontinued to ensure that all resources allocated to support pupils with special educational needs are used appropriately.
- The board should fulfil its obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 and establish a Code of Behaviour that has been drawn up in accordance with the guidelines which were issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB). The board should also revise its admissions policy, formulate an SEN policy and assign responsibilities to the deputy principal and to the assistant principal.
• Teachers are advised to place a significant focus on pupils’ presentation of written work as a matter of priority.
• In settings for pupils with SEN, learning targets would benefit from refinement and the system of monitoring pupils’ ongoing progress should be further developed.
• Whole-school planning and assessment practices should be extended; a more in-depth analysis of all school assessment data should be undertaken and greater use made of diagnostic testing to further assist in planning for individual pupils who are not making optimal progress.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING

• The overall quality of pupil learning is good. Pupils’ learning experiences range from very good in some settings to satisfactory in others. They are positively engaged and have opportunities to participate in activity-based learning in multi-class settings. School assessment data suggests good achievement in literacy and in numeracy.

• In English, pupils in the junior classes have regular opportunities to engage in a wide range of oral language activities. They recite and appreciate rhyme and poetry. In the middle and senior classes, oral language is developed through regular discussion. In general, pupils read competently and fluently and have access to a good range of reading materials, which are used effectively. They have opportunities to write in a variety of genres; however, the standard of penmanship and presentation of pupils’ work in the school ranges from fair to good. Teachers are advised to place a significant focus on pupils’ presentation of written work as a matter of priority.

• Ghlac na daltaí páirt mhaith sna ceachtanna Gaeilge a breathnaíodh. Léiríonn siad go bhfuil ar a gcumas abairtí iomlána a rá. Léann siad le brí agus le tuiscint i gcoitinne. B’fhiú raon níos leithne d’ábhar léitheoiríochta a sholáthar dóibh chun a gcuid scileanna litearthachta sa teanga a fháil. Bhi samplaí de scribhneoireacht fheidhmiúil le feiceáil i ngach rang. Moltar anois aird a dhiúr ar shaorscribhneoireacht agus ar scribhneoireacht pearsanta sna meánranganna agus sna hard ranganna. Pupils engaged well in the Irish lessons observed. They were able to articulate full sentences in the context of the lessons observed. In general, they read with meaning and understanding. It is recommended that a broader range of reading materials be provided to further develop literacy skills in the language. Samples of functional writing were observed in all classrooms. It is recommended that an increased emphasis be placed on the development of creative and personal writing in the middle and senior classes.

• The quality of pupil learning in Mathematics is good overall, with some pupils achieving high standards. Pupils have opportunities to engage with concrete materials and other appropriate resources. In general, they demonstrated good use of mathematical language and undertook operational and computational tasks with speed and accuracy. Increased opportunities for pupils to further engage in connecting mathematical processes to real-life activities would enhance the quality of learning outcomes.
2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The quality of teaching is good overall, with lessons observed varying from satisfactory to very good. Teachers implement a variety of approaches and a broad range of resources is provided to facilitate the delivery of the curriculum. Long-term planning, short-term planning and monthly progress reports are completed by the teachers. There is scope for individual teachers’ planning to be more directed by the school plan rather than by commercial textbooks.

- In-class support, station teaching, small-group tuition and withdrawal from classrooms are among the interventions provided to pupils with additional learning needs. Current arrangements whereby the school-based support teacher takes primary responsibility for teaching mainstream curricular subjects is contrary to the provisions of Circular 0013/2017. The school should discontinue this practice to ensure that additional teaching resources allocated to support pupils with SEN are directed towards pupils with the greatest levels of need. In addition, learning targets for SEN pupils would benefit from further refinement and the system of monitoring pupil progress should be further developed.

- A range of assessment practices are implemented. Standardised tests are administered and the results are analysed to some extent to identify pupils for additional support. A more in-depth analysis of assessment data should be undertaken, with greater use made of diagnostic testing to further assist in planning for individual pupils who are not making sufficient progress. Teachers record pupil achievement in a variety of ways, but there is scope to further extend this practice on a whole-school basis. Written work is monitored, but regular formative feedback should be provided on all pupils’ work in copybooks.

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

- The quality of support for pupils’ well-being is of a high standard. Pupils are well-behaved, polite and engage with peers and staff in a positive manner. The results of the pupils’ questionnaires suggest that they have positive dispositions towards school.

- In light of circular 0013/2017, the school’s enrolment/admissions policy should now be revised to reflect the terms of the circular. The board is also advised also to formulate a policy relating to the provision for pupils with special educational needs.

- The school has an active parents’ association which supports the school positively through a variety of initiatives, including swimming and music activities. Parents report very good home school communication and they state that they play an active meaningful part in the formulation of school policy. The results from the parents’ questionnaires suggest that they are satisfied with the operation of the school.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The board of management is properly constituted, meets on a regular basis and is committed to supporting the school. The board has addressed the developmental needs of the school as they have arisen. It should now devise a schedule for the undertaking of external building works and enhancing the interior of the school. A suite of administrative policies gives guidance to the day-to-day operation of the school. However, the board should ensure that the school meets its
obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 and put in place a Code of Behaviour that has been drawn up in accordance with the guidelines which were issued by the NEWB. Finally, the use of a support teacher to take primary responsibility for teaching mainstream curricular subjects should be discontinued. The principal, with the support of the board, should ensure that all resources allocated to support pupils with special educational needs are used appropriately.

- The principal is committed to addressing the needs of the school community and to developing a caring and inclusive environment for all pupils. He organises a commendable range of extracurricular activities for the pupils. Together with the in-school management team, he places a commendable emphasis on the pastoral care and well-being of pupils. It is advised that the board now devise and ratify a list of appropriate duties for the deputy principal and the assistant principal.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION (SSE)

- The overall quality of school self-evaluation is good. Evidence of work undertaken, prior to industrial action at national level, indicates that this school was making progress in SSE. Specific areas had been identified and an action planning process had been used effectively to guide school improvement in areas of problem-solving and writing genres. The principal has reported that the school is re-engaging in the SSE process.

6. CHILD PROTECTION

During the evaluation, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The school principal is aware that revised child protection procedures for primary and post-primary schools came into effect on 11 December 2017 and arrangements are in place to begin the process of implementing these procedures.
2. The name of the designated liaison person for child protection matters was prominently displayed near the main door of the school and in the school's reception area.
3. The school has a Child Protection policy in place.
4. All teachers are aware that they are mandated persons and of their responsibilities in that regard.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.
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.

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<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Very Good</strong></td>
<td><strong>Very good</strong> 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 <strong>outstanding</strong> and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.</td>
<td>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</td>
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<td><strong>Good</strong></td>
<td><strong>Good</strong> 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 <strong>very good</strong> standard.</td>
<td>Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong></td>
<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong> applies where the quality of provision is adequate. Overall, learners have access to a basic level of provision. 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.</td>
<td>Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas</td>
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<td><strong>Fair</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fair</strong> 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.</td>
<td>Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils’ learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve</td>
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<td><strong>Weak</strong></td>
<td><strong>Weak</strong> 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.</td>
<td>Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;</td>
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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 of Union Hall Mixed NS fully accepts this report and takes on board all of the recommendations contained in it. The report will act as a blueprint for the Board of Management for the future with specific targets for us to achieve in the short, medium and longer term. We welcome the report and its findings and recommendations which we will address and in some cases have already addressed as outlined in Part B.

There are a lot of positives in the report which we embrace and acknowledge and take pride in while also of course looking to address the areas mentioned in it in need of attention.

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

Some of the recommendations in the report have already been addressed and the rest will be addressed in the short, medium and longer term.

The Board of Management has fulfilled its obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and a Code of Behaviour has been drawn up in accordance with guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB). This has been ratified by the Board of Management.

The Board of Management has also revised and ratified our Admissions Policy and also formulated and ratified an SEN Policy.

The enhancement of the interior of the school has commenced, whereby one of the classrooms had extensive improvement works carried out during the Easter closure. New ceilings were put in place to address dampness, the classroom was painted and new flooring was laid. This classroom is now like new. Two other classrooms also got new ceilings and all classrooms will be painted and have new floors laid over the next 1-2 years as funds allow.

The school has complied with the new guidelines for Child Protection and the Board of Management has ratified our Child Safeguarding Statement in advance of the prescribed deadline.

The process of assigning responsibilities to the Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal will be undertaken in the short term with a view to completing it before the end of the current school year.

The addressing of a number of other recommendations has commenced including:

- Discontinuing the practice whereby the school-based support teacher takes primary responsibility for teaching mainstream subjects
- A significant focus is being placed on pupils’ presentation of work and penmanship
- Learning targets for SEN pupils are being refined
- Assessment practices will be reviewed
- Building improvement works will continue in the short and medium term
- Regular formative feedback will be provided on pupils’ work in copybooks
- Beidh béim curtha ar shaorscríbhneoireacht agus ar scribhneoireacht phearsanta sna meánranganna agus sna hardranganna sa Ghaeilge

This report will be our guiding document for the next two years.