An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

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<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Clohanes National School</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Mullagh Ennis County Clare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>13730L</td>
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Date of inspection: 03-04-2019
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.
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

Dates of inspection
01-04-2019 — 03-04-2019

Inspection activities undertaken
• Meeting with principal
• Meeting with representatives of the board of management
• Meeting with parent representatives
• Review of relevant documents
• 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 board of management representative

SCHOOL CONTEXT
Clohanes National School is a co-educational rural school, situated approximately seventeen kilometres from Kilrush, Co. Clare. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Killaloe and is a two-teacher school, with a teaching principal. A special education teacher (SET) based in the school also works in another school in the locality. There were twenty-seven pupils enrolled at the time of the evaluation. Attendance levels are very good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
• The overall quality of pupils’ learning is good; pupils’ learning in Science is limited.
• The overall quality of teaching is good; there are opportunities to extend in-class models of support teaching.
• The overall quality of leadership and management is good and the teaching principal demonstrates very high levels of commitment to school improvement.
• Support for pupils’ wellbeing is of a very good standard with highly respectful and inclusive practices very evident in the school.
• The overall quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is good.
• The deployment of the SET to teach curricular areas to whole-class groups is not in accordance with Department of Education and Skills (DES) Circular 0013/17.

RECOMMENDATIONS
• Pupils’ knowledge and skills in Science should be improved.
• In-class support should be extended, to enhance teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy.
• The deployment of resources for special educational needs (SEN) should be in accordance with DES Circular 0013/17; the current deployment of the SET to teach curricular areas to whole-class groups should be discontinued.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
• The overall quality of pupils’ learning is good. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. The overall quality of pupils’ learning experiences is good. During the evaluation, most pupils demonstrated high levels of engagement and were motivated to learn. In pupil questionnaires, all pupils reported that their teacher listens to them and pays attention to what they say.
Pupils worked very successfully both independently and collaboratively during the lessons observed. Their learning achievements in Mathematics are very good overall. Most pupils responded well to questioning during the evaluation. Pupils’ achievements in summative assessments are very good, overall.

In English, most pupils read with very good fluency and expression. Early literacy skills are very well developed in the infant and junior classes. Pupils have opportunities to write in a variety of genres. However, a more systematic whole-school approach to the teaching of the writing genres should be agreed and implemented.

Ar an iomlán, tá caighdeán maith ag baint le cumas labhartha na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge. Léirigh formhór na ndaltaí tuiscint mhaith; bhi said in ann abairtí iomlána a rá agus ceisteanna a chur agus a fhreagairt. Léigh formhór na ndaltaí sna meánranganna agus sna hardranganna le cruinneas. Cé go mbionn deiseanna ag na daltaí scriobh go cruthaitheach, moltar clár scribhneoireachta córasach a chur i bhfeidhm chun scileanna na ndaltaí a theisiú a thuilleadh. Overall, pupils’ ability to speak in Irish is of a good standard. The majority of pupils demonstrated good understanding, were able to speak in full sentences and could ask and answer questions. The majority of pupils in the middle and senior classes read with accuracy. While pupils have opportunities to write creatively, it is recommended that a systematic plan for writing be implemented to further improve pupils’ skills.

The majority of pupils could discuss their learning across the various curricular areas. Pupils engage in some investigative and project work in Social, Scientific and Environmental Education (SESE). However, all pupils should be provided with more opportunities to develop their skills of working as a historian, geographer and scientist. Pupils’ learning in most strands of the Science curriculum is limited. A whole-school approach to improving pupils’ knowledge and skills in Science should be agreed and implemented; this should include specific open-ended investigations and designing and making activities for each strand of the science curriculum.

Pupils’ handwriting and the presentation of their work are of a very good standard, overall.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

The overall quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good. A variety of teaching methods was observed, including whole-class teaching, group teaching, the use of concrete materials, talk and discussion and collaborative work. Practice was most effective where lessons were carefully structured and where appropriately challenging learning activities were prepared.

The use of graded readers and novels to develop pupils’ reading and comprehension skills is highly commendable. Greater links between oral, reading and writing activities should be established in all classes.

Ar an iomlán, tá caighdeán maith ag baint le teagasc na Gaeilge. I measc na ngnéithe deachleachtaithe a breathnaithe, bhi úsáid na Gaeilge mar mhéan teagaisc, ionchuir cuí foclóra agus cluichí teanga. Ba chóir deiseanna nós rialta a chruthú do na daltaí, áfach, an Ghaeilge atá acu a chleachtadh trí straitéisí fhoghlaima gniomhacha. Overall, the standard of the teaching of Irish is good. Among the aspects of good practice observed were the use of Irish as the language of instruction, the input of appropriate vocabulary, and language games. More regular opportunities should be created, however, for pupils to practise their Irish through active learning strategies.

Support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is provided in a warm and affirming manner. It is highly commendable that The National Educational Psychological Service’s
Continuum of Support is used to plan for and record intervention processes for pupils with SEN. To expand on this good practice, more regular assessment data should be included in pupils’ support plans.

- The majority of support for pupils with SEN is delivered on a withdrawal basis. While some in-class support is provided, this should be expanded to further enhance teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy.
- The use of the SET to teach curricular areas to whole-class groups is not in accordance with DES Circular 0013/17 and should be discontinued.
- A variety of effective assessment practices was observed during the evaluation. There is very good tracking of pupils’ achievements in standardised tests in English and Mathematics. Highly commendable assessment for learning practices are implemented. To enhance this practice, strategies to assess pupils’ learning in other curricular areas should be agreed and implemented on a whole-school basis.
- All teachers demonstrated highly effective classroom management skills during the evaluation. Each classroom is well organised and includes useful displays to support teaching and learning. Further samples of pupils’ work across the curriculum should be displayed in all classrooms.

3. THE QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS’ WELLBEING

- Support for pupils’ wellbeing is of a very good quality. All teachers are committed to nurturing pupils’ holistic development. Highly respectful and inclusive practices are very evident in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils’ behaviour during the evaluation was exemplary. They demonstrated a very caring attitude towards each other.
- Pupils take a very active role in the locality, through the school’s involvement in community events and celebrations, sport and drama.
- The delivery of a comprehensive programme to support sixth class pupils’ transition to post-primary school is highly commended.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The board of management is very supportive and has ensured that a high-quality learning environment is provided for the pupils. In particular, the external environment of the school is of a very good standard and supports pupils’ creative play and recreation. All parents who completed the Inspectorate survey agreed that they feel welcome in the school, that it is well run and that their child is doing well. While effective systems of communication have been established with parents, the board should consider issuing a short report annually on its work to parents.
- The minutes of meetings of the board are maintained carefully and the school accounts are certified annually. Currently, the board meets four times a year. A minimum of five meetings should be held each year from now on, in accordance with the requirements outlined in the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019.
- The teaching principal demonstrates very high levels of commitment to school improvement. She fosters very positive relationships with members of the school community. Together with the staff she has established a warm, caring and positive school climate. The staff provides diligent and effective support to the principal across all elements of school life.
5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The overall quality of SSE is good. The school has engaged effectively in the SSE process. Actions identified in the school improvement plan for Mathematics have impacted positively on pupils’ learning achievements.

- It is noted that the school has itself identified Science as an area for improvement. The current school improvement plan for Science should be reviewed to include more specific targets. A summary of the SSE report should be shared with parents.
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 Clohanes National School welcomes the positive feedback in the WSE-MLL Report. The Board of Management is pleased that the report acknowledged:

- The overall quality of pupils’ learning
- The high quality of teaching that exists in the school
- The effectiveness of management and leadership in the school
- The very high standard of support for pupils’ wellbeing and pupils’ exemplary behaviour was noted
- In questionnaires issued, all parents agreed that they feel welcome in the school, that it is well run and that their child is doing well.

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 welcomes the positive report of the school Inspectorate and will continue to endeavour to implement and develop best practice for the whole school community and strive to implement the recommendations of the Inspectorate.
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.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<tr>
<td>Very Good</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>Good</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 very good standard.</td>
<td>Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement</td>
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<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong> 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.</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>Fair</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>Weak</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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