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>St Patrick’s N S</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Trim, Co. Meath.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>13775K</td>
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Date of inspection: 06-02-2019
WHAT IS WHOLE-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 meets 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 5 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken.
Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

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<th>Dates of inspection</th>
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| **Inspection activities undertaken** | **Analysis of parent and pupil questionnaires**  
• 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  
| **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** |

**CONTEXT**

St Patrick’s NS is a vertical, co-educational school situated in the town of Trim, Co. Meath. The school, which is under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Bishop of Meath and Kildare, has three mainstream teachers and one full-time and one part-time special education teacher. The school draws from a wide catchment area and enrolments have risen over the past few years. There are currently 60 pupils on the roll.

**SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**FINDINGS**

- The overall quality of the pupils’ learning is good.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The current deployment of staff is not in compliance with the guidelines in Circular 13/2017.
- The overall quality of assessment is satisfactory.
- The quality of leadership and management is good with the principal and deputy principal carrying out their duties professionally and competently.
- The school was not fully compliant in relation to the Child Protection checks undertaken at the time of inspection.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Staff should be deployed in accordance with Circular 13/2017 which will ensure that all pupils in need of additional supports can be placed on the continuum of support.
- The school should review its assessment policy and practices in order to use its data more effectively to inform differentiation at classroom level.
- The school needs to become fully compliant with the requirements of the Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2017.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupils’ learning is good. Most pupils present as interested and enthusiastic learners and demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge of prior learning. They have opportunities to engage in a number of active learning methodologies.

- The quality of pupils’ learning outcomes in literacy is good. In the infant classes, Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework is used successfully to develop emergent literacy skills. Across the school, a selection of novels is used effectively to develop a range of reading and discussion skills and a positive attitude towards books while also providing an effective forum for the development of higher-order comprehension skills. A wide variety of reading material is available and the school has a very well-stocked and attractive library. Pupils have opportunities to engage in a range of writing tasks, and many fine samples of their work are displayed throughout the school. The standard of presentation in most copybooks is very high.

- Tá caighdeán gnóthachtáil na Gaeilge sách maith. Baintear úsáid as straitéisí éagsúla chun na daltaí a spreagadh chun cumarsáide. É sin curtha san áireamh, áfach, tá scóip le gnóthachtáil na ndaltaí a fheabhsú. Caithfear tabhairt faoi chumas cumarsáide na ndaltaí a leathnú agus a muinín ag labhairt na Gaeilge a mheádú go córasach céimniúil ar bhonn uile-scoil.

The standard of attainment in Irish is appropriate. A variety of strategies is used to encourage the pupils to communicate. Notwithstanding that, however, there is scope to improve pupils’ achievement. The development of the pupils’ communication skills needs to be addressed and their confidence in speaking Irish needs to be increased on a systematic, progressive whole-school basis.

- The overall quality of pupils’ learning outcomes in numeracy is good. The effective use of early mathematical activities in the infant classes provides a solid foundation for subsequent mathematical learning. Pupils in all classes are exposed to a broad programme of Mathematics. They ask questions and pose possible solutions confidently. Based on responses to pupil questionnaires administered as part of this evaluation and on interactions with pupils during the evaluation, continuous revision and consolidation of mathematical concepts is recommended.

- Noteworthy learning achievements are in evidence across other curricular areas. Samples of pupils’ learning in the Visual Arts and in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) are displayed throughout the school and on the school’s blog. Pupils have achieved great proficiency in tin whistle playing. The school has participated successfully in the Green Schools Programme and the Active School Flag for a number of years.

- The quality of learner experiences is good. Interactions between pupils and teachers are positive and respectful. In all classrooms, pupils are exposed to stimulating and attractive displays of supportive learning materials. Local trips and trails are organised as part of the pupils’ learning experiences. The school has a new outdoor classroom and there are plans for additional use of the school grounds to support learning in SESE. In response to the Inspectorate questionnaires, most pupils agreed that they enjoy their lessons and learning.
2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The quality of teaching is good. In the main, teachers present well-structured lessons and set high expectations for pupils’ learning and engagement. The teachers all demonstrate high quality classroom management skills, are accomplished communicators and create welcoming, inclusive classrooms. In response to the Inspectorate questionnaires, almost all pupils agreed that their teachers explain things clearly. Responses to parent questionnaires indicate that most parents agree that teaching is good in the school.

- All teachers prepare classroom plans. However, the quality of this planning varies. The continued development of planning and the inclusion of specific learning outcomes as well as differentiated approaches in short-term planning to meet varied learning needs, are recommended.

- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is positive and supportive. Where long-term plans have been devised, targets are specific, realistic and time bound. Weekly short-term planning should reflect these targets and should break down the development of skills and content into small incremental steps in order to address each pupil’s specific needs on an on-going basis. Notwithstanding the efforts made by the school to address staffing issues, the current deployment of staff is not in compliance with the guidelines in Circular 13/2017 and should be discontinued. The correct deployment of support teachers will ensure that the greatest level of support can be provided to pupils with the greatest needs. This will also allow for all pupils in need of additional supports to be placed on the continuum of support and for their needs to be met through targeted withdrawal or in-class support, or through team teaching, and for the appropriate records to be developed and maintained.

- The overall quality of assessment is satisfactory although some very good practice was observed. The school has a very good system for recording each pupil’s results in standardised tests as they progress through the school. However, it is recommended that the school reviews its assessment policy in order to use its data more effectively to inform differentiation at classroom level. Written work is monitored regularly although questionnaire responses indicate a need to provide more formative feedback to pupils on their work. There is scope to use diagnostic testing more regularly in support settings to identify priority learning needs.

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

- The school places a great emphasis on pupil well-being and the quality of its support in this area is good. In response to questionnaires administered as part of this evaluation, pupils were positive about many aspects of school life. However, their responses also indicate that further work needs to be done in the area of pupil well-being. School management provides an orderly, safe, secure and pleasant environment for pupils and staff. Commendably, the school has introduced a Wellness Wall for both pupils and teachers. During the evaluation the pupils presented as friendly, engaging and courteous.

- Very good communication exists between home and school and a strong sense of community is evident. In the parent questionnaires all parents agreed that they are happy with the school. The parents are very supportive of the school and are involved in a range of activities.
4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management is good. The board is interested and committed, and ensures that the necessary structures and policies are in place to guide the effective management of the school. The buildings and grounds are maintained to a very high standard. Going forward, the required number of meetings should be convened each year, and while an agreed report is published annually, an agreed report should be drawn up at the closure of each meeting.

- The principal and deputy principal carry out their duties professionally and competently. They share a firm commitment to the development of the school and they collaborate effectively to respond to the school’s evolving needs.

- The school reports that it provides placement for student teachers.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is good. The school is currently focused on bringing about improvements in the teaching and learning of spellings and it is evident that this is having a positive impact in individual classrooms. The next step is to share the improvement plan and outcomes of the review annually with the school community.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<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><em>Very good</em> 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 <em>outstanding</em> 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><em>Good</em> 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 <em>very good</em> 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><em>Satisfactory</em> 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 <em>better</em> 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><em>Fair</em> 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><em>Weak</em> 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

TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management
**Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board of Management of St. Patrick’s N.S. welcomes the findings of our recent whole school evaluation.

The school management and all teaching staff are committed to implementing the evaluation’s findings.

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

In light of the report’s findings and recommendations, the school wishes to confirm:

- All staff are currently deployed in accordance with circular 13/2017.

- The school’s assessment policy and practices will be developed further on a whole school basis to inform differentiation at all class levels. A newly revised short term planning template now incorporates specific learning objectives and outcomes.

- The Board of Management wishes to clarify the following in relation to not meeting the requirements of point 5 on the child protection checklist:
  - The child protection oversight report (confirming that there were no child protection issues) was not included in the minutes of one Board meeting in 2017. At this meeting the school’s newly revised child protection safeguarding statement and risk assessment was ratified and adopted by the Board.