

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

**Whole School Evaluation**  
**Management, Leadership and Learning**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Scoil Náisiúnta Bhríde
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Dún na Sciath Curraghpoor Tipperary
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	14008S

**Date of inspection: 10-01-2019**



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**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 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, 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. However, the school has subsequently furnished evidence of compliance with this requirement.

## Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	10-01-2019
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting with principal</li><li>• Meeting with representative 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 and pupil questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Feedback to principal, teachers and board of management representative</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Náisiúnta Bhríde is a rural primary school located in Curraghpoor, approximately twelve kilometres from Tipperary town. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Cashel and Emly. The school has four mainstream class teachers, including a teaching principal. Two special education teachers (SETs) work in the school, one of whom is based in another school in the locality. There were eighty-seven pupils enrolled at the time of the evaluation and attendance levels are very good.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is good; léirigh na daltaí scileanna labhartha teoranta sa Ghaeilge le linn na meastóireachta. *Pupils displayed limited speaking skills in Irish during the evaluation.*
- The quality of teaching is good overall; effective teaching methods were not evident in all of the lessons observed.
- The support for pupils' wellbeing is highly commendable.
- The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory; the number of meetings of the board of management is not in compliance with the *Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019* and the involvement of parents in school policy development has scope to improve.
- The overall quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is good.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ba chóir plean córasach a chur i bhfeidhm ar bhonn uile scoile chun leibhéal inniúlachta na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge a ardú. *A systematic plan should be implemented on a whole-school basis to raise pupils' level of competence in Irish.*
- More effective teaching methods, including active learning and differentiation, should be used in all lessons.
- The board of management should ensure that the arrangements for board meetings are in accordance with the requirements outlined in the *Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019*.
- The board of management should facilitate increased parental involvement in school policy development.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is good. In the majority of the lessons observed, the pupils were actively and collaboratively engaged in their learning.
- While the majority of pupils could discuss their learning, there is a need to improve the oral competence and confidence of a significant minority of pupils.
- In the lessons observed, the quality of pupils' learning experiences ranged from fair to very good. In a minority of lessons, learning activities were insufficiently challenging and did not develop pupils' knowledge and skills to a sufficient degree. Pupils' learning experiences were highly effective when they were engaged in meaningful, purposeful learning activities, appropriate to their level of ability.
- In Mathematics, the majority of pupils responded well to questioning and demonstrated good understanding of concepts.
- Ar an iomlán, tá caighdeán measartha ag baint le torthaí foghlama na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge. I suímh áirithe bhí foclóir cuí ar eolas ag na daltaí. Bhí deacrachtaí ag na daltaí labhairt go leanúnach ar théamaí éagsúla agus bhí deacrachtaí acu ceisteanna a chur agus a fhreagairt. Is gá leibhéal inniúlachta agus caighdeán cumarsáide na ndaltaí a ardú sa Ghaeilge. *Overall, pupils' learning outcomes in Irish are of a fair standard. In certain settings, pupils knew appropriate vocabulary. Pupils had difficulties speaking continuously on particular themes and difficulties asking and answering questions. There is a need to raise pupils' level of competence and standard of communication in Irish.*
- The majority of pupils read with fluency and can apply comprehension strategies effectively. Pupils' early literacy skills are very well developed in the infant and junior classes.
- The pupils have opportunities to engage in creative writing, including the writing of poetry. Across classes, however, the standard of pupils' writing varies from fair to very good. A small number of pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the writing genres. A whole-school approach to the systematic teaching of the writing genres should be developed and implemented.
- Good-quality samples of pupils' learning across the curriculum, including project work, are displayed attractively on corridors and in classrooms. Opportunities for pupils to engage in investigative work and in the use of the local environment should be extended.

### 2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The quality of teaching is good overall; the quality of teaching in the lessons observed ranged from fair to very good.
- High-quality lessons were characterised by careful teacher preparation, the use of a range of teaching methods and appropriate learning activities. These effective strategies should be extended to all lessons. In-class models of support teaching are used very successfully in the infant and junior classes to support small-group differentiated literacy and numeracy instruction. In-class support teaching should now be extended to the middle and senior classes.
- Tá scóip chun múineadh na Gaeilge a fhorbairt ar bhonn uile scoile. I measc na ngnéithe den dea-chleachtais a breathnaíodh, bhí úsáid na Gaeilge mar theanga theagaisc, ionchur cuí foclóra agus cluichí teanga. Amach anseo, moltar a chinntiú go gcuirtear na trí thréimhse cumarsáide i bhfeidhm i ngach ceacht Gaeilge. Ba chóir clár céimniúil a fhorbairt don Ghaeilge chun leibhéal inniúlachta agus caighdeán labhartha agus scríbhneoireachta na

ndaltaí a fheabhsú. *There is scope to develop the teaching of Irish at whole-school level. 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. Going forward, the implementation of the three communicative phases should be ensured in all Irish lessons. An incremental plan for Irish should be developed to improve pupils' level of competence and the standards of speaking and writing in Irish.*

- The recent introduction of The National Educational Psychological Service's (NEPS) *Continuum of Support* is highly commendable. Most targets are specific and measurable and the inclusion of detailed assessment data in most support files is highly effective practice.
- A variety of assessment practices was observed during the evaluation. There is need for whole-school approaches to assessment across the curriculum, including assessment for learning (AfL), should be agreed and implemented. While pupils' work in copybooks is corrected in most classes, there is a need to provide more regular constructive feedback to pupils in writing, to enhance the learning process.
- A significant number of parents indicated their dissatisfaction with the amount of homework their child gets and a significant number of pupils indicated that their homework is not usually corrected by their teachers. The school's homework policy should be reviewed, in consultation with parents and pupils, and implemented consistently.
- All teachers provided planning documentation. To enhance practice, a whole-school approach to planning, with the clear identification of learning activities and intended learner outcomes, should be agreed and implemented.
- The overall management of pupils during the evaluation was very good. In response to questionnaires, almost all pupils agreed that they felt safe in their classroom and that they knew there were clear rules in the school against hurting other people.
- The teachers' engagement in continuous professional development, including a local professional learning group, is highly commendable.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELLBEING**

- The overall quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is very good.
- Pupils engage in a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities to support their learning and holistic development. The implementation of the *Get Up! Stand Up!* programme to support the senior pupils' wellbeing and their transition to post-primary school is highly commendable.
- Commendably, pupils have opportunities to engage in leadership roles in the school, including the organisation of the book fair, Green Schools and Active Schools committees. As a next step, the establishment of a student council should be considered.

### **4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

- The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.
- The board of management supports the work of the school. The development of annual action plans and a three-year strategic plan is highly commendable. The number of meetings of the board is not in compliance with the *Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019*. While the board meets in each of the three school terms, the required five meetings within a school year are not held. Arrangements for board meetings should be in accordance with the requirements outlined in the *Governance Manual*.

- In the Inspectorate questionnaire, a significant minority of parents were unsure or disagreed that the school sought their views regularly on school matters. The board of management should facilitate increased parental involvement in school policy development.
- The teaching principal demonstrates a clear interest in the school community and has created an inclusive atmosphere in the school. Almost all parents, in response to the Inspectorate questionnaire, agreed that there is a good atmosphere and that they feel welcome in the school.
- The position of assistant principal II is currently being filled. The duties of the assistant principal I and assistant principal II should be reviewed regularly to reflect the school's priorities and improvement initiatives.
- The active parents' association is very supportive of the school.
- The board reported that it provides placement for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and is included among the standards in the Teaching Council's *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers* as it can provide valuable professional benefits for student teachers and the teacher education institution.

#### **5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION**

- The overall quality of SSE is good. The school has engaged positively with the process and SSE reports and school improvement plans (SIPs) have been formulated. There was evidence that some of the actions identified are impacting positively on classroom practices.
- In further engagement in SSE, it is advised that more specific targets be identified and the impact of identified actions for improvement be reviewed regularly.

# **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 Scoil Náisiúnta Bhríde are very satisfied with the findings of the recent inspection. The board is very proud that the area of support for pupils' wellbeing was identified as highly commendable. The acknowledgement of the inclusive and welcoming atmosphere in the school is extremely welcome. Key areas including pupils' learning, quality of teaching and school self-evaluation are all "Good" which highlights the strengths in these areas. We appreciate the recognition of the good work and support that our Parents Association offer the school.

## **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 recommendations, as cited in the report, will be implemented as part of the school's continuous improvement process and school self-evaluation.

The staff supported by the board of management have already initiated a review of the Whole School Plan for Irish. This review will promote continuity and progression in pupils' learning on a systematic basis throughout the school. A timeframe for these revisions is being put in place and will address Irish as the language of instruction and improving pupils' levels of competence in speaking and writing Irish.

The board supports the further development of the in-class support initiatives already in place and these have now been extended to the senior classes in the school. This will support active learning and differentiation across the school.

The board of management has already started to use the new Child Safeguarding Oversight Report document and this report is now, and will continue to be, incorporated into our board of management meeting minutes. The board is committed to complying with the required arrangements for meetings in accordance with the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015/2019.

In conjunction with the board, the staff have commenced engagement with our parents regarding school policies. A review of our Homework provision and Code of Behaviour and Discipline has already been submitted to parents to facilitate their discussion and input. This type of parental engagement will be an ongoing focus going forward.



## 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.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	<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
Good	<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
Satisfactory	<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
Fair	<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
Weak	<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;