

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	St. Colman's B N S
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Kanturk Co. Cork
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	14052V

Date of inspection: 07-03-2019



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 point number 7 above in that the policy on RSE is not fully and consistently implemented from first to sixth class.

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

Dates of inspection	07-03-2019
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 and pupil 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

St. Colman's BNS which caters for boys from first to sixth class operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cloyne. It has five mainstream teachers which includes a teaching principal, one fulltime special education teacher (SET) and one part time SET. There are 116 pupils enrolled in the school. The non-attendance of a significant cohort of pupils is a cause for concern.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is very good; a significant number of pupils achieve to a very high level in both literacy and numeracy.
- Teaching is of a good quality overall; very high standards of teaching were noted in a significant a number of lessons and assessment is at a good level.
- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is very good; an inclusive atmosphere prevails in the school and pupil voice is purposefully developed through pupils' participation in age-appropriate decision making.
- The quality of leadership and management is good; there is a need to review the deployment of special education teachers and the management of pupil attendance.
- School self-evaluation (SSE) is of a good quality; the development of a mechanism to monitor the implementation of agreed initiatives would further enhance the process.
- The school is not fully compliant with Child Protection procedures as Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is not consistently taught in the school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The board of management should: ensure that the policy on RSE is implemented consistently in order to be fully compliant with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017, oversee the implementation of the Special Education Circular 13/2017 with particular reference to the deployment of SETs, and outline and implement strategies to improve pupil attendance.
- The school should establish a mechanism to monitor the implementation of agreed initiatives in its SSE process and to assess the impact of improvement initiatives on pupil-learning outcomes.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The overall quality of pupils' learning is very good with a significant number of pupils achieving to a very high standard in both literacy and numeracy. Pupils experience a broad curriculum with a particular emphasis on co-curricular activities in Science, literacy and Arts Education. They derive high levels of satisfaction from their learning and their abilities and interests are carefully nurtured. Senior pupils described the very broad range of initiatives in which they currently participate, in a most articulate and competent manner. Almost all pupils present as highly motivated learners, who participate eagerly in lessons. They successfully reach and, in some instances, surpass the high expectations set for them by their teachers. The school has identified the progression of digital learning as a priority and this will further enhance the learning experience for pupils. There is scope, in some instances, to develop and to improve the pupils' listening skills. Absentee rates for a significant number of pupils are high and the school should implement a range of strategies to improve overall levels of attendance.

Attainment in English is of a good standard overall with some pupils achieving to a very high level. Pupils' oral language capacity is consistently developed. Many pupils display high levels of competence in oral communication and some have enjoyed success in public speaking competitions. Pupils' skills in creative writing are successfully nurtured. Most pupils read with appropriate fluency and comprehension and very effective use is made of novels. The planned introduction of a graded reading initiative in autumn 2019 is welcomed.

Ar an iomlán, tá caighdeán na foghlama sa Ghaeilge go maith agus go han-mhaith i ranganna áirithe. Labhraíonn and léann na daltaí go muiníneach. Chun a gcaighdeán a fheabhsú a thuilleadh, moltar scileanna scríbhneoireachta neamhspleácha na ndaltaí a fhorbairt go céimiúil ar bhonn uile scoile. *In general, the quality of learning in Irish is good and very good in some classes. Pupils speak and read confidently. To enhance levels of attainment in writing, the incremental development of pupils' independent writing skills on a school-wide basis is advised.*

The level of pupil achievement in numeracy is high. Praiseworthy work is undertaken in the development of pupils' skills in problem solving and a consistent focus is directed towards pupils' capacity in mental maths and in tables. Some demonstrate very good ability to describe their thinking processes, to apply their learning across the strands of the curriculum and to make meaningful connections to their environment.

High-quality learning outcomes were noted in lessons observed in Science, History, Drama and Music. Pupils ably apply curricular skills in examining and critically using historical evidence and predict the likely results of scientific investigations. They cooperate with others in shaping Drama and perform traditional Irish music on a range of instruments. Pupils' achievements in school and in the community are celebrated on the school's website.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

The overall quality of teaching observed in lessons was good with a significant number of lessons being of a very high quality. All teachers provide stimulating learning environments for the pupils and, in some instances, these are of an exceptionally high quality. In general, lessons are well structured and a wide range of methodologies is used to foster active learning. Where teaching is

most effective, high expectations for achievement are successfully communicated to pupils and they are enabled to direct their own learning.

High-quality support is provided to pupils with special educational needs. The range of models used to support pupils' learning has been increased to include team-teaching interventions and in-class initiatives in both literacy and numeracy. Teachers collaborate successfully in their provision for pupils with special educational needs and the *Continuum of Support* is fully implemented. While good use is made of diagnostic assessment to inform targets for interventions, there is scope in some instances for greater specificity in the targets set in student support plans.

While the overall quality of assessment is good, there is potential to make greater use of assessment information. Teachers should regularly collect and examine baseline data to monitor the progress of individual pupils and to assess the impact of in-class initiatives. Strand-specific data from standardised testing should be analysed to direct the focus of SSE initiatives.

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

The quality of support for pupils' well-being is very good. An inclusive atmosphere prevails and the school has a welcoming climate. Pupil voice is purposefully developed through pupils' participation in age-appropriate decision making.

The school is highly praised for its participation in a very wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities for pupils. They are facilitated to explore themes such as citizenship, enterprise, sustainable development, public speaking, robotics and cookery through their engagement in an array of initiatives. These activities make a significant contribution to the pupils' sense of self-worth and their potential to become active, vibrant members of their community. Their involvement in various committees has enabled them to represent their view-points while learning to respect the views of others and to make a positive contribution to the life of the school.

The pupils present as happy, confident learners and pupil-pupil and pupil-teacher interactions were observed to be affirming and respectful. The school operates a healthy eating policy and the anti-bullying policy is implemented successfully. Questionnaire responses from parents indicate very high levels of satisfaction with the pupils' social and personal development.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is good. The board of management displays a strong commitment to the school and demonstrates an awareness of the overall standards of pupil attainment. It should however, ensure that the school operates in compliance with the special education circular 0013/2017. The current situation whereby a teacher allocated to support pupils with special educational needs is deployed to teach Mathematics in a mainstream class should be addressed as a priority. The board should further ensure that the policy on RSE is implemented consistently in order to be fully compliant with Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017. The board should outline strategies to improve pupil attendance.

The principal provides effective leadership for the school and actively promotes professional development opportunities for teachers. The in-school leadership team plays a valuable role in supporting the principal and together they work diligently to progress school improvement. The

team values pupils' views and provides opportunities for them to participate in age-appropriate decision making through their engagement in a range of initiatives including the Green Flag and Junior Entrepreneur Programme.

The parents' association is active in its support of the school and the quality of home-school communication is very good.

The school reported that it provides placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcomed 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 teachers, student teachers and the teacher education institutions.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

The quality of work undertaken as part of the school self-evaluation (SSE) process is good. Improvement plans for literacy and for numeracy have been in place for a number of years and the school has recently formulated a digital learning plan. Baseline data has been analysed, and criteria have been set to assess the success of each initiative. In some instances, targets set should be more specific. In leading teaching and learning, the in-school leadership team should take responsibility for monitoring the implementation and the effectiveness of SSE initiatives. The team should also assess the impact of SSE on pupil learning outcomes and experiences.

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	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

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

We are very pleased with the report. We feel that the very good practices in teaching and learning throughout the school were acknowledged and affirmed. It was important to us that the positive inclusive atmosphere in our school was commended. We are also pleased that the school was highly praised for its provision of a very wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities which contribute to the pupils' sense of self-worth and to their potential to become active, vibrant members of their community.

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 current practice whereby a SET teaches Mathematics in a main stream class will be discontinued, to comply with the Special Education Circular 13/2007.
- The board has facilitated review of the policy on RSE by both members of the board and parent representatives. The revised policy has been ratified by the board and published on our school website. The school community was invited to comment and to respond. Moving forward, the programme for RSE will be fully taught in the second term of school and records of this work will be documented in individual teachers' planning.
- The Board is ensuring that the school is fully compliant with the Child Protection procedures for Primary Schools 2017. The policy on Safeguarding will be reviewed regularly to comply with legislation.
- We will encourage parents to discontinue the practice of taking holidays during term-time. Parents will be regularly informed of children's absences and notice will be given at ten, fifteen and twenty days of absence. Children with high attendance levels will be commended by teachers and by the principal on a monthly basis.
- In relation to SSE, we will share and explain our action plans more explicitly with parents through newsletters and the school website. Each subject area in our plan will be monitored by an individual staff member. Progress to be discussed and recorded at each staff meeting. The board will be regularly updated on the progress in SSE.