

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

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| Ainm na scoile / School name | Lisdoonan N S |
| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Lisdoonan Carrickmacross Co Monaghan |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number | 15143G |

Date of inspection: 23-11-2018



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 inspectors 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.

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

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

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| Dates of inspection | 23-11-2018 |
| 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, pupil and teacher questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Post-evaluation feedback meeting with the principal, deputy principal and teachers, and also with parent and board of management representatives |

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Lisdoonan National School is a small, co-educational rural school located in the hinterland of Carrickmacross in Co. Monaghan. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Clogher. There has been a steady increase in enrolment in recent years and the school currently has 134 pupils distributed across five mainstream classes. There is one full-time and two part-time special education teachers. Attendance patterns are very good, with staff monitoring pupil attendance carefully.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is high; they demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of key curricular concepts; opportunities remain to enhance their skill development in a small number of areas including scientific and mathematical reasoning.
- Pupils enjoy a broad range of curricular and co-curricular learning experiences that facilitate their holistic development; regular engagement in digital learning is not yet a feature of their learning experience.
- Teaching is of a high standard overall with some very good practices noted; while considerable attention is given to standardised and diagnostic assessment, the potential of formative assessment and pupil self-assessment in particular has not yet been fully realised.
- Support for pupils' well-being is very good; all teacher and pupil interactions observed during the inspection were respectful and affirming.
- The overall quality of leadership and management is very good; opportunities exist to strengthen communication/ consultation with parents and to involve them to a greater extent in review and development practices.
- School self-evaluation practices have contributed to the development of whole-school approaches to teaching in a number of areas and these have impacted positively on pupils' learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pupils will benefit from additional opportunities to articulate the reasoning underpinning their mathematical and scientific learning; digital learning experiences should be provided for all pupils.
- Teachers should extend the range of assessment practices to include greater provision for formative assessment strategies, and in particular for the development of pupil self-assessment skills.

- The board of management should extend the involvement of parents in the development and review of school policies; further exploration of parental perspectives regarding key school matters is advised.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is high. Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of key curricular concepts and content. They show positive dispositions towards learning and high levels of engagement and cooperation during learning activities. In particular, pupils demonstrate positive dispositions towards local history and to preparing and presenting oral reports in English.
- Pupils enjoy a broad range of curricular and co-curricular learning experiences that facilitate their development across a variety of domains. Using computers and technology is not yet a feature of pupils' learning experiences. Digital learning experiences should be provided for all pupils.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to be active in their learning and to work collaboratively with other pupils. Pupils can recall a significant number of scientific experiments; further development of their scientific skills would augment this valuable learning.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of mathematical language along with mastery of basic mathematical facts and procedures. They show a preference for written computation and would benefit from additional experience in estimating and articulating their mathematical reasoning.
- Positive reading attainments are in evidence and pupils enjoy writing in a variety of genre.
- Léiríonn na daltaí cumas maith ar usáid na teanga i gcomhthéascanna fiuntacha. Léann fórmhór acu le tuiscint agus le foghraíocht cruinn. Is féidir le cuid is mó acu abairtí agus ceisteanna bunúsacha a chumadh le míniú. *The pupils demonstrate a good ability to use the language in meaningful contexts. The majority of them read with understanding and accurate pronunciation. Most of the pupils can form basic sentences and questions with confidence.*
- Overall, the findings from the pupil questionnaire data were positive in relation to their learning experiences and well-being.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- Teaching is of a high standard overall with some very good practices noted. Teachers demonstrate commendable conscientiousness in their planning and preparation of appropriate resources and inclusive learning environments. Class and school support plans are clearly documented and used to enable pupils with additional needs to progress in their learning.
- Teachers provide well-structured lessons using a suitable range of methodologies. Teachers interact purposefully with pupils to stimulate and consolidate their learning. Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their practices of providing formative feedback to deepen pupils' learning with a view to extending best practices on a whole-school basis. While considerable attention is given to standardised and diagnostic assessment, the potential of formative assessment and pupils' self-assessment has not yet been fully realised. In particular, a whole-school approach to the development and use of editing check-lists by teachers and pupils will enhance the quality of pupils' independent writing.

- Teachers engage in ongoing professional development and use this to inform and enhance their individual and collective practices. Team-teaching has been successfully established to support the development of differentiated initiatives in literacy and numeracy.
- The effective promotion of play-based learning in infant classes through the skilful adoption of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is highly commended.

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

- The overall quality of support for pupils' well-being is very good. School leaders and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the holistic development of pupils. Affirming and respectful interactions between staff and pupils and among pupils were noted during the inspection. Teachers and special needs assistants facilitate the effective integration of pupils with additional needs and foster their independence and confidence in a sensitive manner.
- Pupils' well-being is enhanced by their engagement in the Green School's environmental programme and the Health Promoting Schools' project. Pupils articulated great pride and a sense of belonging to their school and local community during the inspection.
- In their responses to questionnaire, the majority of pupils reported that they like school and feel safe in their class.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The board of management and leadership team addresses the range of responsibilities in an effective manner. They are responsive to the evolving needs and development priorities of the school.
- The principal demonstrates very good management and leadership skills. She works in close partnership with the deputy principal to ensure the smooth running of the school and the progression of ongoing development priorities. Together with the staff, they have successfully implemented a significant number of curricular changes that have impacted positively on pupils' learning.
- A range of channels is in place to facilitate home-school communication including regular newsletters, school reports and an open-door policy to support home-school liaison. An active Parents' Association supports the work of the school and reports positively on the organisation of the school and the activities provided. The data from the parents' questionnaires indicates that almost all parents are satisfied with the quality of teaching. However, a small number of parents indicated dissatisfaction with aspects of the school's organisation and further exploration of these perspectives is advisable. Whilst a small number of parents are involved in the Green Schools and Healthy schools initiatives, there is a need to involve parents to a greater extent in the development and review of school policies and procedures.
- The staff of the school reports that it provides placement for student teachers and this provides valuable benefits for teachers, student teachers, pupils and the teacher education institution.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is commendable. A strong culture of ongoing improvement in teaching and learning is evident in this school. Previous priorities identified in earlier cycles of SSE included the promotion of a greater range of writing genres in English

and a whole-school emphasis on the development of problem-solving skills in Mathematics. It is evident that these improvement initiatives impacted positively on pupils' learning. It is now timely to review the action plans and achievement of targets previously established with a view to embedding the most effective strategies in future practice.

- The principal and staff are currently gathering information and evidence to inform the development of the action plan for the new SSE priority which focuses on embedding of the Primary Language Curriculum. They have sought additional support from external agencies to inform their practice in relation to SSE and also the Primary Language Curriculum. They have yet to liaise with the parent and pupil bodies as part of this cycle of the most recent cycle of SSE although questionnaires were administered to both parents and pupils in previous SSE cycles.

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 welcomes the findings of this report and is encouraged by the affirmation it gives to the whole school community. We appreciate that the inspectors acknowledged the high standard of teaching and good practices which underpin learning.

In particular, the Board is pleased with the acknowledgement of the school's commitment to the holistic development of each pupil.

We welcome the report's recognition of the pupils' sense of belonging and knowledge of history of the local area, which has been part of the school's tradition over many years.

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 accepts and acknowledges the recommendations in the report and wishes to state its intention to review and address them in a timely fashion.

The school is committed to ensuring that a high standard of teaching and learning will be provided into the future and that the wellbeing of pupils and staff will continue to be of utmost importance.

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 <i>very good</i> 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; |