Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

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<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Leaffoney National School</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Kilglass</td>
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<td></td>
<td>County Sligo</td>
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<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>15496Q</td>
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Date of inspection: 07-03-2019
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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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 | 07-03-2019
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**Inspection activities undertaken**
- Meetings with principal and teachers
- 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, teachers and chairperson of board of management

**SCHOOL CONTEXT**
Leaffoney National School, which operates under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Diocese of Tuam, Killala and Achonry, is located in a rural area about eight kilometres from Enniscrone in County Sligo. Currently, the school has two mainstream class teachers—one of whom is the teaching principal—and one special education teacher (SET) who also works in a number of other local schools. There were twenty-one pupils enrolled at the time of the evaluation.

**SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**FINDINGS**
- The overall quality of leadership and management was weak; it was not clear that the board of management was discharging its functions as set out in the Education Act, 1998.
- The overall quality of pupils’ learning was fair; most notably, there was a lack of breadth, balance, continuity and progression in pupils’ learning in the senior classes.
- The overall quality of teaching was fair; teachers’ individual practice across a number of areas ranged from very good to weak.
- The quality of support for pupils’ wellbeing was fair.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) was weak.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**
- The board of management, as a matter of urgency and in consultation with the patron, should seek bespoke training and support with a view to enabling it to fulfil its functions effectively.
- The board should use the SSE legislative checklist—available at www.schoolself-evaluation.ie—to assist it in carrying out its functions as set out in legislation and Department regulations.
- The board, as a matter of urgency, should ratify procedures to enable it to deal effectively with the concerns of parents.
- The board should take steps to support and monitor closely the operation of in-school management and the day-to-day running of the school.
- The school should engage with the support services, as discussed at the post-evaluation meeting, with a view to improving leadership and management and teaching and learning.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
   • The overall quality of pupils’ learning was fair.

   • The overall quality of the learner outcomes being achieved by pupils in the school was fair. While pupils in first and second classes had achieved relevant objectives for their class level, there was evidence of a lack of continuity and progression in pupils’ learning in the senior classes. In some curriculum areas, there was very little evidence that any consistent or progressive learning had taken place.

   • Pupils’ learning in English was satisfactory overall. Their reading standards in both classrooms were at an acceptable level. The development of pupils’ writing was weak. The standard of their handwriting and the presentation of written work was generally poor, particularly in the senior classes.

   • Pupils’ learning in Mathematics was satisfactory. Pupils in both classrooms were generally able to demonstrate that they had achieved relevant curriculum objectives.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING
   • The overall quality of teaching was fair. Teachers’ individual practice varied from very good to weak.

   • There was effective use of Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework as a vehicle for language development in the junior classes. The teaching approaches being experienced by pupils in the junior classes were good. The school should ensure that it makes appropriate provision for all areas of the Primary School Curriculum for pupils in all classes in the school.

   • Ba chóir do gach múinteoir féachaint chuige go mbíonn dóthain cumais, taithí agus muinín aici chun dea-shampla a thabhairt do na daltaí maidir le foclóir, foghraisocht agus foirmeacha teanga sa Ghaeilge. All teachers should ensure that they have sufficient ability, experience and confidence to provide a good example to pupils regarding Irish vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar.

   • The quality of assessment was fair. The school administers standardised tests in literacy and numeracy as well as a non-reading intelligence test. A range of relevant screening and diagnostic assessment tools is used by the SET. Other than these, however, there is little evidence that teaching is being adequately informed by ongoing assessment and monitoring of pupils’ learning. In the senior classroom, pupils’ copybooks and folders did not contain a useful record of learning.
• In the support setting, there was evidence of effective planning, teaching and assessment for pupils with SEN. There was scope for improvement, however, with regard to the way in which the school responds to individual learning needs in mainstream settings. The school should ensure that the deployment of the SET in all of the schools served by this post is in accordance with Department of Education and Skills Circular 13/2017.

3. THE QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS’ WELLBEING
• The quality of support for pupils’ wellbeing was fair. The school had implemented actions to promote healthy eating and to encourage physical activity. The findings from the Inspectorate pupil survey were significantly less positive than expected. It is recommended that the school implement the health-promoting-school approach as set out in Well-Being in Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion (2015).

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT
• The overall quality of leadership and management was weak. It was not clear that the board of management was discharging its functions as set out in the Education Act, 1998. In particular, the board did not appear to have reviewed the school plan in many years.

• It is recommended that the board of management, as a matter of urgency and in consultation with the patron, seek bespoke training and support with a view to enabling it to fulfil its functions effectively. It is recommended that the board use the SSE legislative checklist—available at www.schoolself-evaluation.ie—to assist it in carrying out its functions as set out in legislation and Department regulations.

• Evidence indicates that the board has not addressed a number of parental concerns which have been communicated to the school over a number of years. At the time of the evaluation, the board had not yet ratified a policy for dealing with parental complaints. It is recommended that the board, as a matter of urgency, ratify procedures to enable it to deal effectively with the concerns of parents.

• The overall quality of in-school management was weak. It is recommended that the board support and monitor closely the operation of in-school management and the day-to-day running of the school. It is recommended that the school engage with the support services, as discussed at the post-evaluation meeting, with a view to improving leadership and management and teaching and learning.

• Parents recently nominated to the board of management were positive about the school. However, the responses of parents to the Inspectorate survey were significantly less positive than expected. The summary results of surveys completed by both pupils and their parents have been made available to the school and the board is strongly advised to analyse them and to address the issues raised.

• The school is entitled to reduce the length of the school day for infants by one hour and should consult with the school community regarding this issue. The school should ensure that periods of formal religious instruction are shown clearly on school timetables in both classrooms.
5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of school self-evaluation was weak. The school should ensure that the school engages fully in the school self-evaluation process in accordance with the most recent circulars and guidelines, which are available at www.schoolself-evaluation.ie
Inschools 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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<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Very Good</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>Good</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 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><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 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><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>Weak</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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