

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

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

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Convent National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Mallow County Cork
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	16159D

Date of inspection: 07-11-2019



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

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

Dates of inspection	07-11-2019
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, pupil and teacher 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

Convent National School, Mallow is a senior, girls' national school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cloyne. There are eleven mainstream classes in the school which cater for pupils from first to sixth class. The school operates a learning resource class for pupils with mild to moderate learning difficulties, in addition to an early intervention class and two school-age classes for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. At the time of the evaluation, 272 pupils were enrolled in the school, including 23 pupils attending special classes, eleven of whom were boys. While the attendance of pupils is good generally, the attendance patterns of less than a quarter of pupils require close monitoring and review.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is very good; pupils ably describe learning outcomes and processes across curricular areas but there is scope to further enhance pupil attainment in Irish.
- Teaching is very effective; teacher planning and preparation is of an exemplary standard generally and teachers successfully implement a broad range of methodologies.
- While the additional learning needs of pupils are addressed effectively, there is scope to refine the implementation of the *Continuum of Support* and the formulation of individual education plans (IEPs).
- Support for pupils' well-being is of a very high standard, the school strives to develop the full potential of all pupils in a happy, secure learning environment.
- The quality of leadership and management is good; however, aspects of practice could be progressed further.
- School self-evaluation (SSE) is of a good standard; the school has engaged productively with SSE and effected improvements in learner outcomes, experiences and in teachers' practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- B'fhiú na seánraí scríbhneoireachta a chur i bhfeidhm sa Ghaeilge chun úsáid neamhspleách teanga na ndaltaí a chur chun cinn agus a scileanna teanga a mhéadú tuilleadh. (*It would be of benefit to implement writing genres in Irish, to promote pupils' independent language use and further enhance their language skills*).
- The implementation of the *Continuum of Support* requires review to ensure that pupils with the greatest level of need receive the greatest level of support; IEPs should be devised and ready to implement at the beginning of instructional terms.
- An agreed report should be shared with the school community after each board meeting and mechanisms to involve parents in policy formation and review require development.
- The enrolment policy should be reviewed to outline the enrolment criteria for mainstream and special classes and the selection criteria applied when classes are oversubscribed.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupils' learning outcomes and experiences, including pupils with special educational needs, is very good.
- Pupils demonstrate high levels of motivation, interest and pride in their learning. They are facilitated to explore a broad and varied curriculum and to make meaningful connections within and across curricular areas. They are active agents in their learning who are accustomed to working both independently and collaboratively in a purposeful manner. Attainment is of a good to very good standard. Pupils ably describe learning outcomes and processes and use subject specific language and terminology with fluency and ease.
- Pupils' language skills in English are developed to a high standard. Their ability to write independently and in a variety of genres is commendable. Moltar anois na seánraí scríbhneoireachta a chur i bhfeidhm sa Ghaeilge chun úsáid neamhspleách teanga na ndaltaí a chur chun cinn agus a scileanna teanga a mhéadú tuilleadh. *(It is now recommended that writing genres in Irish are implemented, to promote pupils' independent language use and further enhance their language skills).*
- The learning outcomes of pupils attending special classes is good. In the classes observed, pupils engaged productively in learning activities. They demonstrated good ability to complete tasks relating to language, number and motor development. Learning activities facilitated the development of independent learning skills and pupils' social and communication skills in personal and group interactions.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The quality of teaching is of a very high standard overall.
- Teacher planning and preparation is of an exemplary standard in most settings. Plans identify clear, relevant learning objectives which facilitate the incremental progression of pupils' learning. Almost all lessons observed were very well structured and paced. A range of resources, including information and communication technologies, were used effectively to support teaching and learning. Teachers used questioning strategies very effectively to stimulate pupil responses, to encourage the explanation of outcomes and processes and to develop pupils' critical thinking skills.
- The quality of teaching observed in special education settings is very good. Teachers demonstrate an acute awareness of pupils' personal and learning needs and respond to them with great sensitivity and care. The *Continuum of Support* is being implemented to good effect generally to address pupils' additional learning needs. There is potential, however, to further refine its use to ensure that the pupils with the greatest level of need are consistently prioritised to receive the greatest level of support.
- While student support plans have been compiled to support the attainment of learning targets in most settings, they have yet to be devised in one of the special classes. Plans should be agreed and ready to implement in all settings at the beginning of instructional terms.
- The overall quality of assessment is good. Teachers use various forms of assessment to evaluate pupils' progress. The continued development of both oral and written formative feedback and pupil self-assessment strategies will enhance assessment practices. The school should also engage in a more in-depth analysis of available assessment data to ensure that it informs teaching and learning in a more focussed manner.

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

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is of a very high standard overall.
- The school strives to develop the full potential of pupils in a happy, secure learning environment. Interactions among pupils and between pupils and teachers are very positive, respectful and conducive to well-being.
- The school implements a cohesive, whole-school approach to the teaching of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Stay Safe, and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). Most parents who completed questionnaires agreed that the school helps their child's social and personal development and that they were informed of the schools' RSE policy, the Code of Behaviour and the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Pupils' leadership skills and their understanding of civic responsibilities are progressed through the implementation of the SPHE curriculum and through the school's participation in a number of local and national initiatives.
- Mechanisms are in place to ensure that there is effective communication between the school and parents with regard to pupils' learning. The school has also developed productive links with other schools in the area and with relevant support agencies.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The overall quality of leadership and management is good.
- The board of management is very supportive of the school and fulfils its duties efficiently. An agreed report should be compiled after each meeting of the board and communicated with staff and parents. The board is also advised to review the enrolment policy of the school, to clearly outline the enrolment criteria in mainstream and special classes and the selection criteria applied when a class is oversubscribed.
- The principal was appointed in September, 2019. She demonstrates effective leadership qualities and a strong commitment to maintaining and enhancing the high standards of teaching and learning in the school.
- The members of the in-school leadership (ISL) team have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The duties of the team should be reviewed regularly, to ensure that they align with prioritised areas for school improvement and that the tasks assigned to team members are proportionate to their roles and responsibilities.
- The school has an established parents' association which is affiliated with the National Parents' Council. Officers of the association report that the school is supportive of its work and that there is good communication between the association and the school. Responses to questionnaires indicate that there is scope to improve the role of parents as partners in education. It is recommended that mechanisms which promote greater parental involvement in school life be devised and implemented. Such mechanisms should facilitate greater parental involvement in policy formation and review.
- The school regularly facilitates the placement of student teachers on teaching practice.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The overall quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is good. The school has engaged productively with SSE since its introduction in 2012. School improvement plans have been successfully implemented in literacy and numeracy. These plans have impacted positively on teachers' practice and on pupils' learning experiences and outcomes. The school is currently focusing on the use of digital technology as a tool to enhance teaching and learning.

- It is recommended that the school provide a summary of school improvement plans and reports to parents on an annual basis. The school should also devise and implement strategies which facilitate parents to support the attainment of targets in SSE at home.
- The capacity of the school for further improvement is very good.

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;

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 positive feedback that we have received. We are happy that the overall quality of pupils learning is very good, that teaching is very effective and that teachers' planning and preparation is of an exemplary standard. We are particularly pleased that the quality of support for pupils' well-being was very highly praised and noted to be of a very high standard as it is something that we value as a 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 Board of Management and staff acknowledge the recommendations made by the Inspectorate and are currently actively working together in order to facilitate the effective implementation of same.