

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Frosses National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Frosses County Donegal
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	16375J

Date of inspection: 28-01-2019



**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 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 these requirements.

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

Dates of inspection	28-01-2019
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

Frosses National School is a rural, co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Raphoe. The staff comprises four mainstream class teachers and three special education teachers, one of whom is shared with another school. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in School (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. Eighty-two pupils are currently enrolled and school attendance levels are very good overall.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- Pupils' learning achievements are good overall with pupils demonstrating high levels of interest and participation in active learning experiences.
- The quality of teaching is very good; teachers use an effective and purposeful range of questioning techniques to stimulate and extend pupil responses.
- Leadership and management are good overall and the principal and other leaders in the school promote a learning culture and strive for improved outcomes for all pupils; the board does not currently fulfil Department requirements regarding frequency of meetings.
- The quality of assessment is good with teachers assessing relevant aspects of pupils' learning; there is scope to develop the current use of assessment data in informing teachers' preparation and provision of differentiated learning activities.
- The quality of support for pupils with special education needs (SEN) is very good overall; very effective practices are implemented to support pupils' educational, social and personal wellbeing.
- Whole-school curricular and DEIS planning practices are good; there is a lack of clarity with regard to the ongoing monitoring of pupils' progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The board of management should ensure that meetings are convened not less than five times in any school year in accordance with the *Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019*.
- Greater use should be made of the analysis of assessment data to guide and inform lesson objectives and learning activities that are appropriately differentiated for the wide range of learning abilities of pupils.
- Whole-school curricular and DEIS plans should be reviewed to ensure that they are contextualised to the needs and progression in learning of pupils, while also providing additional guidance to inform and support teachers' individual planning and practice.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of learning is good overall with pupils demonstrating high levels of interest and participation in their learning. Most pupils can understand and explain the purpose of their learning tasks. In Inspectorate questionnaires, almost all pupils agreed that they enjoy their lessons and learning and almost all parents agreed that the school is helping their child to progress in reading and Mathematics.
- During interactions with pupils, very high levels of competence was demonstrated by pupils in making connections regarding their learning in Visual Arts and communication and in co-operation and conflict resolution in the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum.
- There is evidence of improvement in pupils' attainment in Mathematics and English. Effective whole-school approaches have been implemented focusing on improvement in pupils' oral language capabilities in English.
- Pupils demonstrate good ability in their understanding of Irish. While they are able to use appropriate vocabulary, pupils in middle and senior classes have difficulty in structuring a range of sentences independently. To support the development of language skills, it is recommended that the new vocabulary to be learned is outlined more specifically at the beginning of lessons. Pupils' use of incidental Irish should also be developed more systematically at each class level.

Léiríonn na daltaí cumas maith i dtuiscint na Gaeilge. Cé go bhfuil siad in ann foclóireacht chuí a úsáid, tá deacrachtaí ag daltaí sna meán ranganna agus ranganna sinsearach réimse abairtí a struchtúru go neamhspleách. Chun tacú le forbairt na scileanna teanga, moltar an foclóir nua atá le foghlaim a mhíniú go sonrach do dhaltá ag tús na gceachtanna. Ba cheart úsáid an Ghaeilge theagmhasach a fhorbairt níos córasaí ag gach leibhéal ranga do dhaltá freisin.

- The approaches and principles of *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* are implemented very successfully in the junior classroom. The school has invested in a wide range of play-based learning resources and a theme-based approach to enhance pupils' learning has been adopted. There is a strong correlation between play-based learning experiences provided for pupils and curriculum-based learning outcomes which appropriately challenge pupils of varying abilities.
- Pupils have produced collaborative and individual projects in Social Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) which have been completed to a very high standard. Pupils use digital learning technology (DLT) as a learning resource very effectively during some lessons while targeting specific concepts and skills to be developed. Some pupils have opportunities to integrate DLT very successfully during engagement with pupil peer and self-assessment. All pupils should be afforded more consistent opportunities to engage with this highly commendable strategy on a more consistent basis.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers create an inclusive, orderly, pupil-centred learning environment based on mutual respect, affirmation and trust. In the Inspectorate

questionnaires, almost all parents agreed that the quality of teaching in the school is good and all pupils agreed that their teacher explains things clearly.

- Teachers have clear communication skills and they provide very effective explanations of new learning concepts. Overall they organise very good learning experiences to facilitate discussion during lessons.
- Teachers use a range of questioning techniques very effectively for a variety of purposes in stimulating and extending substantial pupil responses. Teachers elicit prior knowledge very effectively and support pupils in developing a deeper understanding of the content taught through appropriate teacher prompting and the provision of specific and formative feedback.
- All teachers support the development of pupils' mathematical language during lessons and they made very effective links between mathematical learning and real-life experiences. This very successful approach aligns very appropriately with identified targets for improvement in the school self-evaluation (SSE) process. Teachers have adopted successful strategies to support pupils who experience challenge in Mathematics. These strategies should now be extended to provide more appropriate challenge for pupils with higher levels of ability.
- A very consistent emphasis on the provision of clear learning intentions and success criteria for pupils is evident in both mainstream and support settings. This highly commendable practice supports pupils in appraising their strengths, areas for improvement and identification of strategies to achieve improvement across the various subjects of the curriculum.
- In the majority of lessons observed, there was a good balance between teacher-led input and the facilitation of collaborative and active learning. In a minority of lessons observed, there was scope to provide for more purposeful collaborative learning experiences including the allocation of individual pupils' roles and responsibilities during group work.
- The overall quality of individual teachers' planning is good with teachers using a variety of effective strategies, including withdrawal and small-group support. A very good approach to team-teaching is implemented with very clear and useful collaborative planning supporting its implementation in the junior classrooms. During the next review for team-teaching; differentiated learning experiences should be planned for in better catering for pupils' varying abilities; it should also be underpinned by appropriate assessment.
- The quality of support for pupils including pupils with special education needs (SEN) is very good overall. Special education teachers have very effectively implemented the *Continuum of Support* and they are placing increased emphasis on in-class support and early interventions. Targets in individual pupil support plans are informed by priority learning needs. Learning targets set for pupils could be enhanced by more consistent use of specific and measurable learning outcomes overall.
- The overall quality of assessment is good. Teachers use a wide range of diagnostic and summative assessments to ascertain the quality of learning at individual class level. Greater use should be made of the analysis of assessment data, including pupil self and peer-assessment to inform lesson objectives and learning activities that are appropriately differentiated for the wide range of learning abilities.

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

- The overall quality of support for pupils' well-being is very good. Pupils have access to a broad and varied curriculum. Pupils grow as learners through respectful and supportive interactions and experiences.

- The principal and teaching staff establish an orderly, secure and healthy learning environment and maintain it through effective communication with parents and the wider community.
- Teachers develop and maintain strong links with external agencies to support pupils' social and emotional needs. Commendable programmes are in place to support pupils in making smooth transitions to and from primary school which are operating very successfully.
- The school at various points in the year engages with pupils so as to include pupil voice in school initiatives. Successful strategies employed include suggestion boxes, questionnaires, specific organisational roles and surveys regarding general school improvements. The establishment of a pupil council would further support pupils in their development of leadership roles within the school.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management is good overall. The board of management shows high levels of commitment and interest in the school.
- The principal is highly committed to the promotion of teachers' and pupils' wellbeing and he promotes equality at all levels. He values and supports partnership with parents as a means of supporting pupils' learning and wellbeing. Very effective links are being maintained with the school community to promote inclusion and the holistic development of pupils.
- The principal is ably supported by an in-school leadership team that provides support in many areas of school life including school initiatives. Members of the in-school leadership and special education teams regularly present and share their expertise during staff meetings. As part of the next review of the roles of the in-school leadership team, an appropriate balance of organisational, pastoral and curricular responsibilities aligned with school priorities should be agreed and implemented.
- Home-school communication is of good quality. In Inspectorate questionnaires, most of the parents agreed that the school regularly seeks the views of parents and the majority of parents agreed that the board reports annually to parents on the work of the school.
- The quality of whole-school planning is good overall. The effectiveness of organisational policies is evident in the smooth day-to-day running of the school. While the overall quality of whole-school curriculum planning is good, some plans require review and development to ensure that they are contextualised to the needs of the pupils and to provide more comprehensive guidance to support individual teachers' planning and practice. School management should adopt a cyclical approach to support the review and development of whole-school curricular and organisational plans including parental involvement in policy development, where relevant.
- The school's engagement in the DEIS planning process is effective. School improvement plans are in place to promote pupils' attainments in aspects of literacy, numeracy and attendance. Target-setting in all school improvement plans should be enhanced. Target-setting should be more specific and readily measurable to support teachers and leaders in the ongoing monitoring of pupils' progress and to inform future teaching and learning.
- The board should ensure that a report from the principal on child protection is a standing item on the agenda for all meetings and that board meetings are held not less than five times in any school year in accordance with the *Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019*.
- The school reported that it regularly provides placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and 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, pupils and the teacher education system.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is good overall. Effective consultation and communication during the SSE process is evident. Parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires have been administered in collating and analysing observations and suggestions for improvement in literacy and numeracy.
- All teachers are aware of the areas for improvement in problem-solving, oral language and reading comprehension. There is evidence that agreed whole-school actions are having a positive impact on teaching and learning in classrooms. Commendably, the monitoring of agreed approaches has been established where teachers reflect on the quality of class-based initiatives in their monthly progress reports. Going forward, procedures need to be more specific to enhance the monitoring of progress in pupils' attainments.
- The school's capacity to engage in school improvement is very good due to the commitment of the principal, the board and the teachers in fostering a culture of improvement.

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 Frosses National School welcomes the findings of this report and is encouraged by the affirmation it gives to our school community. We appreciate the acknowledgment of the high standard of teaching and good practice which underpins the learning in the school. We are pleased with the recognition of the school's commitment to the promotion of the pupils' educational, social and personal wellbeing. We are also pleased by the very positive response of both parents and pupils to the inspectorate questionnaires.

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. We have already begun implementing the advice and recommendations of the WSE-MLL report. These are being systematically addressed as part of an ongoing process of continuous improvement.

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;