

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil Na mBráithre Boys Snr Sch
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Baker's Road Charleville
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	16681Q

Date of inspection: 05-12-2018



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agus Scileanna**
Department of
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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; 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.
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	03/13/2018 to 05-12-2018
Inspection activities undertaken: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meetings with principal, in-school leadership team and special education needs coordinator• 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

Scoil na mBráithre primary school is located in the town of Charleville. The school operates under the patronage of the Bishop of Cloyne and under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice School Trust. Mainstream classes cater for boys from second to sixth class. Scoil na mBráithre has an administrative principal, six mainstream class teachers, five special education teachers, one of whom is part-time, a teacher who works in the multi-disciplinary unit and another who works in the unit for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). At the time of the evaluation, there were 173 pupils enrolled.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupil learning across the curriculum areas evaluated is good; there is scope to further develop pupils' mental mathematical skills.
- The overall quality of teaching is good, with some satisfactory practice noted; an increased focus on classroom differentiation and the selection of models of support that respond to the priority learning needs of pupils would enhance pupil attainment.
- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is very good; the schools' commitment to tapping into pupils' wide range of interests is highly praised.
- The overall quality of management is good; the expertise and experience of board members and of the school leadership team is a key strength of the school.
- The attendance of a significant cohort of pupils is a cause for concern.
- The school has engaged positively with the school self-evaluation (SSE) process and there is strong evidence of the successful impact of this work in classrooms.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pupils' mental mathematical skills should be further developed through the explicit teaching of strategies to support their learning and the promotion of active learning methodologies.
- The school should place an increased focus on the organisation of differentiated learning activities for pupils within the classroom and assessment data should be used to inform the selection of models of support-teaching that respond to the priority learning needs of pupils.
- The school should, as a matter of priority, review its attendance policy and outline targeted strategies to improve the attendance of identified cohorts of pupils.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupil learning across the curriculum areas is good. In lessons observed, pupils admirably applied themselves and derived high levels of motivation from organised tasks. They engaged respectfully with their teachers and peers and interactions were characterised by an openness to learning. They derived very high levels of enjoyment from their learning when they had opportunities to work collaboratively in understanding and constructing knowledge. The extension of these collaborative and cooperative approaches is advised.
- Pupils demonstrate good knowledge of topics explored across a range of curriculum areas. Valuable opportunities to engage in project work were in evidence in all classes. Of note was the effective use of this approach to integrate pupil learning across subjects providing them with opportunities to apply their learning to different tasks.
- The quality of pupil's attainment in numeracy is generally good with a number of pupils attaining very high standards. They use a wide repertoire of mathematical language in explaining and justifying their understanding. The skills associated with implementing operations and procedures are carefully developed across the school. There is scope to incrementally develop their mental mathematical skills through the explicit teaching of strategies to support their learning. The promotion of active-learning methodologies which provide opportunities to estimate, visualise and share mental calculations should assist in the development of these skills.
- Tá caighdeán na foghlama sa Ghaeilge go maith. Tá béim an-mhaith ar Ghaeilge neamhfhoirmiúil tríd an scoil. Forbraítear scileanna labhartha na ndaltaí go córasach agus tá sé ar a gcumas réimse d'abairtí a chumadh. Ba chóir anois, áfach, raon níos leithne de dheiseanna cainte a chruthú chun féin mhuinín na ndaltaí in úsáid na teanga a fheabhsú. Léann said le cruinneas maith ach ní mór an t-ábhar léitheoireachta a leathnú níos mó.
The standard of learning in Irish is good. There is good emphasis on the use of Irish informally throughout the school. Pupils' language skills are developed systematically and they can structure a range of sentences. However, a wider range of speaking opportunities should be created to improve the pupils' confidence in using the language. They read accurately but the range of reading material explored should be broadened.
- The school has identified and prioritised reading fluency as an area for improvement. The recent investment in resources and a focus on ensuring that pupils are facilitated to regularly read independently is impacting positively on pupils' reading abilities. Good use is made of the novel to enable pupils' apply their reading skills and to experience pleasure from reading. Pupils' functional writing skills are well developed and they are facilitated to write in a range of genres. In some classrooms, pupils' written work is very neatly presented and high quality formative feedback is provided. This good practice is praised.
- In Science, pupils spoke enthusiastically of the investigative work they had completed as part of Science week. In these lessons, they were provided with opportunities to write about, illustrate and connect their learning to real life.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching is good, with some satisfactory practice observed during the inspection. In examples of highly effective practice, teachers explained ideas, clarified the purpose of activities and created rich opportunities for classroom dialogue. In these settings, pupils articulated their understanding and could connect the significance of their learning to their own lives. The extension of these practices to all learning settings is advised.
- All teachers prepare long and short-term plans and complete monthly progress reports. The school is praised for its exploration of information and communication technologies (ICT) to

advance planning and recording processes. Scope exists to refine monthly progress reports to support the effective tracking and monitoring of the implementation of the whole-school plan.

- The range of learning experiences provided to pupils to develop and apply their information and communication technologies (ICT) skills is highly praised. ICT is used to nurture pupils' individual creativity. The school has embraced the *Digital Learning Strategy* and is focused on ensuring that whole-school approach exists to implementing improvement and innovation in this area.
- The quality of teaching in settings for pupils with additional needs is good overall with lessons observed ranging from fair to very good. There exists, however, a need for the school to increase its focus on classroom differentiation and to select models of support-teaching that respond to the priority learning needs of pupils. Care should be taken to reflect the principles identified within the publication *Guidelines for Special Educational Needs 2017* and to comply with *Circular 0013/17*. In consultation with class teachers, the SEN coordinator has drafted high quality pupil support plans. The potential for these plans to impact directly on the organisation of support and on the identification of differentiated learning experiences for pupils within the classroom should be fully explored.
- The current language levels of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) are assessed and specific language programmes are drafted to respond to their learning needs. Personalising the immediate language learning environment for these learners is required.
- The quality of assessment is good. The school has a rich range of assessment data on pupil attainment. Summative and diagnostic assessments are used and standardised test results are appropriately analysed. Teachers use work samples, questioning, teacher-designed tasks and noted observations to gather information on pupil learning. In some settings, regular use of assessment for learning strategies were also in evidence. The school is advised to use this rich range of data to a greater extent to inform the organisation of support and to identify appropriate learning activities for pupils with additional learning needs.

3. THE QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELLBEING

- The quality of support for pupil wellbeing is good. Teachers, through their own enthusiasm for and enjoyment of the subjects of the Primary School Curriculum, motivate pupils to engage in and enjoy their learning. Teachers are committed to responding to the holistic needs of pupils. High quality displays in classrooms and corridors celebrate pupil achievement and add to the sense of community experienced by learners.
- The range of co-curricular and extra-curricular initiatives including chess, coding and sports activities ensures the wide range of pupils' interests and curiosities is nurtured. The recent establishment of the Students' Council will enhance the schools' capacity to provide pupils with opportunities to share their views and have a say in how things are done in the school.
- The use of ICT in supporting the needs of accelerated learners is highly praised. In questionnaire responses, pupils replied very positively to having a say in how things are done in their school.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The board of management is properly constituted, meets regularly and operates efficiently. Individual members demonstrate a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The range of expertise within the board and their strong commitment to the school is a key strength. It is recommended, however, that the board work with and support the school in addressing the high rates of absenteeism of a significant cohort of pupils.
- The principal demonstrates a deep understanding of the diverse community the school serves. He ensures a welcoming atmosphere permeates all aspects of school life. The recently appointed deputy principal works diligently in fulfilling her role. The school leadership team meet regularly

and have a clearly defined range of pastoral, curricular and organisational duties which they attend to with due care and attention.

- The board reported that it provides placement for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome 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 student teachers and the teacher education institution.
- The Parent Association provides valuable support to the school. Almost all parents surveyed feel that the school is well run.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of school self-evaluation is good. The school engages productively with the SSE process and it is evident that identified school improvement priorities are impacting positively on classroom practice.
- The school plan is of a good quality with some curriculum plans giving very good direction to teachers. The emphasis on integrated and thematic development of Social, Environmental and Scientific Education areas is praiseworthy. There is scope for the school leadership team to develop processes that enable them to further monitor the implementation of this plan in classrooms. The school's capacity to implement the recommendations of this report 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 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;