

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	S N Deaglan
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Water Street Waterford
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	16976M

Date of inspection: 03-10-2019



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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	03-10-2019
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 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

St. Declan's NS is an all-boys, vertical primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Waterford and Lismore. It is located in the city of Waterford and has a long tradition of education, having been founded in 1932. The 425 pupils enrolled in the school are taught in 16 mainstream classes and are further supported by the 6 full-time and 1 part-time special education teachers and the administrative principal. Pupil attendance is very good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is commendable; pupils present as eager learners, most notably in classes where they engage in pupil-lead, discovery-based, collaborative learning.
- While pupils in some classes engage in meaningful writing tasks, pupils' experiences of the writing genres are not consistent throughout the school.
- The overall quality of teaching is good, with teachers demonstrating a deep commitment to the pupils' holistic development; there is scope to implement a broader range of teaching methodologies.
- The quality of leadership and management is commendable; the curricular leadership role of the in-school management team is not developed to its potential.
- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is of a high standard with pupils engaging in a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- The school is effectively promoting digital learning as part of its engagement in School Self-Evaluation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- An incremental approach to the development of the writing genres across the school should be implemented.
- Further attention should be paid by teachers to the structure of lessons, and to using a broader range of methodologies across the curriculum.
- The in-school management team should lead the implementation and monitoring of agreed whole-school curricular priorities.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is commendable. Pupils are achieving well in English and Mathematics as is demonstrated by the standardised test results. They see themselves as learners and are eager to learn. They can recite poems and sing songs with enthusiasm and flair. In the questionnaire responses most pupils reported that they enjoy their lessons.
- Learning experiences of a very high quality were evident in some lessons where pupils engaged in pupil-lead, discovery-based, collaborative and challenging learning tasks. Lessons observed in Science, Drama and History reflected these approaches. This very good practice should be shared and extended to all classes.
- In Mathematics, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of key mathematical concepts and procedures. Generally, manipulatives are used effectively to support learning.
- Pupils demonstrate high levels of interest in reading, and a number of initiatives including paired and buddy reading are implemented. Well-stocked libraries support pupils' reading for pleasure. There is an emphasis across the school on the development of pupils' comprehension skills. The selection of tailored reading material, informed by a deeper analysis of assessment information, would ensure that pupils are reading according to their individual reading abilities.
- While samples of pupils' writing were noted in some settings, and pupils engaged in meaningful writing tasks, pupils' experiences of the writing genres are not consistent throughout the school. An incremental approach to the development of the writing genres across the school should be implemented.
- Pupils engage in a range of learning experiences from visits to local areas of interest, to debating, chess, science exhibitions and the school garden. There has been a focus recently on the promotion of Music and the school is participating in the Music Generation Programme.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is good with teaching in the lessons observed ranging from satisfactory to very good. Teachers are interested in, and supportive of their pupils and create caring learning environments. In the questionnaire responses, it is noteworthy that almost all pupils consider that their teachers explain things clearly. Almost all parents also responded that they think that the teaching is good in the school.
- Where practice is very good, lessons are well structured, with a clear focus on new learning and pupils engage in meaningful activities. In these lessons the regular and effective consolidation of learning is strongly in evidence. However, in some lessons there is an overreliance on teacher-directed learning. In order to optimise pupils' learning, further attention should be paid by teachers to effective lesson structure, and to using a broader range of methodologies across the curriculum.
- Teachers collaboratively prepare long-term and short-term plans and produce monthly progress records. In the inspectorate teacher questionnaires, all teachers agreed that they collaborate well and share good practice with one another. To further develop teachers' planning and to ensure meaningful learning experiences for the pupils, teachers' individual planning should clearly identify intended learning outcomes and the content and methodologies through which pupils will be enabled to achieve these outcomes.
- The teachers draw on a wide range of assessment tools to monitor individual pupil progress. Diagnostic and screening tests are used purposefully, to identify pupils who require additional support. Assessment for learning is also being promoted in some settings.

- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) benefit from the school's inclusive atmosphere. Positive interactions are in evidence between teachers and pupils, and the atmosphere in support settings is supportive and encouraging. Teachers liaise effectively with external agencies to support pupils with SEN and also meet regularly with parents. The school has also developed valuable links with the on-site pre-school and local secondary schools to ensure effective transitions for pupils.
- In some settings the targets of the support plans are specific, measurable and time-bound and this good practice should be extended to all support plans. While there is some in-class and team teaching approaches, the majority of support teaching is provided outside the mainstream classroom. The school is advised to now consider a greater balance between in-class and withdrawal models of support, including more early intervention.

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

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is of a high standard with the school creating a safe, caring and inclusive learning environment for the pupils. The successful implementation of the *Rainbows Ireland* programme supports pupils who have experienced loss. In questionnaire responses, almost all parents agreed that their children feel safe and are well looked after in the school, and that they are treated fairly and respectfully.
- Good communication exists between home and school. The Parents' Association are involved in many areas of school life including fundraising and helping out with school activities. During the last year it has developed links with local businesses and secured support for the promotion of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) related activities in the school. Almost all parents reported that there is a good atmosphere in the school and that they feel welcome.
- Pupils have opportunities to engage in a commendable range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. These include the provision of many sporting activities from hurling, athletics, soccer and basketball to tennis and Gaelic football.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management is commendable. The board is very supportive of the school and is a valuable source of advice and guidance, with the members sharing their expertise to ensure the smooth running of the school. It has actively engaged in strategic planning to achieve agreed priorities over its term and in its oversight of curricular policy development.
- The principal has a long association with the school. He is committed to the school and competently attends to a diverse range of organisational and administrative issues. The promotion of a positive school climate is central to his work. He is supported by the in-school management team who carry out a range of duties conscientiously. They, together with staff members have updated a number of curricular plans which are contextualised to the school. At the time of the evaluation, a review of all duties pertaining to each member of the team was underway. It is advised that these duties include the leading, implementation and monitoring of agreed whole-school curricular priorities.
- The staff of the school reported that it regularly provides placements 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.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The school is effectively promoting digital learning as part of its engagement in School Self-Evaluation (SSE). A number of teachers completed various Digital Technology summer courses to support the implementation of the targets.

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;