

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Colmcille
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Drumoghill National School Manorcunningham Letterkenny County Donegal
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	16995Q

Date of inspection: 12-12-2018



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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 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, 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	12-12-2018
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

Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Colmcille is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Raphoe. The staff includes three mainstream class teachers and two special education teachers, one of whom is part-time and based in another school. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. Currently there are eighty pupils enrolled in the school. The attendance levels are good overall.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning is good and pupils engage in a wide range of learning activities; there is scope for further purposeful pupil discussion during collaborative learning activities.
- The overall quality of teaching is good; teachers employ very good questioning techniques.
- The overall quality of planning is good; teachers' individual short term planning does not outline content objectives and skills development in a progressive manner.
- The quality of assessment is good; there is scope to develop assessment-for- learning (AfL) practices.
- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is very good; there is a whole-school commitment to the holistic development of each pupil.
- The quality of leadership and management is commendable in most aspects; the board of management has not had the school's financial accounts audited in recent years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should provide a more consistent approach to purposeful pupil discussion during collaborative learning activities.
- Teachers should include content objectives and pupil skills development in the curricular short-term planning to ensure progression from class to class.
- An agreed whole-school approach to pupil self and peer-assessment is recommended to build on current practice.
- The board of management should ensure that the financial accounts are certified or audited annually.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of pupils' learning, including pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good. Pupils demonstrate high levels of motivation and engage with interest in a wide range of purposeful learning activities. However, teachers should provide further opportunities for pupils to participate in discussion during collaborative learning activities more consistently during teaching and learning. In the questionnaire responses all pupils reported that they enjoy their lessons and learning and almost all agreed that it is a good school.
- The overall quality of pupils' learning achievements in Mathematics is very good. Pupils use concrete materials, mathematical games and digital technologies productively during station teaching to explore number concepts. Pupils' knowledge of tables is well developed. Their application of mathematical strategies for problem solving is well developed and they use them competently during learning activities.
- Pupils demonstrate good oral and presentation skills. They can articulate their previous learning very well in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) and in the various projects completed. Pupils can read with fluency in English; additional graded reading materials in English would enhance current provision in this area. The standard of pupils' writing in English is good and handwriting is well developed throughout the school. Pupils write in a broad range of genres though there is scope to address the content of the writing process more systematically on a whole-school basis. Pupils engage with a wide repertoire of poetry and enjoy their experience of reciting poems in all classes.
- In the infant classes, *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is enhancing learning in literacy at a cross-curricular level. Integrated learning activities are planned carefully and good emphasis is placed on using a thematic approach to support pupils' learning.
- Sa Ghaeilge, tá gnóthachtáil na ndaltaí go maith ar an iomlán. Glacann na daltaí páirt go fonnmhar sna ceachtanna and baineann siad úsáid an-mhaith as an nGaeilge go neamhfhoirmiúil. Tá foclóir leathan ar eolas acu agus tá réimse maith de rannta de ghlanmheabhair acu. Is inmholta an caighdeán atá bainte amach ag na daltaí sna meán ranganna agus sna hard-ranganna i labhairt na teanga. Overall pupils' achievement in Irish is good. The pupils participate with enthusiasm in lessons and they use Irish incidentally very well. They know a wide range of vocabulary and rhymes by heart. The standard achieved in the middle and senior classes in speaking the language is commendable.
- Pupils' achievements in Visual Arts are noteworthy. Their creativity and artistic skills are celebrated and displayed attractively.
- The school participates in the Green Schools' Programme and the pupils are working conscientiously towards the achievement of their fourth green flag.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching, including the teaching of pupils with SEN, is good. Teachers were well prepared for their lessons and use a purposeful range of questioning techniques. Learning environments were very stimulating. In questionnaires administered during the evaluation, almost all parents agreed that the quality of teaching is good in the school. In lessons where very good teaching was observed, learning intentions were shared and pupils were enabled to reflect on the achievement of targets.

- The quality of planning is good although certain aspects require review and development. Whole-school curriculum plans have been developed for all subject areas. However, there is insufficient guidance for teachers regarding the overall content to be taught from class to class. To enhance the effectiveness of planning, the plans for literacy should be developed to incorporate the Primary Language Curriculum. While short-term planning includes some reference to differentiation, further delineation of lesson content is needed to support teachers in meeting the wide range of abilities in classrooms. Planning should also outline content objectives and skills development to enhance experiences for pupils. A system to monitor pupils' progression in learning should also be detailed in the plan.
- The school's early intervention strategy for Mathematics is highly commendable as are the school-devised collaborative approaches adopted to improve spelling. Support plans are in place for pupils with identified need. There is a good balance between in-class support and withdrawal of pupils with SEN.
- Overall, assessment practices are good. Pupils' written work is corrected carefully and they are provided with regular feedback. A majority of pupils in the Inspectorate questionnaires agreed that their teacher talks to them about how to improve their work. Diagnostic, standardised and teacher-designed tests are administered regularly. There were limited assessment for learning (AfL) strategies in use during lessons observed. Teachers should develop pupil, peer and self-assessment practices. There is scope to develop a whole-school approach to assessment that is clear, useful and easy to interpret so as to better inform differentiation in short-term planning and maximise continuity and progression in learning.

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

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is very good. There is a whole-school commitment to the holistic development of each pupil. Respectful interactions between teachers and pupils and pupils and their peers were evident.
- In Inspectorate questionnaires, almost all parents agreed that there is a good atmosphere in the school and their child is safe and well looked after. Almost all pupils agreed that their teacher listens to them and pays attention to what they say and that there are clear rules against hurting others.
- Parental participation in formulation and review of policies is encouraged and while they are informed by the school with sample lessons bi-annually, parental responses to the questionnaire indicates that further information in relation to Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) should be provided to them.
- The school has very good links with other schools to extend learning opportunities for pupils including the Shared Education Project with a local primary school.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The overall quality of leadership and management is good overall; however there are some areas that require improvement. The principal demonstrates significant strengths in her work and her approach is very highly effective in many aspects of leadership and management. The principal and ISM team model and develop a strong culture of mutual trust and respect. The principal fosters a very effective and positive school climate that encourages respectful interactions and communications at all levels, including communication with teachers, the board of management, pupils, parents and the wider

community. Collaboration and teamwork structures are very well established and teachers take on leadership roles and responsibilities very willingly.

- The ISM team have assigned roles and undertake a wide range of duties which support the development of teaching and learning. To enhance the effectiveness of the team, further curricular development should be prioritised by the principal with specific delineation of responsibilities to support curriculum implementation, monitoring and review.
- The work of the board of management is effective. It meets regularly, minutes are maintained and a financial statement is provided at each meeting. The board should ensure that accounts are certified or audited and an annual report should be provided to parents on the work of the school. The board supports teachers' ongoing professional development that enriches pupils' learning in a range of areas. The board provides very good-quality teaching resources and maintains the school environment to a high standard with the support of the parents' association.
- The management of communications and relations with the school community through regular newsletters, notes and texts is a strength of the school. The parents' association works very effectively with the school.
- The school 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* as it can provide valuable professional benefits for teachers, student teachers, pupils and the teacher education institution.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of school self-evaluation is good. The school has re-engaged successfully with the school self-evaluation process. As part of their DEIS planning and school improvement process the school continues to target literacy and numeracy through the development of comprehension strategies and early intervention initiatives for Mathematics.
- There is evidence that previous agreed actions for literacy and numeracy are continuing to have a positive impact on teaching and learning particularly in the areas of spelling, problem solving and the identification of mathematical language for development.
- The school has very good capacity for improvement. The commitment teachers demonstrate to teamwork and the very good communication channels in place will support the school in bringing about improvement.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The B.O.M. of Drumoghill National School welcomes this very positive WSE-MLL report and is encouraged by the affirmation it gives to the whole school community. The Board particularly welcomes the report's acknowledgement of

- the overall good quality of teaching including the teaching of pupils with SEN
- the commendable quality of leadership and management
- the whole school commitment to the holistic development of each pupil
- the highly commendable early intervention strategies for mathematics
- the commendable school devised collaborative approach to spelling
- the use of Aistear in the infant setting to enhance learning
- an caighdeán atá báinte amach ag na daltaí ag labhairt an teanga
- the noteworthy achievements of the pupils in Visual Arts

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 B.O.M. and staff acknowledge and accept the findings and the recommendations made within the report. Work has already begun on the implementation of these recommendations.

- The B.O.M. is committed by having the school's financial accounts certified/audited each year.
- Teachers are collaboratively reviewing individual short-term planning to outline skills development in a progressive manner from class to class.
- As part of our school self-evaluation process we intend to devise a whole-school approach to pupil self and peer assessment and collaborative learning activities to build on current practice.

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;