

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 An Fhossa
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Fossa Killarney
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	17012B

Date of inspection: 16-05-2019



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 on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

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	13/05/19- 16/05/2019
Inspection activities undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with special education teachers • Review of relevant documents • Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires • Observation of teaching and learning • Examination of pupils’ work • Interaction with pupils • Feedback to principal and teachers and board of management representative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with principal • Meeting with in-school leadership team • Meeting with representatives of the board of management • Meeting with parent representatives of the board of management • Meeting with teachers 	

SCHOOL CONTEXT

S.N. Fossa is a co-educational, mainstream school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kerry. It has a staffing of an administrative principal, ten mainstream teachers, four special education teachers (SETs) one of whom is shared with neighbouring schools, and two teachers who cater for the needs of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs) in designated classes. At the time of the evaluation, there were 266 pupils enrolled.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupil learning outcomes and experiences is very good across all curriculum areas but there is a need to further challenge the more able pupils.
- The quality of teachers’ practise is very good; the further development of pupils’ independent learning skills and self-directed learning opportunities would enhance provision.
- The quality of assessment is good; current practices would benefit from implementing a means of assessing pupil progress across the curriculum areas and the promotion of pupil self-assessment strategies.
- Very high quality provision is made to support pupils’ wellbeing.
- The quality of leadership and management is very good; however, the school’s deployment of two mainstream classroom teachers is not in accordance with Department circular 0010/2018.
- School self-evaluation processes are very effectively implemented in the school and are impacting positively on the quality of pupil attainment and learning experiences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pupils who are consistently achieving to high levels should be provided with more challenging lesson content.
- Teachers should provide increased opportunities for pupils to engage in self-directed, pupil-lead learning tasks which focus on developing their independent learning and research skills.
- The range of assessment strategies should be extended to enable assessment of and for learning across the curriculum with particular emphasis on pupil self-assessment.
- School management should ensure that all mainstream teachers are used for their intended purpose in accordance with the Department’s circulars on staffing and in doing so, ensure that the number of pupils in any class is kept as low as possible.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is very good. They are provided with a rich array of high quality learning experiences which motivate them and support their learning. They have acquired a comprehensive knowledge base across the subject areas and display effective communication, personal and intrapersonal skills. They demonstrate a capacity to think critically and apply their learning to new contexts. Pupils with special educational needs were observed to engage actively and participate fully in organised tasks designed to progress their learning.
- In both English and Irish, pupils demonstrate a very good ability to communicate clearly and confidently. They read with fluency and expression in both languages. Samples of pupils' writing indicate that they are facilitated to write in a range of genres and for a variety of audiences. To further enhance pupils' language learning, it is advised that a more integrated approach be taken to ensure that the skills acquired in one language are easily transferred to the second. There is scope also to challenge pupils further through deeper engagement with novels and poetry.
- The quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics is very good with a high number of pupils excelling in this subject. Using appropriate mathematical language pupils are able to clarify ideas, solve problems and discuss concepts proficiently. Consideration should be given to providing more challenging mathematical content to those pupils with consistently high attainment levels.
- Pupils' emotional, intellectual and creative enrichment are very well developed through their engagement in Arts education. In Music, Drama and Visual Arts lessons, they are facilitated to explore alternative ways of communicating with others and to develop an appreciation of the contribution that the Arts make to society.
- Pupils' recall of key facts in History, Geography and Science is very good. They are facilitated to explore, investigate and develop an understanding of the natural, human and social dimensions of life. Their learning would however be further progressed through a more active exploration of their immediate and local environment and the examination of critically significant events in their locality.
- Pupils are facilitated to experience a balanced physical education programme in which an emphasis is placed on activity and participation.
- The school's Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme contributes to the development of the pupils' decision-making skills and prepares them for active and responsible citizenship.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The quality of teachers' collective and individual practice is very good. An inclusive pupil-centred learning environment has been created in all settings. Pupils were observed to demonstrate high levels of interest and participation in their learning.
- Exemplary practices were noted in planning and preparation of lessons for pupils with ASDs. Very effective ASD-specific approaches to support pupils' learning, including the development of their language and communication skills, are used in these classes. In all settings, lesson preparation was very good with skilful use of resources to support teaching and learning.
- Well-planned activities are organised for each subject area and curriculum appropriate teaching and learning methodologies are used to very good effect. There is however, scope to improve pupils' higher-order and open-ended problem-solving skills. A greater focus on skills

development in SESE, particularly working as an historian, geographer and scientist is advised. Whole-school approaches to programmes devised in the areas of oral language and writing should also be agreed and implemented. It is recommended that greater emphasis be placed on pupil self-directed learning allowing pupils scope to decide what and how they learn.

- Teachers collaborate very effectively with each other and with parents to support pupils with identified learning needs. They use formal meetings and planning time productively to reflect on their work. They have engaged with a variety of continuing professional opportunities and they share their expertise with colleagues. SETs meet regularly to discuss pupil progress and to make provision for emerging learning needs. This good practice is highly praised.
- The overall quality of assessment is good with some exemplary practices noted. Individual teachers use a range of assessment strategies including the monitoring of pupils' written work, teacher-designed tests, checklists, criterion referenced tests and the maintenance of samples of pupils' work. It is recommended that a whole-school approach to the assessment and recording of pupil progress across the curriculum be implemented and that strategies to promote pupil self-assessment be further developed.

3. THE QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELLBEING

- Very high quality provision is made by the school to support pupils' wellbeing. Buildings, grounds, classrooms and work spaces are well maintained and appropriately furnished creating a welcoming, safe and warm environment. The school demonstrates a commitment to identifying, including and providing targeted supports for pupils experiencing barriers and challenges to wellbeing and learning. Indoor and outdoor space is provided to facilitate social interaction, physical activity and quiet time. The inclusion of pupils with additional care needs is very well supported by a team of special needs assistants. Pupils work co-operatively with staff and one another and are very well behaved, polite and courteous.
- An extensive range of initiatives to promote pupil wellbeing is effectively implemented and a wide and varied programme of after-school extra-curricular activities is organised by the school.
- A well-established student council enables democratically elected pupils to represent their peers in key aspects of school life and to develop their leadership skills. Members are awarded opportunities to consult regularly with other learners and to communicate with management, staff and parents.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management in Fossa N.S. is very good. The board of management, principal, in-school leadership team and parents' association provide very high quality support to the school. The board works very effectively and is very well informed of school practices, policies, plans and pupil attainment.
- Digital technologies and the school website are used effectively to communicate with parents and to celebrate pupil achievements.
- The principal has established and nurtures a very collaborative school culture. He demonstrates a high level of commitment to inclusion and to the holistic development of each pupil.
- A very effective in-school leadership team discharge their assigned duties in a highly conscientious manner. They meet regularly to discuss school priorities and to promote best practices.

- The parents' association is very supportive of the school. It effectively promotes the active engagement of parents in school life and supports the provision of high quality learning experiences for the pupils.
- It is recommended that school management reviews the current arrangements for the deployment of teachers. Presently, two mainstream teachers are assigned to teach only Mathematics and English to pupils in the middle and senior classes. This arrangement is not in accordance with Circular 0010/2018 in relation to the deployment of mainstream staffing for the current school year. School management should, therefore, ensure that in accordance with Circular 0019/2019, posts allocated specifically for mainstream classes on the basis of the staffing schedule for the next school year and in future years are deployed accordingly in order to ensure that class size is kept as low as possible.
- The school regularly provides placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is highly praised and provides valuable professional benefits for teachers, student teachers, pupils and the teacher education institution

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The school has engaged very productively in school self-evaluation (SSE) processes. Teachers are fully involved in reflective and systematic self-evaluation which has the explicit purpose of improving the quality of pupils' experiences and standards of attainment. Priorities for improvement are identified and specific evidence-based targets with clear timelines and defined success criteria are outlined. The school leadership team effectively monitor the implementation of agreed actions and support their embedding into classroom practices. Previous school improvement plans have impacted positively on pupil learning outcomes and experiences in the areas of literacy and numeracy. The further engagement of parents in the action planning process is advised so that they can support its implementation.

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;