

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

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| Ainm na scoile / School name | S N Caisleán An Cumair |
| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Donaguile Castlecomer Co. Kilkenny |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number | 17253A |

Date of inspection: 03-10-2019



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 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 of the school 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

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| 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 parent representatives• 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

Scoil Naisiúnta Caisleán An Cumair is an all-boys school located in the town of Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ossory. There are three mainstream teachers and one special educational needs teacher. At the time of the evaluation, there were 57 pupils enrolled in the school; attendance rates are very good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is good; pupils present as positive, enthusiastic learners who are eager to contribute in all lessons.
- Highly-effective support for pupil well-being is evident; the school provides a welcoming and inclusive setting for all pupils.
- The quality of provision for pupils with Special Education Needs (SEN) is of a very high standard.
- The quality of School Self-Evaluation (SSE) is good; implementation of the plan is evident in teacher individual practice.
- The overall quality of teaching is good with some very good practice observed; scope exists to ensure teaching methodologies promote sustained pupil engagement and differentiation more effectively.
- The overall quality of leadership and management is good and effective distribution of management tasks is evident; there is scope to develop curricular leadership and to enhance the role of the board of management in teaching and learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school should further develop teaching methodologies to ensure that pupil engagement is at a high level during all lessons.
- Activities and lessons should be differentiated more effectively to cater for the needs of class groupings and individual pupils.
- The in-school management team (ISM) should review curricular leadership roles to allow for implementation and monitoring of agreed curricular policies on a whole-school basis.
- The involvement of the board of management in teaching and learning should be enhanced.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of pupil learning is good overall. Most pupils demonstrated good knowledge of the work covered across a range of curricular areas. For the most part, pupil achievements in English are of a good standard. All pupils are enabled to read fluently and with confidence at an appropriate level.
- The quality of learning in Mathematics is commendable with some pupils achieving very good standards. Pupils have a strong knowledge of computational procedures. Scope exists to further differentiate activities to ensure higher levels of pupil engagement and task completion in all settings.
- Tá cumas na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge ag gach rang-leibhéal go maith ar an iomlán. Sa Ghaeilge, á scileanna éisteachta, tuisceana focail aithint agus foghraíocht go maith. Is féidir leis an gcuid is mó de na daltaí iad féin a chur in iúl as Gaeilge agus tá siad ábalta ceisteanna a chur agus a fhreagairt. Baineann na múinteoirí úsáid éifeachtach as teicneolaíocht dhigiteach chun na daltaí a spreagadh agus tascanna a eagrú. *The pupils' ability in Irish at each class level is good overall. In Irish, pupils' listening, comprehension, word recognition and pronunciation are good. Most of the pupils are able to introduce themselves in Irish and to pose and answer questions. Digital technology is used effectively by teachers to engage pupils and structure tasks.*
- Pupils can play the tin whistle and demonstrate interest in music. They can perform and recite some songs and poetry. Further development is required to ensure pupils can sing a specific repertoire of songs and poems, in both Irish and English, this should be documented in the relevant curricular policies.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching is good. Practice observed during the evaluation varied from satisfactory to very good. Aspects of very good practice included well-structured lessons, appropriate differentiation, sustained pupil engagement, and a balance between teacher input and pupil participation. Responses to questionnaires, which were conducted as part of the evaluation by both pupils and parents, indicated that almost all pupils agree that their teacher explains things clearly and tells them how to improve their work. Most parents indicated that the teaching is good in the school.
- Comprehension strategies are taught but scope exists to ensure strategies are covered systematically in all settings. Pupils' handwriting is clear and the presentation of pupils' work is neat. Good practice in the teaching of writing genres observed in some settings should be extended throughout the school.
- In-class support and station teaching have recently been introduced in the school. During the evaluation, very effective station teaching was observed. Pupils demonstrated high levels of purposeful engagement. Activities were differentiated to meet pupils' needs. It is recommended that the use of such teaching methods which included guided reading tasks and recording and communicating learning, be introduced in all settings to ensure increased pupil engagement and differentiation for class groupings.
- The quality of assessment and teacher planning is good overall. Each teacher maintains an assessment folder containing information on pupil progress. It is recommended that further use be made of this data to plan for differentiated learning in all classrooms.

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

- All staff members, including the special needs assistant, work cohesively to support pupils' well-being. In parental questionnaires, almost all parents indicate that there is a good atmosphere in the school.
- A good range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities is provided, enhancing the pupils' learning experiences and well-being. Most of the pupils surveyed indicate that they have a say in how things are done in the school.
- The overall quality of support for pupils with SEN and for whom English is an additional language is very good. Teachers liaise with professional services to support pupils. Good assessment data is gathered in Mathematics and some components of reading; the data is used to devise support plans with clear targets and progression. Scope exists for the use of diagnostic testing to provide additional assessment data on pupil comprehension.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The board of management meets regularly and is very supportive of the work of the school. In addition, the board works hard to maintain the school building to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for pupils and teachers. The school accounts were last certified in 2017; it is recommended that accounts are certified or audited annually as required under section 18 of the Education Act (1998). In addition, the board should enhance its involvement in teaching and learning and provide a report of meetings to the school community.
- The principal articulates a strong commitment to the ongoing development of the school. She is supported by the deputy principal and assistant principal. Commendably, teachers who are not members of the in-school management (ISM) team also contribute to ongoing school development. Teaching and learning are discussed informally and curriculum plans are available; scope exists to set out agreed content within curriculum plans to ensure pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum in all subject areas. Going forward, the ISM team should play a stronger role in curriculum leadership. To this end, specific duties assigned to the ISM team should be reviewed regularly to reflect the changing nature of school priorities and members of this team should report on their duties to the board of management. In addition, the ISM team should meet formally on a more regular basis to lead priority areas for development within the school.
- There is good communication between the school and parents. The school sends regular informative newsletters to parents. In questionnaires, almost all parents said that they feel welcome in the school and most parents agree that the school is well run.
- There is an active parents' association in the school who organise events throughout the year to support the school. The parents' association is involved in policy formation. To develop parents' role, however, it is recommended that the parents' association, and the wider parent body, be given a more active role in policy formation.
- The school actively supports engagement with initial teacher education school placement programmes.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The overall quality of SSE is good. The school has prioritised writing genres for development and evidence of increased emphasis on this work is apparent in classroom planning and

pupil learning. School leadership should ensure that this plan is communicated to the school community and that another area is selected for development in response to an identified need.

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 Castlecomer Boys' National School is very encouraged by the affirmations offered in various areas of the WSEMML report. The Board is extremely pleased that the quality of provision for pupils with Special Education Needs is of a very high standard. The Board also welcomed the fact that highly effective support for pupil well-being is evident in the school.

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 acknowledges and accepts the findings and recommendations of the report. The recommendations are currently being addressed.

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; |