

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning**

REPORT

School name	Rathdrum Boys N S
School address	Rathdrum Co. Wicklow
Roll number	17265H

Date of inspection: 20-11-2019



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(s) 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

Dates of inspection	20-11-2019
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• 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

Rathdrum Boys' National School is a vertical school situated in Rathdrum, Co Wicklow. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. At the time of the evaluation there were 143 boys attending the school and their attendance rates are generally very good. The school is served by five mainstream teachers and three special education teachers, including a teaching principal.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is commendable, the pupils present as interested learners; there is scope to extend the range and level of learning experiences for some pupils.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is of a high quality, teachers are clear communicators and lessons are effectively structured and paced.
- Teachers have collaboratively developed very successful whole-school approaches in a number of curricular areas including assessment and Mathematics, there is scope to extend whole-school approaches for the development of writing.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and support for pupils' well-being are particular strengths of the school; teachers are respectful, kind and demonstrate high levels of care.
- The overall quality of leadership and management is good, leadership is committed to developing meaningful policies to guide and reflect whole-school approaches.
- The overall quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is very good; agreed actions are clearly evident in classroom practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school community should collaboratively plan and provide a wider range of challenging learning experiences for the pupils.
- The school should develop and implement a consistent whole-school approach to the teaching of writing.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of learning is commendable. The pupils present as interested learners who persist with their learning. Where learning was particularly effective, the pupils demonstrated commendable confidence in their learning and an expectation to achieve.
- The pupils' learning in Mathematics is very good and there is evidence that achievement in numeracy is improving. Pupils show high levels of interest during Mathematics lessons. Responses to pupil questionnaires, administered as part of the evaluation, indicate that most pupils consider that they are doing well in Mathematics. The pupils displayed very good understanding of mathematical concepts and in some classes they could articulate ways to solve problems.
- The pupils demonstrate a developing range of literacy and language skills. The pupils read at their own level and demonstrate very good comprehension skills. They can ask and answer questions, predict and recall learning. In some highly-effective classes, where the pupils are taught target language and provided with explicit opportunities to use this language throughout the lesson, their language skills are noteworthy and they could use language to justify and reason. This very good practice should be extended to all lessons.
- During the evaluation, pupils were provided with frequent opportunities to be active in their learning and work collaboratively with others. Projects and integrated play provide pupil-led learning experiences and the outdoor environment is used to support their interest in Science and Geography. Pupils with SEN use information and communications technology (ICT) to create digital artefacts and to identify creative solutions to problems. This very effective practice is based on developing pupils' interests and skills. It is recommended that these type of higher order, responsive learning experiences be extended to all pupils. The development of pupils' learning in Science, Music and Drama should be prioritised. A wider range of challenging learning experiences should be planned and provided to pupils particularly for the more able pupils. Lessons should be further differentiated to ensure that pupils with high levels of interest and ability are sufficiently challenged within lessons and that activities develop pupils' imagination and creativity.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- Overall the quality of teaching observed was good with elements of highly effective practice observed in a number of lessons. Teachers are reflective practitioners who work hard to support the pupils in their care. They have very effective classroom management skills and create inclusive classroom environments. In all settings, teachers are clear communicators and present well prepared, structured and paced lessons. The pupils' prior knowledge is accessed and learning outcomes are shared with the pupils. Teachers create attractive and stimulating learning environments. In questionnaires, issued as part of the evaluation, almost all pupils agree that their teacher explains things clearly and almost all parents agreed that teaching is good in the school.
- The consistent and collaborative approach to Mathematics, and particularly the use of oral mathematics within lessons, is a strength of the school's provision. It is recommended that a similar whole-school approach to the teaching of writing be developed; this should identify how genre writing would be taught in discrete lessons at each class level and how pupils could use writing to creatively consolidate their learning across all subjects.
- It is evident that teachers have a shared understanding of assessment. They use a range of assessment tools to collect information on pupils' learning. The use of diagnostic testing is

particularly noteworthy. The pupils' written work is monitored and corrected very regularly. Plans to use ICT to support the development of pupils' self-assessment is highly praised and the addition of constructive feedback to pupils on their work is advised.

- Provision for pupils with SEN is a particular strength of the school. Teachers in SEN are highly committed to the holistic development of these pupils. They work hard to get to know the learning needs and strengths of the pupils in their care and plan meaningful learning experiences for them. The process of target settings and planning for the pupils with SEN is exemplary. There is a very clear focus on achieving progress for the pupil, and the voice of parents and pupils feature strongly in plans. There was evidence during the evaluation that these pupils, particularly those with complex needs, are making gains and working towards their potential.

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

- Support for pupils' well-being is very good. Excellent levels of care for pupils, particularly for those with additional needs was observed. Highly respectful interactions were observed in all settings and pupils were observed working with pupils with complex needs in kind and valuable ways.
- The school uses a number of strategies to establish an orderly, secure and healthy learning environment including excellent links with outside agencies and feeder schools, regular communication between home and school on pupil behaviour, a consistent use of restorative justice and a breakfast club for all pupils. The school should introduce an in-class resilience programme to supplement current provision.
- There is scope to extend the voice of pupils in mainstream classes in their learning. The school, with support from the parents association, should survey the pupils to identify areas of interest to them and plan co and extra-curricular activities based on these needs. Two-way communication between school and the pupils should be actively developed.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management is of a good standard. The school is ably supported by an interested and committed board of management, who meet regularly and play a key role in developing school facilities. The board is advised to issue an agreed report after each meeting to its stakeholders.
- The principal is highly committed to the school and demonstrates meticulous administrative and organisational skills. She prioritises her relationships with the pupils, particularly those with additional needs, and is passionate in helping them to reach their potential. She works tirelessly to ensure pupils access the supports they need. Parents and the board report that she is particularly good at managing challenging situations.
- The in-school management (ISM) team assume responsibility for a range of curricular and pastoral areas. The principal and ISM meet regularly and have compiled very detailed, research-based reports in order to articulate whole-school approaches to teaching and learning. Leadership should now develop working groups among teachers and establish areas of interest and expertise for all teachers. These working groups should support leadership as they review provision for pupils who are not accessing support, in order to ensure flexible, challenging and varied learning experiences for all pupils.
- In questionnaires administered as part of the evaluation, almost all parents indicated that they feel welcome in the school. The school has an active parents association and they are involved in fundraising and provide support to the school at events. Recent opportunities for

the parent body to voice their opinions on digital technology and oral language are praised and the school is encouraged to extend this practice further to other areas.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The overall quality of SSE is very good. The school has devised a school improvement plan for English and agreed actions are clearly evident in classroom practice. Teachers' collective ability to reflect on current practice and identify areas for improvement is noteworthy.
- Given the dedication and commitment of the staff to the school and its pupils, the ability of the school to develop further 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;

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 Rathdrum Boys' National School welcomes the WSE-MLL Report which affirms that the learning environment for all pupils in the school is orderly, secure and healthy. The Board of Management acknowledges that the quality of pupils learning is commendable and that teaching is of a high quality.

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 of Rathdrum Boys' National School, acknowledges the recommendations made by the Inspectorate. The recommendations will be integrated into our 3 year plan and developed through the S.I.P. process.