

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Shanagolden N S
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Shanagolden Co. Limerick
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	17438M

Date of inspection: 29-01-2020



An Roinn Oideachais
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 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	29-01-2020
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 and pupil questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers, and board of management representative

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Shanagolden NS is a co-educational, rural school which operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Limerick. Teaching staff consists of a teaching principal who works in a special education setting, five mainstream teachers and two special education teachers. There are 117 pupils enrolled in the school.

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning is high with some pupils attaining very good standards in aspects of the curriculum; the continued development of contextualised, whole-school approaches to the delivery of the curriculum would further enhance pupils' learning experiences and outcomes.
- The quality of teaching is of a high standard with a number of exemplary lessons observed; support for pupils with additional needs would benefit from reviewing the prioritising of needs process and increasing the range of early intervention initiatives.
- A range of approaches to formative and summative assessment are effectively employed and these provide valuable insights on pupil learning; scope exists to extend assessment approaches to capture the cross-curricular progress of pupils.
- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is excellent; relationships between pupils and staff are exceptionally positive and the schools' commitment to the principles of inclusivity and equity is impacting most favourably on pupils' wellbeing.
- The quality of leadership and management is very good; the principal and other leaders in the school maintain highly constructive relationships and manage curriculum and organisational change in a collaborative, flexible and sensitive manner.
- The quality of school self-evaluation is good and a range of action plans have been developed to target improvement in selected leadership and teaching priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school should further develop its whole-school approaches to the delivery of the curriculum across the subject areas to ensure appropriate balance and depth in coverage and continuity in pupil learning.
- In organising support for pupils with additional learning needs, the school should place an increased emphasis on the prioritising of needs process and on early intervention initiatives.
- Cross-curricular assessment approaches should be reviewed with a view to identifying pupils' key learning milestones the outcomes of which should inform planning and practice in all learning settings.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of pupils' learning is high with some pupils attaining very good standards in aspects of the curriculum. Pupils derive very high levels of enjoyment from their learning and are strongly motivated. In lessons observed, many pupils deeply engaged in the learning tasks provided and they were confident in their ability to succeed with these tasks.
- In literacy, very good speaker-listener relationships have been established. In both English and Irish pupils demonstrate very good sentence structure and use of vocabulary. They write effectively across a range of genres and they read with accuracy, fluency and expression in both languages. In infant classes, stories are very effectively used to promote pupils' emergent reading skills. Novels are well explored in English and pupils gain unique enrichment from the experience of novels being read aloud to them. Pupils are developing inquiring and discerning dispositions from their regular engagement in Book Talk and can extensively describe their reading preferences using a range of advanced book terminology.
- Pupils' ability to compute and engage in mental math tasks is highly commendable. They apply a range of mathematical language to verbalise, reason and connect number concepts. In some lessons, authentic and open-ended materials were used to stimulate, support and foster pupils' learning and creativity. Increased emphasis on problem-solving and the use of concrete materials through real-life contexts across the strands would further enhance their learning.
- Pupils display very high levels of curiosity and enthusiasm with regard to their learning in History, Geography and Science. Senior pupils comprehensively recall their key learning with confidence and pride. They have a good knowledge of their locality and this is contributing to their sense of identity and belonging. Pupils have conducted a number of scientific investigations. The further promotion of a skills through content approach to a wider range of inquiry-based tasks in Science is encouraged.
- Pupils sing sweetly and with melody and derive great satisfaction from opportunities to engage in musical performances. They have opportunities to reflect on and respond aesthetically to Music. Scope exists to ensure that the whole-school plan facilitates the incremental exploration of elements, concepts and subject-specific language in arts education.
- Pupils experience a broad Physical Education curriculum. They are aware of the benefits of an active lifestyle. A significant number of pupils engage in after-school sporting activities.
- Highly effective play-based methodologies are implemented in infant classes. This learning is characterised by opportunities for pupils to be creative, to negotiate with others and to engage in decision-making.
- Pupils are provided with a comprehensive range of holistic learning experiences which meaningfully contribute to extending and complementing their learning. They engage with a rich programme of co-curricular activities including Science Week, Maths Week, carol performances, guest speakers, sports events, local visits and outings to theatrical performances. Their exposure to these activities cultivates the development of unique interests and strengthens their love of learning. The continued development of whole-school approaches across the subject areas is recommended to ensure continuity, progression and development in pupils' experience of the content and skills of the curriculum.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The quality of teaching is of a high standard with a number of exemplary lessons observed. Teachers' model enthusiasm and interest in lesson content. They motivate pupils and create high expectations for learning. In all classes, pupils are managed effectively and positive behaviour is consistently valued and admirably acknowledged. Teachers optimise opportunities for pupils to experience success in their learning. Pupils' achievements are widely celebrated in the immediate school environment and across the school community.
- Teachers are highly reflective practitioners deeply committed to the care and development of their pupils. All teachers plan comprehensively for lessons and they employ a range of approaches and methodologies. In lessons observed, pupils worked productively on collaborative tasks and demonstrated a very strong awareness of the needs of others. Similarly, during independent work, pupils demonstrated self-reliance and could capably regulate their own behaviour.
- High quality support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties and support and classroom teachers collaborate effectively when planning to meet their needs. Despite significant changes in personnel, the school has embraced the continuum of support and is actively exploring its implementation to ensure it has optimum impact on pupil learning. A range of initiatives is implemented including Literacy Lift-Off, station teaching, early intervention, intensive small group and individual tuition. There is scope however to review the process of prioritising pupils with the greatest needs for support and to extending early intervention initiatives.
- The quality of assessment is good and effective approaches noted include teacher observation, teacher-designed tests and the maintenance of samples of pupils' work. Pupils have engaged in valuable self-assessment practices and take pride in selecting work for their self-assessment folders. In some settings, very good examples of evaluative commentary was provided on pupils' work providing them with a clear sense of the next steps they need to take in progressing their learning. Cross-curricular assessment approaches should however be reviewed with a view to identifying pupils' key learning milestones the outcomes of which can inform planning and practice across the school. The development of longitudinal pupil profiles and checklists of key knowledge and skills to be acquired should assist in this regard.

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

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is excellent. Relationships between staff and pupils are exceptionally positive and standards of pupils' behaviour and discipline are most impressive.
- Teachers are keenly aware of the social and emotional dimensions of pupils' learning and reflect this in the learning activities they prepare. Pupils' interests and talents are recognised as central to the creation of relevant and interesting learning experiences. There are planned opportunities for pupils to show care and consideration for others and to develop the skills of active citizenship. The importance of praise as a motivating factor is well understood. In all settings, pupils display a strong desire to succeed in their learning endeavours.
- Pupils are making very good progress towards the development of self-esteem and an awareness of personal safety. Their strong confidence and pride in their knowledge, skills and emerging values admirably contributes to their sense of wellbeing.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management is very good. The board of management has a clear corporate identity and engages in the well-considered cyclical review and ratification of policies. The board is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for staff and pupils that is conducive to high quality learning outcomes and experiences. Their considerable experience, expertise and interest in diligently and conscientiously fulfilling their roles is a key strength of the school.
- The teaching principal provides highly effective leadership. His clear strategic direction is based on a shared vision which has taken into account the views of partners. He leads with integrity, demonstrates exemplary professionalism and instils confidence in others.
- The in-school leadership team are committed to continuously improving the quality of provision for pupils. They have engaged in professional development opportunities to enhance their leadership roles. The team meet regularly, fulfil a purposeful range of duties and provide updates on their work to the board of management.
- Very strong partnerships with parents have been established. Parents in their responses to questionnaires were unanimously positive in agreeing that there is a good atmosphere in the school and that it is well run.
- 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 quality of school self-evaluation is good. The school has engaged effectively with the school self-evaluation process. Teachers' commitment to enhancing their professional capacity as expert practitioners, individually and collectively, is highly praised. Improvement action plans have been developed to address a number of leadership and teaching priorities. Positive steps have been taken to gather the views of parents and others about the quality of provision. Actions to effect improvement are agreed on a whole-school basis. Building on this good practice, the school should ensure greater specificity in target setting to enable the monitoring and evaluation of their impact on pupils' learning outcomes and whole-school 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;

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 Shanagolden National School welcomes the WSE- MLL Report which asserts and affirms the dedication and commitment of the school staff, the Board, the Principal, the In-school management team and parent body of our school. It acknowledges that the report identifies leadership and management in the school as being very good, in maintaining highly constructive relationships, managing curriculum and organisational change. The Board is pleased that the report identifies and acknowledges the high standards of teaching, learning and pupil achievement evident in the school. The Board is particularly pleased that the quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is excellent and that the principles of inclusivity, equity and exceptionally positive pupil/staff relationships were acknowledged as impacting most favourably on pupil's well-being. The Board extends congratulations and thanks to the staff whose continued work and efforts were affirmed and to the children who are ambassadors for our school every day.

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 Shanagolden National School acknowledge and welcome the recommendations in the report which will inform our planning and will be integrated into our School Self Evaluation Plan. The school will endeavour to further develop its whole school approach to the delivery of the curriculum, will review cross-curricular assessment approaches and will place an increased emphasis on the prioritising of needs process, when organising support for pupils with additional needs.