Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>S N Fionntáin</th>
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| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Chapel Street  
|                          | Taghmon  
|                          | Co. Wexford |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number | 17443F       |

Date of inspection: 12-03-2020
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.
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).
8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.

The school did not meet the requirements in relation to 7 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, the school has subsequently furnished evidence of compliance with these requirements.
Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

Dates of inspection: 12-03-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection activities undertaken</th>
<th>12-03-2020</th>
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<tr>
<td>Meetings with principal and in-school leadership team</td>
<td>Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires</td>
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<td>Meeting with representatives of the board of management</td>
<td>Observation of teaching and learning</td>
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<td>Meeting with parent representatives</td>
<td>Examination of pupils’ work</td>
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<td>Meeting with teachers</td>
<td>Interaction with pupils</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review of relevant documents</td>
<td>Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives</td>
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SCHOOL CONTEXT
SN Fionntáin, Taghmon, is a rural, co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ferns. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education for educational inclusion. There are 183 pupils currently enrolled. While pupil attendance is good, the attendance of a group of pupils is a cause for concern. A number of interventions have been employed to address this issue. The school has undergone significant change and at the time of the evaluation, the principal had been newly appointed.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
- Overall, the learning achievements of pupils are good with some pupils achieving very good results in standardised assessments; some well-designed collaborative opportunities and rich learning experiences in Mathematics and Social Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) as well as noteworthy learning achievements in the Visual Arts, were in evidence.
- While some pupils discuss certain aspects of their learning competently, others are less confident; there is a need to further strengthen pupils’ ability to recall and explain their learning.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is good with some highly effective practice also observed; teachers support reflective practice and promote a culture of improvement.
- In light of the increase in special educational needs (SEN) teacher availability in the school, a review of SEN provision is now required.
- Overall, there is good quality leadership and management in the school and the principal leads and manages the day-to-day running of the school very efficiently.
- As part of its self-evaluation process, the school has drawn up a school report (SR), a school improvement plan (SIP), a plan for literacy and numeracy and an attendance strategy: it does not have planning for the DEIS themes of supporting educational transitions, retention and partnership with parents and others.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Regular opportunities should be provided for pupils to revise lesson content previously covered and to orally present, describe and discuss their learning across all curricular areas and in all settings.
- As part of a whole school approach to SEN provision, a co-ordinator should be appointed, planning for more focused, targeted support should be advanced and the organisation of time and the deployment of SEN teachers should be reviewed and regularised at the earliest possible opportunity.
As part of the DEIS planning process, the school should identify, implement, monitor and review evidence-based targets under each of the key DEIS themes.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
   - Overall, the learning achievements of pupils are good with some pupils achieving very good results in standardised assessments. Generally, pupils demonstrate a positive attitude to learning and engage in activities provided with enthusiasm. Some pupils with additional learning needs also record good progress.
   - Sa Ghaeilge, tá caighdéan maith á bhaint amach ag na daltáí. Tá tuiscint mhaith agus stór focal oiriúnach ag roinnt maith diobh. Tá a scileanna luathchumáide forbartha go maith agus tá siad ábalta ceisteanna a chur agus a fhreagairt agus abairtí simplí a chumadh, sna bunranganna agus na ranganna sóisearacha ach go háirithe.
   - In Irish, pupils are achieving a good standard. Many pupils have a good level of understanding and an appropriate vocabulary. Their early communication skills are well developed and they are able to ask and answer questions and construct simple sentences, particularly in infant and junior classes.
   - Overall, in literacy, pupil achievement levels are good. Pupils’ phonics and early literacy skills are systematically taught and monitored. Fine examples of pupils’ writing in a range of genres in English were observed. This approach would benefit from further extension across the curriculum, using subject specific language, to purposefully record and practise pupils’ new learning.
   - Achievement in numeracy is of a good standard overall. Effective use is made of concrete resources to support pupils’ understanding of new concepts. Praiseworthy work was observed in relation to pupils composing their own problems and their use of mathematical reasoning skills.
   - During the evaluation, some well-designed collaborative opportunities were used to promote pupils’ oral language abilities. However, while some pupils discuss certain aspects of their learning competently, others are less confident. In order to strengthen the ability of all pupils to recall and explain their learning, there is a need to embed and regularly reinforce material covered. Further opportunities to orally present, describe and discuss learning across all subjects should also be provided.
   - Particularly noteworthy learning achievements are in evidence in the Visual Arts and pupils’ work is attractively displayed throughout the school. Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework is implemented effectively in infant classes to support the promotion of the pupils’ social and communication skills. Rich learning experiences as part of interesting and challenging lessons in SESE, were also observed.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING
   - Overall, the quality of teaching is good with some highly effective practice also observed. Teachers support reflective practice and promote a culture of improvement in the school. In the parent questionnaires, most parents agree that teaching is good in the school.
   - Lessons are well structured and link to previous learning. In some lessons there is an over-reliance on teacher-directed methods. Where teaching is highly effective, the purpose of lessons, new learning content and the teaching of specific skills, are explained clearly and
reinforced regularly. Good use is made of visual resources and a guided, problem-solving approach to learning across the curriculum is used. It is advised that such exemplary practice be extended schoolwide.

- Overall there is a good range of assessment data available. While there is evidence of differentiated approaches to teaching and learning in some settings, a more consistent whole school approach to the collection and use of assessment information is advised. This would include the regular analysis of baseline data to track and monitor the progress of pupils and guide more focused teaching approaches in all learning settings.

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

- The school has an open, inclusive and welcoming atmosphere. Staff are very aware of pupils’ needs and high quality support is provided for pupils’ well-being. Teachers nurture their holistic development through the range of experiences provided.
- The school plays a very important role in the local community. Parents and the parents’ association are supportive of the work of the school and committed to its development. In their questionnaire responses, almost all parents indicate that there is a good atmosphere and that they feel welcome in the school.
- The pupils are well behaved, friendly, and courteous. The pupil questionnaire responses do however, indicate that there is potential to further include pupil voice more overtly in aspects of appropriate decision-making and in relation to their learning.
- Special educational needs (SEN) support is provided for pupils in literacy, numeracy, sensory and motor skills development. While the school uses a variety of individual, small group, whole-class and in-class structures to meet the range of pupil learning needs, support is organised primarily on a withdrawal basis. Currently, a SEN teacher takes sole responsibility for provision for Mathematics and English for half of one class group and another SEN teacher has been deployed as a full-time main class teacher with a whole-class group.
- In light of the increase in SEN teacher availability in the school, a review of SEN provision as a whole school approach, is required. As part of this process, a SEN co-ordinator should be appointed. Planning for more targeted support as part of withdrawal and in-class support should be advanced.
- The organisation of time and the deployment of SEN teachers should be reviewed and regularised as a priority. In line with circular 13/2017 and the Guidelines for Primary Schools – Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs, the school should ensure that SEN teaching supports are used in their entirety to support pupils identified with SEN. The use of additional teaching resources for mainstream class teaching or to reduce the pupil teacher ratio in mainstream classes should be discontinued and the situation regularised at the earliest possible opportunity.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Overall, there is good quality leadership and management in the school. The board of management meets regularly, is highly committed to the school and has overseen considerable improvements to the school building.
- The principal leads and manages the day-to-day running of the school very efficiently. She promotes a climate of care and collaboration, and is continuing the school’s programme of policy creation and review. The school actively supports engagement with initial teacher education school placement programmes.
- The principal is ably supported by the members of the in-school management (ISM) team who carry out their duties diligently. As priorities emerge from the DEIS planning process, it
is advised that specific duties assigned to the in-school management team be reviewed in order to reflect the changing nature of school priorities more fully and that team members develop the monitoring aspect of their leadership roles.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- As part of its self-evaluation process, the school has drawn up a school report (SR), a school improvement plan (SIP), a plan for literacy and numeracy and an attendance strategy. Evidence of planning in relation to the DEIS themes of supporting educational transitions, retention and partnership with parents and others was not available.

- It is a requirement under DEIS, the Action plan for Educational Inclusion 2017, that schools assigned DEIS status engage in DEIS action planning for improvement. The school should identify, implement, monitor and review evidence-based targets and actions under each of the key DEIS themes as part of their DEIS planning process. Given the current public health guidelines, this review should reflect the school’s Covid-19 policy.
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 quality of the school’s provision of each area.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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</td>
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<td>Good</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement</td>
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<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils’ learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve</td>
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<td>Weak</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;</td>
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Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management
Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

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Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

1. This recommendation will be met by class teachers and SET team. The recommendation will be discussed at a staff meeting and targets will be set. Progress will be reviewed regularly and evidence-based decisions made as to whether or not targets are being met. Embedding of this process will be a priority for teachers.

2. A SEN co-ordinator has been appointed. The SEN team will meet every six weeks to plan for focused targeted support. Assessments will be undertaken and reviews carried out accordingly. Deployment of SEN will be reviewed at the end of this school year.

3. A complete review of the DEIS plan will be undertaken and evidence based targets under each of the key DEIS themes will be identified, implemented and reviewed.