

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil Náisiúnta na hAille
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Aill An Mhóin Ard Contae Thiobraid Árann
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	17799V

Date of inspection: 08-03-2019



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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 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

Dates of inspection	08-03-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meetings with principal and deputy principal• 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, teachers and parent and board of management representatives

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Náisiúnta na hAille is a co-educational school located in Ayle, County Tipperary under the patronage of the Catholic Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly. It caters for boys and girls from infants to sixth class. There are six teachers on the staff, including four mainstream class teachers and two special education teachers. The teaching principal was appointed in September 2018. At the time of the evaluation, there were 104 pupils enrolled. Attendance levels overall are very good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is good, with some very good learner outcomes achieved in aspects of learning across the curriculum.
- The overall quality of teaching is good, although there is scope to further develop some teaching and assessment methodologies.
- Very good support for pupils' wellbeing is provided; the pupils learn in an inclusive, caring environment.
- Leadership and management are very good; the guiding vision for the school is being implemented very effectively.
- The school self-evaluation (SSE) process is having a positive impact on learner experiences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The principal and the teaching staff should agree and implement a greater range of whole-school teaching methodologies, in particular in English and Irish.
- Teachers should ensure that greater use is made of ongoing classroom-based assessments to inform differentiation of learning to suit pupils' abilities and needs.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of learning is good, with some very good learner outcomes achieved across the curriculum. The learning environments in most classrooms and in the communal areas of the school reflect high-quality learning experiences. Pupils learned collaboratively in most lessons.
- Good-quality learner outcomes are achieved in literacy. Pupils' interest in and enjoyment of reading were evident in each setting and promoted at whole-school level. Overall, standardised attainment test results are good. Pupils in the infant classes are given very

useful opportunities to learn language using a play-based, integrated approach. Very high-quality samples of pupils' writing were noted in a small number of settings, where writing was developed systematically and differentiated to suit pupils' needs. This very high-quality practice should now be extended across the school.

- Tá caighdeán na foghlama sna ranganna sóisearacha go maith. Labhraíonn na daltaí le habairtí iomlána agus tá dearcadh dearfach acu i leith na teanga. De réir mar a théann na daltaí chun cinn sa scoil, áfach, níl na torthaí foghlama chomh láidir: ar chaighdeán sásúil. Cé go ndéantar obair mhaith sa gramadach, tá roinnt deacrachtaí ag na daltaí le fíorchumarsáid ó bhéal. Ba chóir an cur chuige cumarsáideach a chur i bhfeidhm i ngach ceacht chun an Ghaeilge ó bhéal a fheabhsú. Tá béim mhaith ar an nGaeilge neamhfhoirmiúil trasna na scoile. *The standard of learning in the junior classes is good. The pupils speak with full sentences and have a positive attitude to the language. As the pupils progress through the school, however, the learning outcomes are less strong: a satisfactory standard. While good work is done with grammar, pupils have some difficulties with oral communication. The communicative approach should be implemented in every lesson to improve oral Irish. There is a good emphasis on informal Irish across the school.*
- In Mathematics, the learner outcomes are very good. This very high-quality learning was supported by relevant resources, linkage to real-life contexts and engaging discussion about mathematical concepts. Results from standardised attainment tests are at a very high standard overall. Further development of problem-based learning strategies would be beneficial to maintain this very high standard.
- Pupils in each class have achieved very high standards in the performance strand of the music and drama curricula, particularly through their participation in whole-school concerts. In addition, many aspects of Physical Education are developed to a very high standard.
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are provided with engaging, interactive lessons in a caring environment. These pupils are making very good progress in line with their identified needs.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching, including teaching in SEN settings, is good. All teachers prepare long-term and short-term plans and the lessons observed during the evaluation were prepared very effectively. During team-teaching sessions, high-quality differentiated learning was provided to pupils of all abilities. However, there is scope to extend differentiated teaching methodologies beyond the team-teaching sessions.
- The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) *Continuum of Support* documents are used to very good effect, with clear plans in place for pupils with SEN. These plans are reviewed regularly and contain good-quality targets for improvement. A very good range of methodologies to support pupils is used. Where practice was most effective, differentiated teaching was provided using a structured, time-bound approach to intervention. All teachers are advised to regularly review the models of support provided, and to adapt them according to the needs of the pupils.
- The quality of assessment is good. The assessment policy outlines very clearly the whole-school approaches to standardised and diagnostic testing and it is implemented consistently. However, the range of ongoing classroom-based assessment strategies observed was limited. Teachers should further develop formative assessment strategies in everyday classroom work to ensure lesson content is pitched appropriately to the range of pupils' needs.

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

- Support for pupils' well-being is very good. A warm, respectful atmosphere has been created. The pupils were very well behaved throughout the evaluation and all teachers used very effective classroom management strategies. In questionnaires administered during the evaluation, all pupils agreed that they like the school.
- The holistic development of pupils is nurtured through a range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities. The parents' association is very supportive of the work of the school. Very strong links have been made with the local community.
- Pupils in the senior classes have developed their leadership skills through the allocation of specific responsibilities for supporting the working of the school. Similarly, pupils in each class are given leadership responsibilities within their own classroom. A more structured whole-school approach to developing and including pupil voice would be beneficial.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Leadership and management are very good.
- The principal has a very clear vision for the development of the school. She has implemented a good range of whole-school teaching and learning initiatives, which are discussed frequently at staff meetings and board of management meetings. The role of the recently appointed deputy principal, and that of the assistant principal when appointed, should include leading learning and teaching responsibilities, as outlined in *Looking at our School 2016 – a Quality Framework for Primary Schools*.
- The board and the in-school management team work cohesively to create and maintain a school environment that is conducive to high-quality learning. Very positive relationships have been established with parents, and in questionnaires administered as part of the evaluation, all parents agreed that they feel welcome in the school. The board meets regularly and accounts are certified. Minutes of board meetings are recorded and the needs of the school are prioritised to very good effect. It is recommended that progress towards these identified goals are communicated to the school community in an annual report.
- There is a clear sense of distributive leadership in the school, and all teachers have demonstrated their ability and willingness to take on leadership roles. Teamwork is encouraged and all teachers undertake relevant continuous professional development in line with the identified needs of the school.
- The school reported that it regularly provides placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and is included among the standards in the Teaching Council's *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers* as it can provide valuable professional benefits for teachers, student teachers, pupils and the teacher education institution.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- There is evidence that the engagement with and investment in the SSE process has had a positive impact on learner experiences. However, the plan should be reviewed to incorporate parent voice and include changes to teaching methodologies to ensure that these improved learner experiences translate to improved learner outcomes.

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 S.N. na h-Aille welcomes the findings outlined in the Whole School Evaluation - Management, Leadership and Learning Report. We are pleased that the report recognises the many strengths of our school including the provision of a warm and respectful environment for all our pupils. We value the recognition that the overall quality of teaching and learning is good and we appreciate affirmation of the dedication and commitment of staff, pupils, parents and management. We are also pleased with the recognition and affirmation of the very high quality of leadership and management of the school. We are pleased that School Improvement Plans are impacting positively on teaching and learning 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 is happy to implement the recommendations made by the Inspectorate as we believe in and encourage best practice in all areas of school life in order to provide optimum learning experiences for the pupils of S.N. na h-Aille. The report identifies recommendations in relation to the greater use of ongoing classroom-based assessments and steps are being undertaken to address this. The report acknowledges the various teaching methodologies in use in the school and in line with recommendations the school is currently exploring further methodologies to be incorporated in the classroom. The school is also actively engaged with the P.D.S.T. to enhance curricular development.

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;