

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	St. Conleth and Mary's Primary School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Newbridge Co. Kildare
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	17872F

Date of inspection: 20-11-2019



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agus Scileanna
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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(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.

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.

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.

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, 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

St Conleth and Mary's Primary School, situated in Newbridge, Co. Kildare, is a senior primary school which caters for pupils from second to sixth class. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. Staffing comprises an administrative principal, fifteen mainstream teachers, including one teacher assigned to the special class for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), five special education teaching (SET) posts and one shared SET post. The overall attendance rates of the 375 pupils enrolled are very good, and while a significant number of pupils miss more than twenty days, this number is reducing year on year. The school receives additional supports due to its participation in the Newbridge School Completion Programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- There is effective leadership in the school which centres on the holistic development of each pupil and the fostering of very positive relations with staff members, parents and the community.
- The quality of pupils' learning is good; there is scope to further develop the pupils' ability to express their ideas and communicate their learning more comprehensively in line with their abilities.
- The quality of teaching is good; the teachers have scope to facilitate deeper engagement by pupils with the relevant concepts and skills outlined in the curriculum.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is satisfactory; while the school has engaged with the process in a focused manner, there is scope to develop some aspects of the process.
- Support for pupils' well-being is a significant strength of the school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pupils' communication skills in both English and Irish should be developed more systematically to enable them to express themselves with increasing complexity.
- Teachers should model and guide pupils in acquiring the relevant curriculum concepts and skills and they should enable pupils to transfer these to a variety of contexts and real-life situations.
- The school should enhance its approach to the SSE process in order to maximise its potential for impact on pupils' learning.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of learning is good. Pupils demonstrate very positive dispositions to their learning and are enthusiastic and respectful. They can capably work together and independently. The layout of some classrooms should be reviewed to optimise collaboration. Pupils undertake engaging learning experiences such as project work and experiments with the use of practical resources. In the Inspectorate questionnaire, almost all pupils agreed that this is a good school, they like it and their teachers explain things clearly. Their responses merit further exploration regarding the regular use of digital technologies and having a say in school matters.
- Literacy standards are good overall. Pupils can ably recount, question and predict. They are not as competent in demonstrating higher-order skills, for example justifying, inferencing and evaluating. Pupils can communicate simply in Irish, but have difficulty in sustaining a conversation. It is recommended that the pupils' communication skills in both English and Irish be developed more systematically to enable them to express themselves with increasing complexity, in both an oral and written manner.
- Pupils display a sense of place and belonging. This is fostered through their engagement in the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) curriculum and their first-hand experiences of learning in the locality. Many examples of their SESE work are attractively displayed. While they can recall and describe their learning experiences with confidence, there is scope for pupils to integrate, connect and apply their learning to real-life scenarios to a greater extent.
- A rich environment for the creative arts is evident and pupils achieve commendable outcomes in many strands of the Visual Arts.
- The pupils achieve good standards in Mathematics and in each class there is a cohort of pupils who achieve very high standards. During lessons, pupils are enabled to talk and discuss topics using appropriate mathematical language. To build on this good practice, it is advised that pupils be consistently enabled to clarify ideas, relate Mathematics to everyday life and explore multiple approaches to solving problems.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers create inclusive, pupil-centred learning settings based on respect and affirmation. They use a range of methodologies and resources to engage learners and they establish attractive learning environments. In particular, a practical range of resources has been developed to support the pupils' engagement with local history. The use of age-appropriate timelines, maps and globes to support pupils' learning in SESE in all classes is advised. Purposeful whole-class teaching, along with some station, group and pair work, are features of teachers' practice. In the delivery of these models there is a need to provide greater levels of challenge to pupils, particularly those with higher ability. Consideration should be given to how teachers' planning could best address how pupils will be challenged appropriately, in line with their abilities.
- Teachers plan and structure their lessons well and deliver them in an engaging manner. Where practice was most effective, teachers shared the learning intentions and made links with pupils' prior learning through skilful questioning and guided discussion. Such an approach facilitates deep learning. To this end, all teachers should engage in modelling and guiding the use of specific language, concepts and skills so that pupils are enabled to make connections and transfer skills across and beyond the curriculum.

- Individual teachers use a varied range of assessment approaches to monitor and evaluate learning and to communicate pupils' progress. There is scope to develop teachers' collaborative assessment practices with regard to the recording and analysis of data, and the use of this data to plan appropriately challenging learning experiences.
- There are good supports for pupils with special education needs, including pupils with ASD. Aspects which are praiseworthy include the breadth of supports, the high-quality interactions and the cohesive implementation of the Continuum of Support. Models of in-class support and intervention are at an early stage of development by mainstream and support teachers. It is recommended that all interventions be focused on the assessed learning needs of pupils and that baseline data be used to inform the setting of relevant programmes which are time-bound, monitored and reviewed.

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

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is a significant strength of the school. This is a very welcoming school where good manners, respectful interactions and inclusivity are promoted. All staff members, including the special needs assistants, ancillary staff and personnel delivering the school completion programme work effectively as a team to support pupils and to enhance their well-being.
- The school has put in place a wide range of initiatives, therapy supports, and after-school activities to enrich the pupils' well-being. These include school assemblies, themed weeks, attendance-promotion actions, physical activities and participation in Green Schools' actions and the Active Flag initiative. While pupils are well engaged in all initiatives, school leaders should explore further ways to promote and facilitate the development of pupil voice and pupil leadership. The school has established strong links with relevant agencies, local enterprise and feeder schools, including the junior school on its shared campus.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- There is effective school leadership and management at all levels. The board of management undertakes its roles and responsibilities with competence. It is supportive of staff professional development and is committed to providing a well-run, orderly school. The board communicates well with parents. It should explore ways to incorporate the views of parents in policy formation and SSE to a greater extent, and should review its enrolment policy to better reflect the school's inclusion practices.
- The principal is a vibrant, visible presence who provides effective leadership. Working closely with the deputy principal, together they foster a very positive school climate. School leadership nurtures strong relationships and communicates a shared mission centred on the pupils' holistic development. Staff are empowered to take on leadership roles. Members of the in-school leadership and management team are aware of and responsive to the needs of the school. The school has established good structures and processes to address priority areas to date including special education, school mission and social, personal and health education. School leadership is well placed to lead a rolling review of whole-school curricular plans, many of which are in need of updating.
- The school values the support of parents as a means of enhancing pupils' learning and well-being. The officers of the parent-teacher association provide a variety of valuable supports to the school and they expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school's openness and the welcome given to parents. They are kept well informed regarding their children's progress and school matters. According to the parent questionnaires, all parents agree that there is a good atmosphere, the school is well run and that their child is doing well.

- The school has well-established mentoring and induction processes for newly-appointed teachers. 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 Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers, as it can provide valuable professional benefits for teachers, pupils and the teacher education institute.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is satisfactory. Teachers have agreed an action plan for their chosen priority area. However, the plan would benefit from greater consultation and evidence gathering in order to optimise its potential for impact. To this end, the school should implement a more structured, consultative approach to SSE so that clear, attainable targets are agreed, and procedures are established to monitor its implementation and evaluate its impact on learning.

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.

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

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

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Area 2 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 welcomes the findings of the evaluation of our school. We are pleased that the main strengths of the school were identified and that the commitment of all members of the school community was affirmed. The Board of Management acknowledges the manner in which the evaluation was efficiently and professionally undertaken and thanks the inspectors for the courtesy which was extended to all.

The Board of Management will take on board the recommendations made in the report and they will provide a focus to further enhance the work of the school through their ongoing implementation.

The Board of management acknowledges the recommendation regarding policy review and shall do so in accordance with our schedule of reviews.