Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

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<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Crossbridge N S</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Crossbridge Tinahely Co Wicklow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>17907V</td>
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Date of inspection: 07-03-2019
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; the board chose to accept the report without response.

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, 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates of inspection</th>
<th>07-03-2019</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inspection activities undertaken</strong></td>
<td><strong>Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Meetings with principal and in-school leadership team</td>
<td>• Observation of teaching and learning</td>
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<td>• Meeting with representatives of the board of management</td>
<td>• Examination of pupils’ work</td>
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<td>• Meeting with parent representatives</td>
<td>• Interaction with pupils</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Meeting with teachers</td>
<td>• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Review of relevant documents</td>
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SCHOOL CONTEXT
Crossbridge National School, is a rural, vertical, co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Diocese of Ferns. The overall attendance levels of the 56 pupils enrolled is very good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
- The learning achievements of pupils are of a good quality overall with some pupils scoring at very high levels in standardised tests in English and Mathematics.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is good with a range of practice from satisfactory to very good observed: in some lessons there is an over reliance on teacher-directed learning and an insufficient focus on sharing the learning intention, and on the teaching and regular consolidation of specific skills.
- Assessment is a feature of practice in all classes; assessment for learning practices vary across the school.
- There is a need to review current arrangements for special educational needs (SEN) provision.
- Leadership and management is competently exercised in the school; there is a need to develop the curriculum leadership role of the in-school management team further.
- The school has devised a school improvement plan (SIP) for English literacy focusing on oral language and the implementation of the Primary Language Curriculum.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- In order to build on existing good practice, teachers should ensure a strong focus on sharing the learning intention of lessons with pupils and the teaching of specific skills that are explained clearly and regularly consolidated as part of well-structured, collaborative learning experiences.
- The school should develop its assessment practices further to inform more differentiated teaching and learning approaches in response to the range of pupil ability levels in classes.
- As part of provision for pupils with SEN, priority should be given to providing early intervention and prevention measures in infant classes, ensuring that the continuum of support is implemented fully and that support provided in withdrawal and in-class support settings has a clear emphasis on targeted learning outcomes for pupils.
In order to develop the curriculum leadership role of the ISM team, the specific duties assigned to the team should be reviewed regularly to reflect the changing nature of school priorities and the monitoring of the consistent implementation of agreed whole-school initiatives.

**DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING**
   - Pupils engaged in the range of learning opportunities provided during the evaluation with high levels of interest and motivation. The learning achievements of pupils are of a good quality overall with some pupils scoring at very high levels in standardised tests in English and Mathematics. All parents who completed the questionnaires reported that their child is doing well in school.
   - Sa Ghaeilge, tá caighdeán maith á bhaint amach ag na daltáí. Tá tuiscint mhaith agus stór focal oiríunach ag roint mhaith diobh. Tá scileanna luathchumarsáide na ndaltaí forbartha go maith agus tá siad ábalta ceisteanna a chur agus a fhreagairt agus simplí a chumadh, sná bunranganna ach go háirithe. In ainneoin sin, labhraíonn cuid acu le heaspa muiníní. Chun an caighdeán a fheabhsú a thuilleadh, moltar scileanna labhartha agus scríbhneoireachta neamhspleách an duine a fhorbairt go céimníúil ó rang go rang agus monatóireacht córasach a dhéanamh ar an dul cinn a dhéanann siad i nGaeilge.
   - In Irish, pupils are achieving a good standard. Many pupils have a good level of understanding and an appropriate vocabulary. Pupils’ early communication skills are well developed and they are able to ask and answer questions and construct simple sentences, particularly in Infant classes. In spite of this, some pupils speak with a lack of confidence. In order to improve their standard further, it is advised that pupils’ independent speaking and writing skills are developed incrementally from class to class and their attainments in Irish monitored systematically.
   - Overall, in literacy, pupil achievement levels are good, with some pupils achieving very good reading levels. To enhance achievement levels in literacy further, it is advised that differentiated reading instruction be progressed throughout the school.
   - Pupils experience writing in a range of genres in English. To maximise the impact of this approach there is a need to provide increased opportunities to embed pupils’ writing skills. A more sustained whole-school focus on writing in each genre and the further development of comprehension skills is advised.
   - The level of pupil achievement in numeracy is high, with some pupils achieving at very high levels. Effective use is made of concrete resources and maths games to support pupils’ understanding of new concepts. In the questionnaires most pupils feel they are doing well in Maths.
   - The very effective use of Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework at infant level and junior levels to develop the pupils’ Scientific Environmental and Social Education (SESE) and communication skills, is highly praised. Examples of commendable work in History and Science were observed during the evaluation. In Drama, a strong emphasis is placed on pupils’ performance abilities. The pupils sing very well and play percussion instruments enthusiastically.

2. **THE QUALITY OF TEACHING**
   - Overall, the quality of teaching is good with a range of practice from satisfactory to very good observed. Lessons are well structured and link to pupils’ previous learning. Classroom environments are attractively presented.
In some lessons, there is an over reliance on teacher-directed learning. Where teaching is highly effective, very good use is made of methodologies which have a strong focus on sharing the learning intention of lessons and teaching specific skills which are explained clearly and regularly consolidated. Pupils are actively engaged in high quality, collaborative learning experiences. Such particularly effective practice is worthy of extension school-wide. In the parent questionnaires, all parents agree that teaching is good in the school.

Assessment is a feature of practice in all classes. Assessment for learning practices vary across the school but include teacher-designed tasks and the gathering of profiles of pupils’ work. The school should develop its assessment practices further to inform more differentiated teaching and learning approaches, in response to the range of pupil ability levels in classes.

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

- Support for pupils’ well-being is of a commendable quality. The pupils are very well behaved, friendly, confident and courteous. However, the pupil questionnaire responses indicate that there is potential to further include pupil voice more overtly in aspects of appropriate decision-making and in relation to their learning.
- The school plays a very important role in the local community and parents are supportive of the work of the school. The board of management and staff report very good assistance from the parents’ social committee. In their questionnaire responses, all parents indicate that there is a good atmosphere and almost all state that they feel welcome in the school.
- Additional teaching support is provided for pupils in literacy, numeracy, sensory and motor skills development. This is delivered in a warm and engaging manner. While the school uses individual, small group and in-class structures to meet the range of pupil learning needs, support for pupils with SEN is organised primarily on a withdrawal basis.
- The school should review current arrangements for SEN provision to ensure that priority is given to early intervention and prevention measures to support pupils’ learning in infant classes, while still ensuring that pupils with the greatest learning needs receive the highest level of support.
- Individual profile and learning programmes (IPLPs) or school support plans are drawn up in consultation with parents and, commendably, also with the pupils’ own input. It is recommended that the continuum of support for pupils is implemented fully, with particular emphasis on the use of classroom support plans.
- The continued development of in-class support to incorporate focused team teaching, is also advised. More careful planning for withdrawal and in-class support, with a clearer emphasis on targeted learning outcomes, should be advanced to enhance this work.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Leadership and management is competently exercised in the school. The board of management meets regularly and is very supportive of the work of the school. The issuing of an agreed report after board meetings and an increased provision for parental input into pertinent policy formation is now advised.
- The principal articulates a strong commitment to the ongoing development of the school and ensures that the school is organised and well run. She is supported in her role by an assistant principal I (API) and an assistant principal II (APII) who carry out their assigned duties conscientiously and competently. It is advised that the specific duties assigned to the in-school management team be reviewed regularly to reflect the changing nature of school priorities. The development of its curriculum leadership role, especially in relation to the monitoring of the consistent implementation of agreed whole-school initiatives should be
progressed. The school actively supports engagement with initial teacher education school placement programmes.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION
- The school has devised a school improvement plan (SIP) for English literacy focusing on oral language and the implementation of the Primary Language Curriculum. School leadership should ensure that the collection of baseline data, targets, actions and monitoring mechanisms are sufficiently clear and delineated. Further involvement of the stakeholders in the school self-evaluation (SSE) process is also advised.
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.

<table>
<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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<tr>
<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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