

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil Naomh Ioseph
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Gorey Co. Wexford
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	18280I

Date of inspection: 05-12-2019



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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 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	05-12-2019
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

Scoil Naomh Ioseph is located in Gorey in County Wexford and operates under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Ferns. The school has experienced significant growth and change in recent years. It is now a vertical, co-educational school and has a special class for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). The school has nineteen mainstream teachers, six special educational need (SEN) teachers and one special class teacher. The attendance of the majority of the 504 pupils currently enrolled is very good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is good; a more individualised approach to the teaching of reading and a greater focus on pupils' skills across the curriculum would enhance learning.
- The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory; there is an absence of shared teaching approaches; in some learning settings there is an overreliance on teacher-led instruction; and SEN provision requires review.
- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is good; the school is warm and welcoming and pupils are managed very well.
- The quality of leadership and management is fair; there is scope to develop practices at board and in-school levels.
- Communication practices in the school have not developed in line with the changes and growth that the school has experienced.
- The school has recently started to re-engage with the school self-evaluation (SSE) process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The board of management should improve its governance and oversight practices to ensure that resources available to the school are appropriately utilised and that it is meeting its statutory obligations.
- The principal and in-school management (ISM) team should develop their roles as instructional leaders, using the SSE process to monitor learning standards and develop shared teaching approaches across the school.
- Revised communication structures and processes should be developed and implemented at all levels in the school.
- A whole-school, differentiated approach to the teaching of reading should be developed and a review of SEN provision should be initiated.
- Teachers should make greater use of active methodologies to engage pupils in discussion and enquiry, and to purposefully develop their skills.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is good. They display positive dispositions towards learning and are generally motivated and engaged. In infant classes, pupils are benefitting from the recent introduction of *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. Pupils enjoy when opportunities are provided to be active and to work collaboratively with others.
- Ar an iomlán, tá dearcadh dearfach ag na daltaí ó thaobh fhoghlaim na Gaeilge de. Sna hard ranganna, tá foclóir maith acu agus tá sé de chumas ag fórmhór díobh abairtí iomlána agus sách casta a chur le chéile, laistigh de comhrá leanúnach. *Overall, pupils have a positive attitude towards the learning of Irish. In senior classes, they have a good vocabulary and most are able to construct full and relatively complex sentences as part of a continuous conversation.*
- The overall attainment levels in Mathematics and English reading are good. Some pupils do not experience reading instruction at an appropriately challenging level and are not provided with suitable reading material that matches their level of development. A whole-school approach to the teaching and learning of reading that provides for differentiated reading material should be developed.
- Pupils have developed some good oral skills; they can question, predict, and communicate effectively. However, many of them experience difficulties in justifying, inferring and elaborating on their learning. In some settings, pupils' writing skills are developed effectively across the curriculum, using a genre-based approach.
- In the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) subjects, pupils recall of knowledge and previously taught content is commendable. Nevertheless, in the lessons observed, an insufficient focus was placed on the development of pupils' skills. In some classes, pupils achieve good outcomes in Music and Visual Arts. Overall, pupils would benefit from a greater focus on skills' development.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The quality of teaching in classrooms and support settings is satisfactory overall. There were variations in the quality of teaching observed, ranging from fair in a small number of settings, to good and very good practices in other settings. Teachers create a positive learning atmosphere characterised by mutual respect, affirmation and trust. Classroom environments are welcoming and many contain good displays that celebrate pupils' learning.
- Where practice was best, lessons were well structured, pupils were actively engaged in purposeful tasks, content was appropriately differentiated, and teaching was focused on supporting learners to acquire and consolidate specific skills. In other lessons, there was an overreliance on text books and teacher-directed learning.
- Assessment is a feature of practice in all classes. Teachers gather valuable information in relation to pupils' learning using a good range of assessment strategies. In some learning settings there are good assessment for learning practices evident, and information from standardised tests is used to inform differentiated programmes of learning, and to make decisions about provision of support for pupils. However, data from standardised tests is not being effectively analysed at whole-school level to examine overall achievement levels and trends in attainment.
- Clear individual support plans with good targets have been developed for pupils in receipt of additional support through the *Continuum of Support*. Commendably, in-class support and team-teaching are well-established practices, although in some instances, there is potential

to clarify teachers' roles. Support usually commences at the start of the school year and while the provision of support is reviewed, it generally continues for the full year. In some mainstream classrooms, up to five SEN teachers provide additional support. A comprehensive review of SEN provision should take place that examines its organisation and considers targeted interventions based on the identified learning needs across the school.

- A key shortcoming in the overall teaching is the absence of shared approaches. In light of the school's changed and evolving context, it is important that priority areas are identified and that common approaches to teaching are developed. The school is advised to seek sustained support from the Professional Development Support for Teachers (PDST).

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

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is good. The school is warm and welcoming and pupils are managed very well. The code of behaviour is implemented effectively and all interactions were observed to be respectful. In questionnaires, almost all pupils agreed that there were clear expectations for behaviour and that they knew who to talk to if they experienced bullying.
- The school participates in the Gorey School Completion Programme and positive efforts are made to support and include all children in school life. A good range of extra-curricular opportunities are facilitated, and engagement in some co-curricular projects is promoted. Other projects and co-curricular experiences that enhance pupils' learning and provide challenge should be considered.
- The school does not currently have a student council or any formal mechanism to involve pupils in decision making. This would be a useful way to develop leadership capacity amongst pupils and to facilitate pupil voice.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management is fair. Leadership and management practices and procedures have not adapted sufficiently to reflect the school's changed context. The board of management is supportive of the work of the school, provides financial oversight and has engaged effectively with the department's building unit through the development and repair of the school building. The recent appointment of new board members presents an opportunity to lead a review of the vision for the school and to identify strategic priorities to inform its term of office.
- There is scope to develop the board's governance and oversight role to ensure that resources available to the school are appropriately utilised and that the board is meeting its statutory obligations. The board is advised to access any relevant training and support from the patron. Specific matters that require the board's urgent attention include:
 - Appointing an Assistant Principal 1 (AP1), a post that has remained unadvertised for over a calendar year.
 - Ensuring that the sole pupil enrolled in the EBD class has access to a full school day and that teaching resources assigned to the class are gainfully used at all times.
 - In conjunction with the ISM team, overseeing that sufficient resources for teaching and learning are available across the school, and that a system to store and share resources is developed.
 - Ensuring that a digital learning plan is developed and that grant aid provided as part of the *Digital Strategy for Schools* is used without delay.
- The principal effectively oversees the day-to-day management of the school and ensures that an orderly environment is maintained. He cultivates positive relationships with pupils and parents. Individual members of the ISM team diligently carry out a range of

management duties and the team recently examined the potential of working collaboratively.

- The principal and the ISM team should develop their instructional leadership roles. Areas of responsibility should be formally agreed and regular team meetings should be facilitated so that the team functions as a strategic unit. The team should use the SSE process to progress teaching and learning priorities, monitor and lead their implementation, and build cohesive approaches to teaching and learning. Opportunities should be provided to facilitate working groups among the teaching staff, to distribute leadership, develop leadership capacity and improve communication and consultation. With these points in mind, the team is advised to seek external support from PDST and the Centre for School Leadership.
- In questionnaires administered as part of the evaluation, a majority of teachers disagreed or were unsure that the board kept them informed of its work, and a significant minority disagreed that communication amongst the staff was good. A significant proportion of parents disagreed that the board and the Parents' Association communicated regularly with them. Revised communication structures and processes should be developed and implemented at all levels in the school.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- At the beginning of this school year, the school began to re-engage with the SSE process and oral language and problem solving were identified as areas of focus. The targets in the school improvement plan are vague and a long menu of possible actions has been identified. In light of the school's changed context, the development of an effective SSE process should be a priority for the school.

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 and staff of St Joseph's Primary School welcome the findings of the WSE-MLL Report and are committed to implementing a continual process of self-evaluation and improvement in the School.

The Report highlights many examples of good practice within the School thereby recognising the diligent efforts of the staff. We welcome the feedback of questionnaires which show almost all pupils and parents are happy with the school, feel welcome in the School, feel that the teaching is good and the students are making educational progress.

We also note some areas which need to be improved and the recommendations will provide the Board of Management and staff with a useful tool to engage in reflection and improvement.

The Board of Management and staff will continue to strive and work hard in order to maximise the potential of the children.

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 and staff acknowledge and accept the recommendations of the Report and will support the implementation of these recommendations. Plans to address the recommendations have already begun.

The Assistant Principal (API) Post has been advertised and filled. A system to store and share resources is being developed. The delay in using the Digital Grant Aid was to ensure that the money was used prudently. We have since spent the money and hope the investment will enhance and develop our digital learning. The Principal is currently drafting a Digital Learning Policy which will shortly be presented to the staff for ratification. The Board of Management have agreed on an Approved Report which will be made available at the end of each meeting. The Parents Association are looking at setting up an Information Point at Reception to make parents aware of their function and work in the School. The Staff have implemented two new forms of communication.

The Principal and staff will review current practices in relation to creating a whole-school differentiated approach to the teaching of reading. The Principal and staff will continue to review and improve SSE, ISM and SEN provision in the School. In future reviews of our whole school curriculum plans, we will ensure that there is additional emphasis placed on the use of active methodologies to engage pupils in discussion and enquiry, and to purposefully develop their skills.