

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil Chaitríona Naíonaín
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Measc Avenue Coolock Dublin 5
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	18362K

Date of inspection: 20-10-2017



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 on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

Dates of inspection	20-10-2017
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 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 Chaitríona Naíonáin operates under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The school is included in Band 1 of the School Support Programme of Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. It has a home-school-community liaison (HSCL) service and receives support from the School Completion Programme. There are 221 pupils enrolled currently across ten mainstream classes from junior infants to first class. There are four support teachers based in the school and one part-time support teacher. Overall attendance among the majority of pupils is good; however, the attendance of specific cohorts of pupils requires improvement.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- Learning achievements are very good with pupils engaged in meaningful play-based and integrated learning experiences.
- The quality of teaching is very good with some exemplary practice evident.
- A comprehensive range of assessment data is generated; further analysis of this data is required.
- Support for pupils' well-being is of a very high quality.
- While the DEIS action plan addresses key priorities, some aspects require further development.
- The quality of the leadership of teaching and learning is very good; notwithstanding this, overall management and organisation have a number of specific areas for improvement.
- The board of management continues to apply the concession for pupils in first class to have a shorter school day, as is provided for in Circular letter 11/95; this concession is applied by a small minority of schools nationwide.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Greater analysis of assessment data is needed to ensure optimal achievements for all pupils.
- As part of the DEIS action planning process, a more strategic approach to improving attendance levels and progressing further parental involvement in policy development and review is required.
- The board of management should increase the frequency of its meetings, review its current provision for extra-curricular tuition for pupils and the arrangements for recreational breaks for pupils to ensure compliance with the regulations of the Department.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- Overall, the quality of the learning achievements of pupils in all settings is very good. Pupils demonstrate their knowledge and understanding successfully in a variety of ways across the curriculum. Their skill development in Social Environmental and Scientific Education and in the Arts is of a very high standard. Pupils engage regularly in meaningful play-based and integrated learning experiences underpinned by the principles of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. Overall, classroom management is very good and this contributes positively to pupils' learning experiences. High-quality classroom displays reflect and celebrate pupils' learning. Regular assemblies should be considered as further means of promoting attendance, celebrating pupils' achievements and developing their sense of community.
- Overall, learning achievements in literacy are very good. Pupils use talk and discussion very effectively to engage with their learning. They write to a very good standard with particular success in recount writing, independent writing and pre-writing skills. Pupils enjoy being read to regularly by their teachers from a good range of large format texts. Commendably, all pupils engage in a range of integrated literacy activities in collaborative groupings. Ar an iomlán, léiríonn na daltaí dearcadh dearfach i leith foghlaim na Gaeilge. Cothaítear scileanna éisteachta agus labhartha na ndaltaí go han-mhaith trí mheán cluichí agus dánta, rannta agus abairtí a aithris bunaithe ar théamaí áirithe. *Overall, pupils demonstrate a positive attitude to learning Irish. Pupils' listening and speaking skills are well developed through games and repetition of poems, rhymes and thematically focused sentences.*
- Overall, learning achievements in numeracy are very good. Pupils' learning is facilitated regularly in small groups. They use manipulatives and other resources in lessons to explore number concepts and to support their understanding of real-life mathematics. It is recommended that teachers identify common areas of difficulty in learning for some pupils, combined with targeted interventions to address these, to strengthen provision further.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- Overall, the quality of teaching is very good with some exemplary practice evident. Teachers provide active learning experiences for pupils in literacy and numeracy through appropriately play-based approaches. Teaching is grounded in a good range of research-based methodologies at all class levels. Enhancing the teaching of reading skills is an on-going priority for teachers; work in this regard has been good. The teaching of comprehension strategies require further attention.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) incorporates very effective team-teaching through a range of in-class support models. Commendably, implementation of the continuum of support is evident, in line with the *Guidelines for Primary Schools Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools*. Student support plans are in place; however, targets arising from pupils' priority learning needs are not always sufficiently clear to guide practice and enable effective assessment.
- Overall, teachers' planning is of a very good quality. Planning for the *Primary Language Curriculum* is incorporated effectively into teachers' short term-plans. Whole-school curricular

plans in English and Mathematics have updated appendices attached. A strategic approach to reviewing these plans fully is needed and, in the context of this school, electronic storage of whole-school plans is advocated. Established and effective collaborative planning and assessment approaches, in place for some in-class models of support, should be extended to all models of support.

- A very good range of whole class and individual pupil assessment data is generated in all settings, comprising photographic evidence, work samples and checklists. However, it is not analysed in a way that optimally informs practice or achieves further improvements in attainment. Greater analysis of data on a whole-school basis should identify where improvements can be achieved for pupils, in line with their abilities.

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

- Support for pupils' well-being is of a very good standard. Pupils appear very content in their learning settings and staff provide a calm and nurturing environment. The work of the HSCL co-ordinators involves home visits and providing courses for parents. An attendance monitor supports the school. Going forward, provision for a breakfast club and a more suitable parents' room should be considered. The transition of pupils to senior primary schools is very well organised. Practices to support pupils' transition from pre-school settings should be developed further.
- The parents' association is not affiliated currently to the National Parents' Council-Primary. In discussion, a parent nominee from the board of management reported very high satisfaction levels with the school. Parents provide very good support for whole-school events and for a range of in-class activities such as *Maths for Fun* and the *Storytime* project. Currently, parents have a limited role in policy review; more active involvement of parents in policy development and review should be progressed. In inspectorate questionnaires, all parents agreed that their child feels safe and well looked after in the school.
- Confirmation was provided that the board of management has formally adopted the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* without modification and that the school is compliant with the requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory overall. The board of management undertakes many aspects of its work in an effective manner. It is supportive of the continuing professional development of staff and provides a detailed annual report to parents on its work. Notwithstanding this, immediate improvement is needed in a number of specific areas. The board holds one meeting per term; it should hold not less than five meetings in any school year.
- While two break-times are scheduled for pupils during the school day, the pupils go to the playground for one period of fifteen minutes only; where at all possible, the pupils should be permitted to go to the playground during break-times. The arrangement whereby some teachers are being remunerated for providing extra-curricular tuition during official school time should be discontinued as a matter of priority. Currently, such tuition is happening during

the hour when teachers in infant schools are expected to prepare for their own classroom practice. The board is aware of challenges in relation to improving overall attendance levels and some aspects of parental involvement. To this end, further development of the school's DEIS strategic plan is needed.

- The board continues to apply a shorter school day for first class under the provisions of Circular 11/95. It should review whether the continued application of this concession is in the educational interest of pupils at first class level in this school.
- The leadership of the principal has been highly effective in promoting progressive pedagogical practice; this in turn is resulting in high-quality learning outcomes for pupils. High expectations regarding teaching and learning are communicated clearly to teachers, resulting in very positive learning experiences for pupils. The work of the in-school management team supports inclusive practices and contributes to the very efficient day-to-day operation of the school. It is timely now to focus more specifically on the achievement of DEIS related priorities. Other staff members contribute very effectively to promoting a child-centred environment. In questionnaire responses, all teachers agreed that the school is well run and has a good atmosphere.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The school reported that it is not currently engaging in the school self-evaluation (SSE) process due to industrial action. However, a DEIS action plan is in place and evidence available from self-evaluation work conducted prior to the industrial action shows that the school had engaged well previously in the SSE process. There is evidence that agreed actions are having a positive impact on teachers' collective practice and on learning in classrooms.

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 <i>very good</i> 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. Overall, learners have access to a basic level of provision. 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;