

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	S.N. Faiche Liag
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Portlairge Co. Waterford
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	18380M

Date of inspection: 24-01-2019



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

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.

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	24-01-2019
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

SN Faiche Liag is a rural, co-educational school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Waterford and Lismore. There are currently 205 pupils enrolled in the school and the attendance levels of pupils are very good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall learning achievements of pupils are very good with the pupils presenting as articulate and interested learners who are confident at expressing themselves and their views.
- The overall quality of teaching is good, with some very good practice also observed; where teaching was particularly effective there was a clear focus on a shared learning intention for lessons and the teaching of specific skills which are then regularly consolidated.
- Pupils' abilities and interests are nurtured successfully in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) with a strong emphasis on participation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) projects.
- The overall quality of pupils' well-being is very high and this is a significant strength of the school; there is a welcoming, caring atmosphere in evidence with very positive respectful interactions and close links with the local community.
- The quality of leadership and management in the school is commendable; the principal and in-school management team (ISM) manage the organisation of the school in a highly effective manner and a very positive working environment prevails.
- The school has prioritised Science as an area to focus on for school self-evaluation (SSE).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To build on existing good practice, all teachers should ensure a clear focus on a shared learning intention for lessons and the teaching of specific skills which are regularly consolidated as part of well-structured, differentiated, collaborative learning experiences.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall learning achievements of pupils are very good. Pupils present as articulate and interested learners who are confident at expressing themselves and their views. In the pupil questionnaires, administered as part of the inspection, most pupils indicated that they enjoy their lessons and learning.

- Pupils are given very meaningful opportunities to apply and use their learning in a wide range of contexts. Opportunities are purposefully exploited for pupils to develop and integrate their learning in Visual Arts and Music across the curriculum. The schoolwide approach to promoting the pupils' physical fitness is praised.
- Pupils' abilities and interests are nurtured successfully in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) with a strong emphasis on participation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) projects. The pupils engage very productively in a range of activities to develop their entrepreneurial skills and apply their learning to real-life experiences. The school's outdoor and local environments are also used very effectively to support a range of learning experiences in SESE including a highly innovative approach to integrating the school garden into school life. Ancillary staff and visitors to the school are invited to share their local knowledge and to make learning more meaningful for the pupils.
- Learning outcomes in Mathematics are of a very good standard overall. Pupils use mathematical language appropriately and their computation skills are strong. Their problem-solving skills have been prioritised appropriately for further development as part of the schools' self-evaluation (SSE) process. Team-teaching approaches in Mathematics are used to promote problem-solving and reasoning through collaborative games and activities.
- Léiríonn na daltaí suim sa Ghaeilge. In ainneoin sin, cé go gcuirtear béim ar fhoclóir agus ar fheidhmeanna teanga oiriúnacha, labhraíonn cuid de na daltaí le heaspa muiníne. Ar mhaithe lena ngnóthachtáil a uasmhéadú, moltar scileanna labhartha na ndaltaí a fhorbairt a thuilleadh go céimniúil ar bhonn uile scoile. *Pupils display an interest in Irish. However, while vocabulary and suitable language functions are emphasised, some pupils speak with a lack of confidence. To enhance their achievement levels, the incremental development of pupils' independent speaking skills on a whole-school basis, is advised.*
- Overall learning outcomes for pupils in English reading are very good. Pupils have a good grasp of early reading skills and the school-wide focus on developing pupils' comprehension skills further is praised. The school liaises closely with parents to encourage and promote reading for pleasure. The pupils can communicate, understand and use language comprehensively in a range of contexts. They also have opportunities to take part in debating competitions on a variety of topics.
- Within English and across the curriculum pupils are afforded opportunities to engage in interesting writing activities. A whole-school approach to the teaching of writing genres is in place which guides the work in all the classrooms. To maximise the impact of this approach, it is advised that benchmarks for pupil achievement in writing be developed for each class level.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching is good, with some very good practice also observed. Teachers are hardworking and demonstrate high levels of commitment to the pupils in their care. Attractive, well-organised, print-rich learning environments are provided and during the evaluation teachers demonstrated very effective classroom management skills. Lessons are well prepared and link well with previous learning. Cross-curricular, thematic links are used to promote an integrated approach to teaching and learning. A variety of visual resources, including information and communications technology (ICT), is used effectively to enhance and support teaching.

- In some lessons, very good use is made of methodologies that involve well-structured lessons which have a clear focus on a shared learning intention and the teaching of specific skills which are regularly consolidated. In these lessons, pupils are actively engaged in high quality, differentiated, collaborative learning experiences. Such particularly effective practice is worthy of further extension school-wide.
- All teachers provide individualised long and short-term planning and progress records. In some instances a clearer focus on the intended learning outcome for lessons would further guide curriculum implementation in the school.
- Commendable provision is made for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in withdrawal settings and as part of in-class models of support. Members of the team possess considerable experience and expertise and work collaboratively with mainstream teachers in preparing programmes of work for the pupils. Teachers employ effective strategies and a wide range of resources to support pupils in the development of specific academic and life skills in an environment that is caring and reinforcing for pupils.
- Teachers have developed a range of assessment practices which monitor pupil achievement. In some learning settings, the analysis of this information is being used successfully to guide differentiated programmes of learning to accommodate the range of abilities in classes. Building on current good practice, it is advised that further opportunities to employ assessment for learning approaches be developed.

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

- The overall quality of pupils' well-being is very high and this is a significant strength of the school. The school successfully places pupil well-being at the heart of all of its processes and decision making. There is a welcoming, caring atmosphere in evidence in the school and interactions between pupils and teachers are very positive and respectful. A wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities is organised by the school to prioritise pupils' holistic development. Strong links have been established with feeder pre-schools.
- The school plans to facilitate pupils more formally in age-appropriate decision-making through the establishment of a pupils' council. The results of the questionnaires administered during the evaluation indicate that this type of activity is worthy of further development.
- The school plays an important role in the local community and parents are highly supportive of the work of the school. An open door policy is in place and parents feel comfortable approaching staff with queries and concerns. Regular newsletters, text messages and the school website ensure good communication between home and school. Almost all parents report that they are happy with the school and all agree that there is a good atmosphere in the school and that it is well run.
- There is a very active parents' association in the school. The parents association demonstrate their support through their active involvement in a variety of aspects of school life, including managing the school library, fund raising and supporting liturgical and school celebratory events.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management in the school is commendable. The board of management plays a key role in maintaining the culture of the school and has proactively overseen significant developments in the school's infrastructure. The chairperson is a frequent visitor to the school and gives generously of her time and support. The board promotes good levels of communication with the school community. Building on this good

practice, the board is now advised to develop structures to involve parents more meaningfully in the development of pertinent school policy.

- The principal demonstrates highly effective organisational skills in managing the day to day work of the school. He displays a commitment to developing practices in the school which ensure high quality educational provision for the pupils. He works collaboratively with the staff and the school community to promote a nurturing school atmosphere. At the time of the evaluation, it was noted that there was very good staff morale and that a very positive working environment prevailed. He is ably supported by the in-school management team who meet regularly and carry out a range of duties diligently and conscientiously. The school actively supports engagement with initial teacher education school placement programmes.
- In light of the significant changes in the school's staff in recent years and as priorities emerge from the self-evaluation process, it is advised that members of the team further develop the monitoring aspect of their leadership roles in relation to the implementation of agreed whole-school priorities and teaching actions.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The school has prioritised Science as an area to focus on for school self-evaluation (SSE). It also plans to continue to progress previously identified literacy and numeracy targets and actions. The teaching staff has compiled an SSE report and school improvement plan. In so doing, the school should ensure that targets and actions are sufficiently delineated and implemented systematically.

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;