

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation**  
**Management, Leadership and Learning**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Scoil Náisiúnta Rath Éilte
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Thurles County Tipperary
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	18396E

**Date of inspection: 19-09-2019**



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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 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

<b>Date of inspection</b>	19-09-2019
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meetings with principal and in-school leadership team</li><li>• Meeting with representatives of the board of management</li><li>• Meeting with parent representatives</li><li>• Meeting with teachers</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Náisiúnta Rath Éilte (Rahealty National School) is a rural primary school operating under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Cashel and Emly. There were four mainstream class teachers and two special education teachers (SETs), with ninety-eight pupils enrolled, at the time of the evaluation.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The quality of learning is very good.
- Teaching is very good; the implementation of a common approach to the planning and recording of differentiation is one of the few areas for improvement.
- Assessment is good; there is scope for better use of assessment data in planning for further learning.
- Support for pupils' wellbeing is very good and the school creates an inclusive environment.
- The quality of leadership and management is very good.
- Work undertaken in respect of school self-evaluation (SSE) is good; the impact of SSE on teaching and learning would be better if the current focus were broadened.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school should implement a whole-school approach to differentiation, to include arrangements for the planning and recording of differentiation.
- Teachers should make use of all available assessment data when planning programmes of work.
- The focus of the SSE process should be broadened to encompass all aspects of oral language.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of learning is very good. The pupils are engaged in their learning and motivated to participate in school life.
- Tá an-bhéim ar chómhraí Gaeilge. Labhraíonn na daltaí agus na múinteoirí Gaeilge go neamhfhoirmiúil i rith an lae. Tá an-chuid acmhainní Gaeilge in úsáid ag an scoil. Díreann an-aire ar chúrsaí gramadaí sna hardranganna. Breathnaíodh ceacht Corpoideachas a bhí déanta trí Ghaeilge. *There is a very good emphasis placed on Irish conversation. The pupils and teachers speak Irish informally during the day. The school uses a variety of Irish resources. One of the lessons observed was in Physical Education (PE) with Irish as the medium of instruction.*
- Junior and senior infants benefit from learner experiences provided through *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. There is literacy-based team teaching in all classrooms. In their reading, pupils use comprehension strategies effectively. They demonstrated good progress in sentence structure and vocabulary development. There is a need, however, to ensure that learner experiences are provided in relation to other aspects of oral language also. All teachers should use class libraries and other resources to promote reading for pleasure among pupils.
- The pupils have opportunities to use concrete materials and real-life examples in the development of mathematical concepts and language.
- Pupils have experience of the skills of working as historians. During the inspection, they were observed using maps and globes when learning about climate in Geography. They also explored mini-beasts and habitats in the school garden and environs. Digital technologies are used extensively by pupils for creative and research purposes.
- In Visual Arts, pupils have good learning opportunities in respect of *Looking and responding*. In Music, pupils learn about musical literacy through listening, performance and composition.
- The school provides broad learner experiences in all strands of the PE curriculum and opportunities for pupils to participate in many team sports.

### 2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching is very good. The quality of the teachers' preparation is commendable. Individual and collaborative planning are very effective, and include sharing of good practice.
- Déanann an scoil an-iarracht chun Gaeilge a mhúineadh. Tugann na múinteoirí dea-shampla trí Ghaeilge a labhairt os comhair na ndaltaí. Cuireann na múinteoirí an-bhéim ar Ghaeilge ó bhéal. Bíonn foghlaim chomhtháite ábhar agus teangacha (FCÁT) ar siúl trí Chorpoidéachas. *The school makes a considerable effort to teach Irish. The teachers model competent Irish. The teachers put a strong emphasis on oral Irish. Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) occurs in PE.*
- Whole-school approaches to literacy and numeracy are used very effectively, including the teaching of comprehension and writing genres. Concrete materials and mathematical trails are used extensively. The culture of early intervention is notable.
- Team teaching is implemented very effectively. Pupils work very well as teams and are aware of how their team roles impact group work.
- Teachers foster pupils' ownership of their own learning by sharing intended learner outcomes with them and providing useful feedback on their work.

- The learning environment is well organised in all classrooms, with displays of pupils' work. There is good use of the local environment as a resource for learning. Story is used very successfully to teach chronology in History. Digital technologies are used effectively.
- The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The SETs plan in accordance with the *Continuum of Support* framework. The school should support all teachers in working towards agreed targets and maintaining the log of actions consistently in the student support file. The school should implement a whole-school approach to differentiation, to include arrangements for the planning and recording of differentiation.
- The overall quality of assessment is good. Teachers' observations and data from standardised assessment tests inform teaching and learning. However, all teachers should use the assessment data available to ensure that the learner experiences address the pupils' assessed learning needs. Whole-school strategies for self-assessment and peer-assessment are needed. Teacher-designed tasks and rubrics observed during the evaluation did not always take cognisance of the skills sections of the *Primary School Curriculum*. The school should ensure that pupils are enabled to achieve the objectives of the skills sections of the curriculum.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELLBEING**

- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is very good. There is a nurturing atmosphere. The relationships observed between teachers and pupils were very positive and mutually respectful. The use of the 'Buddy Bench' is a very effective intervention. The school makes good provision for Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE).
- Pupils have opportunities to contribute to decision making through efforts made to engage in consultation with them, and their involvement in various committees.

### **4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

- The quality of leadership and management is very good. The principal is very committed to the school and the deputy principal and assistant principal provide effective support. Examples of devolved leadership and the development of leadership capacity among the teachers were observed. In-school communication is effective. School resources are managed very effectively.
- The chairperson and the board of management provide commendable support to the school. They engage in policy development, SSE and have oversight of records management. There is good communication between school management and the parent body, with parents involved in policy development. The school maintains very effective links with relevant agencies and other local schools. The local community is very supportive and involved in various school activities.

### **5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION**

- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is good. The school is very proactive in involving parents in policy development and in the SSE process. The current focus in SSE is on particular aspects of oral language. The focus of the SSE process should be broadened to encompass all aspects of oral language. The school has demonstrated very good capacity for improvement and the implementation of recommendations.

# **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 of Rahealty National School welcomes the very positive report of the Inspectorate. We are very pleased that the report recognises the many strengths of our school and its affirmation of the dedication and commitment of staff, pupils, parents and management. The Board particularly welcomes this report's acknowledgement of the following:

- The very high quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The quality of support of students' wellbeing is very good.
- We are also pleased with the recognition and affirmation of the very high quality of leadership and management of the school.
- We are pleased that SSE is impacting positively on teaching and learning in the school.

## **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 is happy to implement the recommendations made by the Inspectorate. The report identifies recommendations in relation to implementing a whole-school approach to differentiation and steps are being undertaken to address this. The report acknowledges that the overall quality of assessment is good and, in line with recommendations, the teachers will use all available data for future planning. The school is actively engaged in SSE process and, as recommended, will focus on encompassing all aspects of oral language.

## 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
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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 <b>very good</b> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;