**Whole School Evaluation**

**REPORT**

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<th>Ainm na scoile / School Name</th>
<th>Scoil Na Mainistreach</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile/ School Address</td>
<td>Oldtown Road Celbridge Co. Kildare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>18551N</td>
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**Date of inspection: 02-05-2019**
WHAT IS WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION?
The Whole-School Evaluation model is used to provide whole-school evaluative information, advice and support to the school. These inspections affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of educational provision in the school. In addition to evaluating leadership and management, school planning and self-evaluation, and support for pupils, the inspectors typically examine the quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English, Gaeilge, Mathematics and one other subject.

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 leadership and management
2. The quality of school planning and school self-evaluation
3. The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement
4. The quality of support for pupils

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.
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 did not meet the requirements in relation to check number 2 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken.
Whole-School Evaluation

Date of inspection 02-05-2019

Inspection activities undertaken
- Meeting with principal and deputy principal
- Meeting with the board of management
- Meeting with parent representatives
- Review of relevant documents
- Pupil focus-group interview
- Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires
- Observation of teaching and learning
- Examination of pupils’ work
- Interaction with pupils
- Feedback to senior management team and teachers,
- Feedback to parent representatives
- Feedback to board of management

SCHOOL CONTEXT
Scoil na Mainistreach is an all-boys vertical primary school in Celbridge, Co. Kildare. It will become co-educational in September 2020. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The teaching staff comprises an administrative principal, deputy principal and twenty mainstream teachers, two of whom are assigned to the unit for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). There are ten special education teachers on staff and an additional teacher on a part-time basis. There are currently 468 boys enrolled. The high number of pupils who miss more than twenty days is cause for concern. Provision for English, Irish, Mathematics and Drama was evaluated in a sample of settings during this whole-school evaluation.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
- This inclusive and welcoming school ensures that the care and wellbeing of the pupils is central to its work; this aspect of the school’s provision is highly commendable.
- Leadership and management at all levels are aware of the school’s need to update its guidance regarding policy and curriculum delivery and it is well placed now to lead developments in teaching and learning.
- The quality of teaching is good, though there is scope to develop the teachers’ methodologies and programme planning with regard to oral language teaching in both English and in Irish.
- While the pupils display good levels of application to their learning, there is a need to enhance their learning experiences to ensure greater emphasis on the teaching of skills, collaborative group work and the promotion of their autonomy as learners.
- In the main, the quality of support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good, though there are aspects for development in how SEN support is coordinated and its impact evaluated.
- The school has not yet undertaken its annual review of its Child Safeguarding Statement in line with check number 2.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Leadership and management at all levels should ensure that effective systems, structures and whole-school guidance are put in place to comprehensively inform curriculum provision and address the priority needs of the school.
• All teachers should extend the language-learning methodologies in use and plan specific language programmes to ensure progression in the pupils’ oral language skills in English and Irish.

• Teachers should provide more stimulating, challenging learning experiences whereby pupils are enabled to work collaboratively, and transfer and apply skills from one context to another.

• In implementing the Continuum of Support framework, greater coordination is required to ensure that the pupils with the greatest need get the most support, based on their assessed needs.

• The school should now undertake its annual review of the Child Safeguarding Statement.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

• The quality of school leadership and management is appropriate. The well-functioning board carries out its duties in a capable manner. It is advised to undertake a more detailed, phased review of school policies and curricular plans which reflects the school’s context and needs more fully. As a start, it should review the school procedures for promoting punctuality and improving attendance, and should update its enrolment procedures to better reflect the inclusive practices of the school.

• The principal fosters a welcoming, supportive school environment and is committed to ensuring that all pupils reach their potential and fully participate in school life. There is very good collaboration between the principal and deputy principal, both of whom are recently appointed. The in-school leadership and management team members carry out their assigned duties in a capable manner. To support effective whole-school planning and to address school priorities, it is recommended that the principal, working closely with school leadership at all levels, establishes clearer structures and processes for decision-making, and for leading and evaluating the impact of changes in how the curriculum is delivered.

• The management of resources is very good. The school hosts a number of additional resources including a library, ASD unit, sensory rooms, the Aistear room, an attractive school environment, digital technologies and a garden area. All teachers use a variety of teaching resources and, in most settings, prepare stimulating classroom environments. The school’s informal procedures for teacher mobility should be clarified and set out in policy.

• Mentoring, induction and continuous professional development practices are established. The school reported that it regularly provides placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and is included among the Teaching Council’s Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers, as it can provide valuable professional benefits for teachers, pupils and the teacher education institute.

• The school fosters very good relations and communications with the community. This welcoming school has established good links with local schools. Effective communication strategies are in place to inform parents regarding their children’s education. The parents’
association provides very good support and works with the school in a spirit of collaboration for the benefit of the pupils. In the Inspectorate survey conducted during the evaluation, almost all parents agreed that there is a good atmosphere, the school is well run and they are welcome. The parents’ responses indicate a need to enhance aspects of communication and to ensure that parents’ views are sought in relation to school matters to a greater extent.

- The management of pupils is commendable. A wide range of strategies and initiatives is underway to foster pupils’ self-esteem and promote their wellbeing. Overall, relations are warm, supportive and affirmative. During the evaluation, the pupils were well behaved, courteous and respectful. In the Inspectorate survey, the majority of pupils agreed their teacher explains things clearly, listens to them and gives them feedback on their work. The pupils’ responses indicate some areas for further exploration including group work, pupil voice and aspects of pupil behaviour.

2. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL PLANNING AND SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The overall quality of school planning and the school self-evaluation (SSE) process is satisfactory. The school has used the SSE process in the past, but has yet to systematically evaluate its impact on learning. Early work is underway during the current cycle of SSE in identifying a focus area. It is advised that learning from the previous SSE cycle inform future strategic planning.

- For the most part, appropriate organisational policies are in place which underpin the smooth running of the school. Current curriculum plans do not guide teachers’ practice nor sufficiently address whole-school provision in each subject. In addressing this challenge, the school has begun to update plans. To this end, a phased and systematic approach to the review and updating of plans should be undertaken. Existing planning structures should be reviewed to ensure teachers engage in curriculum planning which is informed by best practice and guides effective teaching and learning in every setting.

- In general, the quality of teachers’ individual planning is good, with appropriate focus on learning objectives, and where relevant, the Primary Language Curriculum. Teachers should ensure that short-term learning objectives are more closely focused on the needs of individual pupils, based on the outcomes of assessment data. Effective target setting is an area for development in SEN planning.

3. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, with scope to enhance the learning experiences of pupils. Teaching is characterised by good lesson structure, clear explanation of concepts and appropriate use of resources. Teachers are effective communicators. There is scope to enhance the pedagogy of language learning. The school makes good provision for play-based learning in the infant settings. Pupils are attentive and motivated to learn. They display good levels of application to their learning. Nevertheless, there is scope to enhance the pupils’ learning experiences with a greater emphasis on the acquisition of skills, opportunities for collaborative group work, and the promotion of pupils’ autonomy as learners.
The overall standard of English is good. Early-reading skills are well taught and pupils achieve commendable reading standards. The pupils’ writing in terms of content, penmanship and presentation varies significantly, ranging from fair to very good. During the evaluation many pupils did not display sufficient confidence and competence in expressing themselves orally. All teachers should deliver discrete oral language lessons, focusing on developing the pupils’ communicative relationships through language. For pupils who are learning English as an additional language, more robust language assessment should be undertaken to inform appropriate support. The following language-teaching approaches should be explored by all teachers, namely, recasting, small group guided-talk sessions, drama techniques and extensive language prompts.

Sa Ghaeilge, ní mór feabhas a dhéanamh maidir le torthaí agus eispéiris na bhfoghlaimeoirí. Baineann na hoidí úsáid as áiseanna oiriúnacha agus as dánta, cluichí agus rainn i rith na gceachtanna. Cruthaitear timpeallacht shaibhir i bprionta cé go bhfuil scóip chun níos mó béime a chur ar phiciúir chun tuiscint a spreagadh. Cé go gcuireann na hoidí béim chuí ar obair bheirte, moltar achar níos faide a chaithear ar mhúineadh na n-eiseamláirí nua atá leagtha amach go sonrach sa phhleanáil, agus níos mó deiseanna cainte a thabhairt do na daltaí chun fíor-chumarsáid a chothú. Chun cur le sealbhú scileanna teanga na ndaltaí, moltar tuilleadh naisc a chruthú idir an obair ó bhéal agus táiscanna létetheoireachta agus scribhneoireachta cruthaíthi.

There is scope for improvement with regard to pupils’ learning outcomes and experience in Irish. The teachers use appropriate resources and employ poems, games and rhymes during lessons. A print-rich environment for Irish is established, though there is scope to increase the use of visual prompts to promote understanding. While teachers place suitable emphasis on pair work, it is recommended that more time should be spent on the explicit teaching of new language exemplars, which are set out clearly in planning, and more opportunities should be provided for pupils to communicate more naturally. It is advised that further links be made between oral work and both reading and writing tasks to support language acquisition for pupils.

The quality of teaching and learning in Mathematics is good. It is characterised by clear explanation of concepts, teacher-modelling, the use of concrete resources and, at times, active learning. The pupils achieve good standards. They can compute with confidence and capably apply their knowledge of mathematical operations to problems. The use of digital technologies was noted, with scope to review the suitability of the content in terms of context and challenge. Teachers need to ensure that all Mathematics relates to the pupils’ everyday lives and that the pupils are enabled to explain their approaches to solving problems using appropriate mathematical language.

The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Drama is satisfactory. While some good teaching strategies were observed during the evaluation, an overall approach to drama learning has not been fully implemented. The school places an emphasis on performance drama and the recent large-scale production brought a great sense of achievement to all involved. It is advised that the school place a stronger focus on educational drama. All pupils should be enabled to experience Drama as both a subject and a methodology with an emphasis on specific elements of Drama and on pupil reflection, cooperation and communication.

The overall quality of assessment is satisfactory. A small range of assessment approaches is used at whole-school level and class level to identify pupils’ learning needs and abilities.
Teachers monitor the pupils’ written work well and provide supportive feedback. Overall, there is a need to extend the range of assessment approaches in use, to include assessment-for-learning and pupil-assessment. Whole-school guidance in relation to the range, analysis and use of assessment is required by all teachers to better inform teaching and learning.

4. QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS

- The overall quality of support for pupils with special educational needs is good with development required in how support is coordinated and how progress is evaluated. Aspects which are praiseworthy include the teaching and learning of pupils with ASD, general teaching methodologies, use of resources and the quality of relationships. There is scope to bring greater cohesion to how support is delivered and its impact evaluated, so that those with the greatest need get the most support. The SEN team should ensure that greater balance is achieved between both in-class and withdrawal models at all class levels, arising from the assessed needs of pupils at class, group or individual level.

- The quality of care and support for the wellbeing of pupils is a significant strength of the school. The school provides a very good range of additional supports to ensure that all pupils are enabled to participate fully in school life. This is evident in the many in-school and after-school supports, clubs, activities and sports that are provided to pupils. The school has recently established a student council and has an active Green School committee. The school celebrates and affirms pupils’ achievements through regular assemblies and through school-wide displays. The school’s inclusion practices are praiseworthy.
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>
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<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<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 <strong>outstanding</strong> 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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<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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Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management
Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management welcomes the positive findings from our recent WSE. We thank the Inspectorate for their professional engagement. The Board also wish to acknowledge and thank the staff for their professionalism and the high level of care which they offer to all the pupils. The report acknowledges many of the schools strengths including:

- Being an inclusive and welcoming school that has the children’s wellbeing central to our work.
- Having a good quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Having a well-functioning Board.
- Having very supportive parents and an engaged and hard working Parents Association.
- Having good relationships within the community.

Area 2  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 acknowledges the recommendations in the report. The Board, Principal, ISM team and staff have already started to address some areas.

They include:

- The annual review of the Child Safety statement which is nearing completion.
- Review our curricular planning. This will be completed at a gradual and systematic pace.
- Starting to assess our oral language programmes to ensure consistency and progress throughout the school.
- Looking at options to improve children’s punctuality and attendance.

All recommendations will be taken on board in order to build upon existing good practice within Scoil na Mainistreach.