

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School Name	Scoil Bhríde, Eglantine
Seoladh na scoile/ School Address	Douglas Road Cork
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	18563U

Date of Evaluation: 24-11-2016



WHAT IS A WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION?

The Whole-School Evaluation model is used to provide evaluative information, advice and support to the school. These inspections affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to inform the further development of educational provision in the school. In addition to evaluating management and leadership, the inspectors examine the quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in four subjects, including English, Gaeilge, Mathematics and one other subject.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this process, the inspectors evaluated and reported under the following headings:

1. Quality of leadership and management
2. Quality of school planning and school self-evaluation
3. Quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement
4. 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 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.

Whole-School Evaluation

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Date of inspection	24-11-2016
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with principal• Meeting with the board of management• Meeting with parent representatives• Meeting with deputy principal and in-school management team• Meeting with special educational needs teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• 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 Bhríde Eglantine is an all girls' primary school located in Douglas in Cork city. The school is under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross. The school has a long-established educational tradition and there are 564 pupils on roll. The official staffing allocation is twenty mainstream classroom teachers, five support teachers and an administrative principal. The level of school attendance is good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of school management is unsatisfactory.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is good with some very good practice observed.
- There is a satisfactory range of resources to enhance teaching and learning; however, a teacher allocated to a support setting is deployed in a mainstream classroom.
- The school has a very supportive parents' association and both parents and pupils have a positive view of the school.
- There is significant scope for development in school planning and assessment practice.
- While the quality of support for pupils is satisfactory, provision in this area would benefit from more effective whole school co-ordination and planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The board of management should ensure its operating procedures are in accordance with the *Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019*.

- The principal needs to develop a focused and collaborative approach to leading teaching and learning and overall school development.
- A contextualised school plan needs to be developed to guide teaching and learning throughout the school.
- A whole-school approach to assessment should be established to ensure a consistent approach to monitoring and reviewing pupil progress.
- A greater range of teaching methodologies including differentiation and active learning approaches should be used.
- The coordination and management of support for pupils with special educational needs should be reviewed in order to enhance provision in this area.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The overall quality of school management is unsatisfactory. There is significant scope for improvement in the work of the principal. The board of management is required to further develop its operating procedures to ensure compliance with the Department of Education and Skills (DES) *Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019*.
- The board has a broad experience base and is supportive of the school. Meetings are convened on a regular basis and members' roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. The work of the board in ensuring the maintenance and continued upgrading of buildings is clearly in evidence in the school. However, there are a number of matters relating to the operation of the board which should be addressed as a matter of urgency. The chairperson, principal and recording secretary should ensure that all members are consulted on key decisions, are aware of developments which occur within the school and are briefed on correspondence received from the DES. Equally, all decisions associated with the operation of the school should be recorded in the minutes of board meetings. While the treasurer of the board presents an account of income and expenditure at each meeting, it is recommended that all accounts are certified or audited on an annual basis in accordance with Section 18 of the Education Act 1998.
- The board should also address issues regarding the deployment of teaching staff within the school. The current situation whereby a teacher allocated to support pupils with special educational needs is deployed in a mainstream classroom setting should be addressed as an immediate priority. The board has also employed a classroom teacher in a private capacity in the recent past. However, it was noted that the school's patron was not consulted regarding this process and the procedures used were not in accordance with *Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019*. To support the board in its work, it is recommended that it engages in training to ensure full familiarity with the governance procedures for the operation of a board of management of a primary school.
- The principal has focused primarily on organisational matters associated with the school environment. He has also been instrumental in the introduction of tablet technology to the

school. However, there is significant scope for development in the work of the principal particularly with regard to leading teaching and learning, overall school development, and record keeping. It is recommended that he engages in a whole-school collaborative process of reviewing, planning and monitoring curriculum implementation. In light of the areas of development identified during the evaluation, school management should reflect on the professional development required to progress improvement in leadership, teaching and learning and record keeping, and engage with the support services to build capacity in these key areas.

- The deputy principal and members of the in-school management (ISM) team have been assigned a broad range of duties which greatly support the daily operation of the school. They attend to these duties in a conscientious manner. Some scope for development exists with respect to extending the curricular leadership role of the ISM team. They should also be given an opportunity to report progress on their agreed areas of responsibility to the board of management on an annual basis.
- A satisfactory range of resources which enhance teaching and learning is in place. An audit of available teaching materials should be undertaken to identify additional resources required to support teaching and learning. Special needs assistants (SNAs) work collaboratively with class teachers to assist pupils to access the curriculum.
- The school enjoys a positive relationship with parents and good home-school communication arrangements are in place. The parents' association is very supportive of the school and contributes positively to various aspects of school life. A meeting with the representatives of the parents' association, together with information from questionnaires, indicate that the parental body has very positive attitudes towards the school.
- Pupils in the school are courteous, well behaved, enthusiastic and polite. Very positive and supportive teacher-pupil relationships were noted during the evaluation. Pupils are facilitated to engage in a range of extra and co-curricular subjects within the school. Their responses to questionnaires were positive and they consider Scoil Bhríde to be a good school.

2. QUALITY OF SCHOOL PLANNING AND SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The overall quality of whole-school planning is weak. While a selection of curricular plans and administrative policies were available for review during the evaluation, whole-school planning does not inform individual teacher planning and practice. Under the direction of the principal, and in a collaborative manner, the school should implement an action-planning approach to the review of all curricular plans and administrative policies.
- There is evidence of preliminary engagement in the school self-evaluation process. However, there is scope for development with regard to embedding this work in teaching and learning on a whole-school basis.
- 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*.

3. QUALITY OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT

- The overall quality of teaching observed was good with some very good practice observed. Teachers prepare long and short-term plans and approach their work in an organised manner with a clear focus on learning outcomes. There were good examples of collaborative planning at some class levels. Under the direction of the principal, work should be undertaken to link whole-school planning with individual teacher planning and practice. There is also scope to extend active learning experiences and further develop differentiated teaching approaches.
- The overall quality of learning outcomes range from good to very good with school assessment data indicating high levels of pupil attainment in reading and Mathematics. Good levels of productive pupil engagement were noted in classrooms. Additional analysis of assessment data should facilitate a further extension of challenging learning experiences for pupils.
- Tá caighdeán maith bainte amach ag na daltaí sa Ghaeilge. Aithrisíonn siad raon leathan foclóir, frásaí agus abairtí. Tá stór breá rannta, dánta agus amhráin ar eolas acu, rud a chuireann lena bhfoghraíocht agus lena rithim na teanga. Tá siad in ann teanga a úsáid i gcomhthéacsanna áirithe. B'fhiú deiseanna níos leithne a sholáthar dóibh an teanga a úsáid i slí fhíor-chumarsáideach. Léann na daltaí buntéacsanna le brí agus le tuiscint agus díritear go príomha ar na scileanna feidhmiúla sa scríbhneoireacht. Moltar réimse níos leithne ábhar léitheoireachta a chur ar fáil agus béim sa bhreis a dhríriú ar scríbhneoireacht neamhspleách, chruthaitheach. *The pupils have achieved a good standard in Irish. They recite and learn a broad range of Irish vocabulary, phrases and sentences. They have learned a variety of poems and songs which contribute to enhancing their pronunciation and rhythm when using the language. They can use Irish confidently when speaking in particular contexts. It is recommended that a wider range of opportunities be provided for the pupils to use the language in communicative contexts. The pupils read core texts with meaning and understanding and attention is focussed primarily on functional writing activities. A broader range of reading materials should be provided and greater attention should be given to the development of independent and creative writing skills.*
- In English, the overall quality of teaching and pupil attainment is high. Pupils were observed to be very confident in their use of language. A clear whole-school approach to developing oral language skills would further enhance learning outcomes in this area. The *Aistear* framework has been successfully introduced in the junior classes. Very good reading standards across a range of genres were noted. Pupils have access to graded readers and a variety of novels and non-fiction materials. Significant scope for development was noted in classroom libraries. Samples of pupils' writing across a variety of genres ranged from good to very good. The development of a whole-school approach to handwriting is recommended.
- Pupil achievement in Mathematics is very good. There is a clear structured approach to teaching using a variety of active learning methodologies in many settings. Pupils demonstrated very good understanding, recall, and implementation of mathematical processes. Good use of mathematical language was also noted. There is scope to further develop reasoning and higher-order skills and to extend the use of the school environment to enhance mathematical understanding. Further discussion with pupils regarding their attitudes to Mathematics is advised with a view to improving pupils' perceptions of their own competence and abilities in the subject.
- The overall quality of provision in Geography is good with lessons ranging from satisfactory to very good observed during the evaluation. Pupils demonstrate good geographical knowledge

and a well-developed sense of environmental responsibility. Thematic approaches and involvement in initiatives such as the Green Flag project help to enhance and embed this awareness. An increased emphasis on geographical investigation skills, a structured approach to the use of the local area and an increase in geography resources would further enhance provision in this subject.

- The overall quality of assessment throughout the school is fair. Examples of practice observed include teacher-designed and commercially produced tests, checklists, teacher observation and the compilation of work samples. Pupils' work is well monitored with examples of positive constructive feedback in some instances. To ensure consistency throughout all classes, it is recommended that a whole-school approach to assessment across all subject areas be undertaken under the direction of the principal. Greater analysis of assessment data would assist in informing planning and guiding differentiated teaching approaches. Opportunities for pupil engagement in self-assessment and peer-assessment should be explored.

4. QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS

- The overall quality of support for pupils is satisfactory. To enhance provision, the principal and support teachers should collaboratively devise a plan which includes the coordination of special educational needs (SEN) provision in the school. The principal, together with the board of management, should also ensure that all support teachers are deployed in accordance with DES guidelines.
- The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs ranged from satisfactory to very good. Professional, caring, affirmative and constructive relationships were observed between teachers and pupils in the school. All teachers provide individual education plans (IEPs) for pupils receiving supplementary teaching. Pupils' strengths, needs and learning targets are identified in IEPs but there is scope to further develop the target-setting process in some instances. Reviewing the approach to tracking and monitoring pupils' progress is also recommended. Further development of the continuum of support model to include a greater emphasis on stage one intervention at mainstream class level would enhance provision.
- Good provision was noted in settings catering for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL). It is recommended that the timetabling of such provision be reviewed to facilitate the delivery of support on a more frequent basis.

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 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. 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

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

1. The Board of Management is very concerned to read the W.SE. Report from the Department of Education and Skills Inspectorate.
2. The Board of Management is resolved to addressing the issues and has contacted the Patron's Office for advice and support.
3. The Board of Management is going to engage with the support services required to build capacity in the key areas as per the Whole School Evaluation Report.
4. The Board of Management has requested the C.P.M.S.A. to provide training for its members.
5. The Accounts have been certified and copies have been forwarded to the Patron's office.
6. The regulations as outlined in the "Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019" will be strictly adhered to.