

**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>	S N Cholmcille
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Blackstaff Carraig Mhachaire Róis Co Mhuineacháin
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	188200

**Date of inspection: 06-03-2019**



---

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 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 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>Dates of inspection</b>	06-03-2019
<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 and pupil questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Review 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 Cholmcille is a rural school located in the parish of Inniskeen, County Monaghan. It is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Clogher. The school participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative. There has been a steady increase in enrolment in recent years and the school currently has seventy-eight pupils distributed across three mainstream classes. There is one full-time special education teacher (SET) based in the school. The overall attendance is very good.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning is very good; pupils demonstrate very positive learning dispositions across a broad and balanced range of curricular areas.
- The quality of teaching is of a very high standard; a broad range of methodologies was used in the lessons observed to enhance pupils' learning.
- The overall quality of assessment is commendable with an emphasis on developing methodologies to support and enable pupils' self-assessment; ongoing assessment of pupils' skill development on a cross-curricular basis has not yet been fully realised.
- The support for pupils' well-being is very good and a caring and supportive atmosphere is evident in the school; a student council has yet to be established.
- The quality of leadership and management is very effective and characterised by collaborative practice, supportive relationships and a clear vision for the school community as a whole.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is very good with a strong focus on improvement in teaching, learning and assessment. The Digital learning Framework has also been implemented very successfully.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- To enhance assessment practices, teachers should place greater emphasis on monitoring the development of pupils' skills on a cross-curricular basis.
- Pupils would benefit from the establishment of a student council in order to develop their decision-making and leadership skills.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of pupils' learning is very good. Pupils engage well with learning tasks and speak about their learning with confidence. In responses to Inspectorate questionnaires, almost all pupils indicated that they enjoyed their lessons and learning.
- Pupils participate in a broad range of curricular learning experiences and their learning attainments across the curriculum are very good.
- Pupils read with fluency in both English and Irish and there is a good standard of reading throughout the school. They demonstrate good comprehension skills. They are exposed to a wide range of text types and writing genres with some particularly good examples of poetry and writing in evidence.
- Ghlac na daltaí páirt mhaith sna ceachtanna Gaeilge a breathnaíodh. Léirigh said tuiscint mhaith ar an bhfoclóir a bhí foghlamtha acu. B'fhiú deiseanna breise a thabhairt do na daltaí a scileanna saorscribhneoireachta a chleachtadh agus a fhorbairt. *Pupils engaged well in the Irish lessons observed. They displayed good understanding of the language they had learned. Pupils would benefit from greater opportunity to develop their creative writing skills.*
- Pupils' learning achievements in Mathematics are very good. They adopt a problem-solving approach to Mathematics and engage with a wide range of concrete materials.
- The pupils' learning in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) is very good. Pupils regularly use digital technologies to research and present their work in a wide range of learning contexts. They engage with a range of artefacts to support the development of their skills as historians.
- Pupils enjoy a broad Arts curriculum and examples of their creative work are displayed widely within the school environment.
- Pupils engage in an extensive Physical Education curriculum which includes community and parental involvement. They participate in a range of initiatives including programmes such as 'Sprocket Rockets' and an initiative unique to their school entitled 'Operation Blackstaff.'

### 2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers plan and prepare well for lessons. They demonstrated an ability to engage and challenge pupils of varying abilities and needs during the lessons observed.
- The classrooms are bright and supportive of learning. The environment is stimulating and very well-resourced.
- There is exemplary practice evident in the infant education setting where *Aistear: the Early Childhood Framework* is used very effectively to provide pupils with a cohesive and playful learning experience. A combination of open-ended resources and real items are used during play sessions to allow pupils avail of multi-sensory and enriching learning experiences.
- Team-teaching is well established in the school. Reading Recovery is in place with those pupils in need of additional help with reading identified and supported on an ongoing basis.
- The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. A suitable range of support models is adopted including in-class support in literacy and numeracy, station teaching, one-to-one teaching and small-group teaching. The *Continuum of Support* is implemented in all settings with close alignment between the targets identified in pupils' learning programmes and their prioritised needs. The special education teacher (SET) also supports the mainstream teachers in developing classroom support plans. Teachers

undertake careful tracking and monitoring of interventions and of pupils' progress in achieving their targets.

- The overall quality of assessment is good. Teachers are using a range of assessment methodologies that includes assessment of learning and assessment for learning approaches. A wide variety of standardised testing is used. This could be developed to include an Irish language test. In line with their progress in the school self-evaluation process, teachers are trialling new methods of self-assessment with the pupils. Pupils are also creating self-assessment learning folders and conferencing is used effectively in one setting. Pupils' work is monitored carefully. The assessment policy should be updated to reflect these developments and support a whole-school, systematic approach to assessment.
- Teachers successfully adopt whole-school approaches to promote particular curricular subjects and aspects of learning such as Science and Maths Weeks and an Art Week, involving local artists and an exhibition of pupils' work.
- There is a highly commendable commitment to ongoing professional development within the staff. Teachers use their learning to enhance and support both their individual and collective practices.

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

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is exemplary and this provision is a key strength of the school. During the evaluation, the board of management and the parents' association acknowledged the work of the staff in supporting the pupils' and their families through challenging and difficult times.
- A very positive, inclusive, caring culture has been established. In pupil questionnaires administered during the evaluation. Almost all pupils reported feeling safe and supported in school. The staff has high expectations of the pupils and their behaviour. During the evaluation, pupils were welcoming and presented themselves with friendliness and confidence. Initiatives are in place to support pupils' social and emotional development and these include the implementation of the Incredible Years programme and mindfulness activities.
- Almost all parents reported, through the questionnaires administered during this evaluation, that they found the school welcoming and supportive.
- The staff has sought the opinions of the pupils through the school self-evaluation process. In the pupil questionnaire, most pupils reported that they have a say in how things are done in school. However, this should be further enhanced by the establishment of a student council as a further means to strengthen pupil role in decision making.

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

- The quality of leadership and management is very good. The principal has a very clear vision for the school and is constantly striving towards improvement. He demonstrates strong leadership qualities and has high expectations for teaching and learning. In parent questionnaires, almost all parents reported that the school is well run and there is good communication between school and home.
- The board of management meets regularly and attends to its range of statutory duties in an efficient and effective manner. The board is well informed regarding the work of the school and is very supportive of the principal and the staff. Board members display deep commitment to the development of the school. In addition, members of the board have contributed their expertise to initiatives within the school including mindfulness and first aid training.

- The principal is ably supported by a strong in-school management team. The deputy principal provides very good collaborative support to the principal in addition to carrying out her duties diligently. The staff as a whole is very supportive of one another and nurtures the culture of care towards the pupils and the parents.
- An active parents' association provides valuable ongoing support to the school. The parents' representatives report positively on the teaching and learning in the school. They spoke about the strong links between school and the community and the opportunities provided to the pupils through various visiting speakers and links with local business. Good systems of communication are in place between the board and the parents' association.
- The school plan is of a good quality with some curriculum plans giving very good direction to teachers. There is a need to update a number of plans to reflect the good practice evident in observations during the evaluation. The staff has reviewed their English plan in line with the implementation of the Primary Language Curriculum and Irish has been identified as the next curricular area to be reviewed.
- The school staff reported it provides placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and is included among the standards in the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for teachers as it can provide valuable professional benefits for teachers, student teachers and the teacher education institution.

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

- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is of a very high standard. The school had prioritised literacy and numeracy in previous cycles of the SSE process and has continued to monitor progress in relation to the identified targets and success criteria. The staff has now identified assessment as a priority and are in the process of gathering evidence. Pupils have been consulted as the starting point for the evidence collection to date.
- The staff has engaged with the *Digital Learning Framework* within the context of their own school and have designed an e-learning plan with clearly identified targets. A range of resources is in place to support the implementation of these targets. Teachers are working together to collaborate and support one another in embracing new technologies.
- The capacity of the staff to implement the recommendations of this report is very good. There is a culture of collaboration and improvement evident within the school. Although the school staff has prioritised assessment as their key focus for the SSE initiative, they also continue to develop aspects of practice in response to other DES requirements such as the introduction of the Primary Language Curriculum and Digital Learning Framework.

# **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 Scoil Cholmcille, Blackstaff welcomes the findings of this report and is encouraged by the positive affirmation it gives to our whole school community. We appreciate the acknowledgement of the high standard of teaching and learning in our school. We welcome the acknowledgement of quality of support for pupils' well-being as exemplary and a key strength of the school. The Board welcomes this very positive affirmation of the teaching, learning, management and leadership within our 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 accepts and acknowledges the recommendation in the report. We have taken the advice and recommendations and started to implement these recommendations. The report will be fundamental in our School – Self Evaluation process and planning into the future.



## 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 <i>very good</i> 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;