

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

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| Ainm na scoile / School name | Tankerstown N S |
| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Tankerstown Bansha Co Tipperary |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number | 19305D |

Date of Evaluation: 06-04-2017



WHAT IS A WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION: MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING?

Whole-School Evaluations – Management, Leadership and Learning report on the quality of teaching and learning and on the quality of management and leadership in a school. They affirm good practice and make 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. Teaching and learning
2. Support for pupils' wellbeing
3. School leadership and management

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 – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

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| Dates of inspection | 06-04-2017 |
| Inspection activities undertaken | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with representatives of the students' council• Review of relevant documents• Analysis of parent and pupil questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to senior management team and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with the principal• Meeting with the in-school management team• Meeting with representatives of the board of management• Meeting with parent representatives• Meeting with the special educational needs teachers | |

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Tankerstown NS is a co-educational, vertical primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Cashel and Emlý. The school has four mainstream class teachers and two part-time support teachers, both of whom are based in the school. There are ninety-seven pupils enrolled and pupil attendance is generally very good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of teaching is good and the teachers implement new initiatives in an enthusiastic and effective manner.
- The overall quality of pupils' learning achievements is good and teaching initiatives in literacy and numeracy are impacting positively on learning outcomes; the development of pupils' oral language skills in Irish requires further attention. *Ní mór tuilleadh airde a dhíriú ar scileanna labhartha na ndaltaí a fhorbairt.*
- While good progress has been made in the development of whole-school approaches to assessment, there is scope to extend the potential of assessment for learning.
- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is of a high standard.
- The principal provides highly effective leadership and demonstrates a commitment to high standards in teaching and learning.
- School self-evaluation practices are well developed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Moltar an plean forbartha don Ghaeilge ó bhéal a cur i bhfeidhm go córasach ar bhonn uile scoile. *The development plan for oral Irish should be implemented systematically at a whole-school level.*
- The outcomes of assessment should be used consistently to extend the potential of assessment for learning.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS OF PUPILS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning achievement, including pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good, with some pupils achieving very good learning outcomes. The pupils are enthusiastic learners and most demonstrate good capacity in describing their learning. Achievements in summative assessments, including standardised tests in reading, Mathematics and Irish, are good. There is scope to provide further opportunities for the pupils to work collaboratively.
- The quality of pupils' learning in English is good. The recent introduction of focussed programmes and interventions for infant and junior pupils is impacting positively on the progression of the pupils' phonological and reading skills. All pupils read from a broad range of material and they demonstrate a good understanding of the conventions of books. In their questionnaire responses, a majority of pupils indicated that they believe they are doing well at reading. Writing genres are addressed systematically on a whole-school basis and the overall quality of written work is good.
- Sa Ghaeilge, léiríonn na daltaí tuiscint mhaith agus, ar an iomlán, tá stór foclóra maith ar eolas acu. I bhformhór de na ranganna, baintear feidhm éifeachtach as filíocht agus amhráin chun taithí ar fhuaimneanna agus ar struchtúr na teanga a thabhairt do na daltaí. Léann na daltaí go hábailta, le cruinneas agus le tuiscint agus tá said in ann struchtúr cuí a chur ar abairtí ina gcuid scríbhneoireachta. Chun tógáil go céimniúil ar fhorbairt scileanna labhartha na ndaltaí, is fiú an plean forbartha don Ghaeilge ó bhéal a cur i bhfeidhm go córasach ar bhonn uile scoile. *The pupils demonstrate good understanding and they have a good range of vocabulary in Irish. In most classes, effective use is made of poetry and songs to give pupils experience of the sounds and structure of the language. Pupils read capably, accurately and with good understanding and they are able to construct sentences appropriately in their writing. In order to systematically develop the pupils' speaking skills, the development plan for oral Irish should be implemented systematically at a whole-school level.*
- The quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics is good, with some pupils achieving a very good standard. The pupils demonstrate good mathematical reasoning and understanding of concepts. They engage in worthwhile discussion and make effective use of concrete materials in their learning. Mathematical language is taught consistently and most pupils capably communicate their learning.
- Good learning achievements were noted in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) where the pupils explore social media and examine its influence on their opinions and their behaviours. Infant pupils were observed to demonstrate very good capacity in accompaniment with percussion instruments.

2. QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching is good. The quality of lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to very good. Where high quality teaching was observed, teachers purposefully developed literacy and numeracy skills within lessons. A very good balance was achieved

between teacher input and productive-pupil participation. These teaching approaches should be extended throughout the school.

- The whole-school focus on continuing professional development and the ongoing sharing of best practice among teachers is commended. This has resulted in a cohesive approach to classroom planning and to the selection of effective teaching methodologies, as observed in team-teaching lessons. A number of carefully chosen initiatives in literacy and in numeracy are impacting positively on the quality of teaching and learning. Almost all parents who participated in the parent questionnaire agreed that teaching is good in the school.
- Good progress is being made in reviewing the whole-school approach to assessment. Elements of pupil self-assessment have been introduced and instructional reading levels have been established in classes where *Literacy Lift Off* is being implemented. There is scope to further extend assessment for learning and greater use should be made of assessment information to cater for the range of abilities in all classes. Deeper examination of the outcomes of assessment will further support the setting of specific targets for the range of in-class programmes operating the school.
- Good quality interventions and supports are provided for pupils with special educational needs. Individual learning programmes (IEPs) are carefully planned and parents are consulted at the target setting and target review stage. A combination of withdrawal and in-class support is implemented successfully and there is a high level of collaboration between mainstream and support teachers.

3. SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELL-BEING

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is very high. An orderly, secure and healthy learning environment is successfully maintained. Teachers demonstrate a commitment to pupils' well-being. They frequently engage in professional development opportunities to support the schools' inclusive, child-centred environment. Pupil voice is promoted through the active students' council. Almost all parents indicated through the questionnaire, that their children felt safe and well looked after in school and all parents agreed that they feel welcome in the school.
- Very good communication exists between home and school and a strong sense of community is evident. Parents are kept informed of school activities through frequent email and newsletters. The parents' association and general parent body play a very active and supportive role. Attendance levels for most pupils are very good and this reflects the positive work that has been undertaken by the school to cultivate a shared understanding of the importance of attendance.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management is very good. The board of management operates efficiently and members demonstrate a keen understanding of their role. Board members give careful consideration to the formulation of school policy and are aware of the teaching and learning priorities in the school.
- The principal provides highly effective leadership. Her work is characterised by her commitment to high standards in teaching and learning. She leads the school in a visionary manner and fosters very good relations with parents, teachers, ancillary staff and the broader school community. She promotes and supports the introduction of initiatives to improve

learning outcomes on a whole-school basis. The in-school management team works in close partnership with the principal to lead improvements in teaching and learning.

- 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*.

5. SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The school has engaged purposefully in the school self-evaluation (SSE) process. Areas of focus for improvement in literacy and in numeracy have been identified. Initiatives have been introduced in a number of classes and these have resulted in significant improvements in both the learning experiences for pupils and in teachers' individual and collective practice.

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 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; |

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 of Tankerstown National School broadly welcomes the findings in this WSE-MLL.

To see that 100% of the parent body surveyed feel welcome and that 100% of parents value the emphasis the school puts on the social and personal development of their children is most encouraging, as the emotional wellbeing of our pupils and school community is paramount.

In the past five years, we have carefully chosen a number of teaching initiatives to enhance pupils' learning achievements but also their learning experiences.

The Board concurs that the school is indeed being highly effectively led and wishes to acknowledge this formally.

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

We have developed a spiral incremental progression plan from infants to sixth class in the majority of subjects. Having spent the past number of years developing Irish in the school (SSE), it is satisfying and energising to see pupils' good vocabulary, understanding, reading and enjoyment of Irish as a living language in the school being acknowledged. We have developed an oral Irish scheme as a whole staff team in the past year. As the new language curriculum (English/ Gaeilge) is being rolled out in the next academic year, we welcome the recommendation to implement this incremental plan, and will do so with enthusiasm.