

**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>	Newcestown N S
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Newcestown Bandon Co. Cork
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	19348V

**Date of inspection: 18-09-2019**



---

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 inspectors 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>Dates of inspection</b>	18-09-2019
<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

Bishop Galvin National School is a rural co-educational mainstream school located in Newcestown, 12 kilometres northwest of Bandon in County Cork. There are 233 pupils enrolled and the school is under the patronage of Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross. Staffing consists of an administrative principal, nine mainstream class teachers, three special education teachers (SETs) and three special needs assistants (SNAs).

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The overall quality of learning is very good; pupils present as highly-motivated learners and demonstrate an enquiring, open-minded attitude towards their learning.
- The overall quality of teaching is good with some excellent lessons observed; there is potential to develop a whole-school approach to assessment.
- The quality of teaching and support for pupils with additional needs is good with some very good practice observed; ensuring greater links between individual pupil need and delivery of in-class intervention would enhance provision.
- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is very good.
- While the overall quality of management is good, a number of school policies merit review.
- The quality of the school's engagement in the self-evaluation (SSE) process is very good and this is impacting positively on classroom practice.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- A whole-school approach to assessing and the recording of pupil progress across the curriculum should be implemented and strategies to promote pupil self-assessment should be further developed.
- Provision for pupils with special education needs (SEN) should be reviewed to ensure consistency in pupil support files, to establish greater links between individual pupil need and the delivery of in-class intervention and to ensure that the SEN policy reflects the provisions of Circular 0013/2017.
- The board of management should review and revise its policies relating to school admissions and incorporate greater parental perspective in the policy formulation process.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of learning is very good. Pupils present as highly-motivated learners and demonstrate an enquiring, open-minded attitude towards their learning. They understand the purpose of their learning and aspire to achieving high quality outcomes. Pupils engage productively in learning tasks and are particularly eager to work collaboratively. They articulate their views with confidence and competence. Pupils in SEN settings were observed to engage actively and fully participate in a range of activities appropriate to their learning needs.
- There is a strong emphasis on developing both the English and Irish languages throughout the school. In infant classes, pupils have excellent opportunities to learn through play. In the play-based learning activities observed, pupils had opportunities to interact, negotiate and make decisions about their learning. The authentic resources prepared for these activities stimulated rich child-led dialogue between pupils.
- In English, reading standards are very good. Pupils read with fluency, understanding and expression and they can select their own books to read. Pupils in senior classes can explain preferences for particular texts and authors. Comprehension strategies are systematically developed and a guided reading programme is in place to ensure learners are reading at age-appropriate levels. Pupils write in a variety of genres and, in many settings, strong emphasis is placed on the presentation and organisation of work. High standards of penmanship were noted in many classrooms. There is scope to further enhance classroom libraries through the provision of a wider range of reading materials.
- Sa Ghaeilge labhartha, tá béim mhaith ar leathnú foclóra agus ar fheidhmeanna teanga. Tá caighdeán maith sroichte ó thaobh léitheoireachta de sa Ghaeilge agus tá samplaí de scríbhneoireacht fheidhmiúil ar fáil sna cóipleabhair. *In spoken Irish, there is a good emphasis on vocabulary development and on language functions. There is a good standard of reading in Irish and examples of functional writing are available in copybooks.*
- High levels of pupil attainment in Mathematics were noted. In all settings, mathematical language is prioritised and pupils have regular opportunities to communicate their mathematical thinking. Mental maths and computational skills are well developed and pupils are presented with regular opportunities to describe mathematical processes.
- Pupils are very well disposed towards their learning in many subjects. There are particularly enthusiastic about their learning in Science and there is a high level of engagement in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) learning across the school.
- The school's Social, Personal, Personal and Health (SPHE) programme contributes to the holistic development of the pupils. However, there is scope to further enhance pupils' perspective of their own learning and achievement through discussion and assessment.

### 2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching ranges from good to very good with some excellent practice observed. Teachers utilise a wide variety of methodologies to provide engaging, stimulating lessons for pupils. They make frequent use of active learning methodologies and facilitate discovery-based learning. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging collaboration and group-work amongst the pupils. In examples of highly effective practice, teachers maintained a balance between their own input and productive pupil participation and response. They use high-quality questioning to prompt and probe pupil understanding. Pupils' contributions to learning are sought and valued. Teachers communicate high expectations to pupils and all classes are well-managed. Teachers generally create

challenging learning experiences for pupils. However, some scope exists to provide such experiences on a consistent basis to cater for accelerated learners.

- The quality of teacher planning is good and teachers plan comprehensively and collaboratively for lessons.
- The quality of teaching in settings for pupils with additional needs is good with some very good practice observed. Interventions include: in-class support; team-teaching and withdrawal of individuals and groups for targeted intervention and support. There is scope to ensure greater links between individual pupil need and delivery of in-class intervention. The school has embraced the continuum of support since its introduction and the SEN team is praised for its approach to meeting the holistic needs of pupils with reference to reports from multidisciplinary professionals. Teachers collaborate well with each other and parents when planning and some very good pupil support files have been formulated. This good practice should be extended to establish clear achievable targets in all pupil support files. The school's current SEN policy should be updated to reflect the provisions of Circular 0013/2017.
- The overall quality of assessment is good with some very good practice noted. Individual teachers use a wide range of assessment strategies. Pupils' learning is monitored and outcomes of assessment generally inform the next stage of the teaching process. It is recommended that a whole-school approach to assessment be adopted and that a means of recording of pupil progress across the curriculum, which includes strategies to promote pupil self-assessment, be outlined.

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

- Support for wellbeing is a strength of the school and the overall quality of support for pupils is very good. They benefit from the very caring and nurturing learning environments provided. A notable feature of practice was the whole-school approach taken to actively promoting positive behaviour and restorative practice and to the development of pupils' critical social and emotional knowledge. The staff place a commendable emphasis on the teaching of the SPHE programme and a range of other wellbeing initiatives. The inclusion of pupils with additional needs is well supported by special needs assistants.
- The school has long-established links with the local community and a wide range of after school curricular activities is provided.
- A very active and supportive parents' association organises many activities and fundraises to support additional school activities. The work of the parents' association is shared through social media and the school website.
- The level of pupil attendance is good. However, strategies for improving punctuality should be incorporated into the attendance policy and be implemented so that all pupils are in school at the official opening time in the morning.

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

- The overall quality leadership and management in the school is good. The board of management is properly constituted, highly aware of its responsibilities and very well informed of school practices and pupil attainment. The board should review its admissions policy to reflect the inclusive nature of the school and explore options to incorporate greater parental perspective in the policy formulation process. Consideration should be given to the current level of the annual voluntary parental financial contribution. It is recommended that the board provide an annual account of its work to the school community.

- The principal demonstrates a strong commitment to progressing the educational needs of the school community and nurtures positive relationships with pupils. She has a clear understanding of change processes, communicates high standards and approaches the management of change in a collaborative manner.
- The in-school leadership team, which includes the deputy principal, attends to a broad range of duties with due care and attention. It is recommended that assigned duties be agreed and ratified by the board of management.
- The school regularly provides placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is highly praised and provides valuable professional benefits for teachers, student teachers, pupils and the teacher education institution.

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

- The quality of the school's engagement in the self-evaluation (SSE) process is very good. Work undertaken in the identified areas of literacy, wellbeing and the Irish language have had a positive impact on classroom practice.
- The ongoing development of school planning has resulted in high quality curriculum plans which provide clear guidance to teachers.

## 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;

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**



## **Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report**

Thank you for providing the report on the Whole School Evaluation that was completed in September 2019 and for the opportunity to respond to same.

The Board of Management accepts the findings and affirms the highly effective practices in relation to the quality of the pupils' learning, the school self-evaluation process and most importantly, the quality of the pupils' well-being which is central to the school's vision of our school being a happy, caring and safe learning environment for all.

The Board of Management, members of the In-school management team and all staff will follow up on the recommendations in the report and will review policies on an ongoing basis with due regard to current and new legislation.

Our school will continue to ensure access to quality education for all.

## **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 will review the school's assessment policy to ensure that there is a whole-school approach to pupil self-assessment and formative assessment.

The S.E.N. team will continue to work on setting achievable targets in student support files and will further review the S.E.N. policy.

The board will monitor developments relating to the Education (Admission to Schools) Act, 2018 as advised on the Department's website, and will update the admissions policy in accordance with legislation.

The board will continue to work with all the education partners in policy formation.