

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Ciarán
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Rooty Cross Oldtown Athlone County Roscommon
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	19368E

Date of inspection: 16-10-2019



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agus Scileanna
Department of
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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(s) 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 did not meet the requirements in relation to 2 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, the school has subsequently furnished evidence of compliance with these requirements.

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

Dates of inspection	16-10-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meetings with principal and in-school leadership team• Meeting with representatives of the board of management• Meeting with parent representatives• Meeting with teachers• Review of relevant documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Ciarán is a rural, co-educational primary school located in the south of County Roscommon. The school, which operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam, has four mainstream class teachers and two special education teachers (SETs). A further SET, who is based in another school, also provides support for some pupils. There were 107 pupils enrolled in the school at the time of the evaluation and overall school attendance is very good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is good, with scope for further development of pupils' skills.
- The overall quality of teaching is commendable; there are opportunities to enhance team teaching approaches and in-class support.
- Curriculum policies in the school plan do not sufficiently guide teachers' individual and collective practice and some organisational policies require review.
- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is good; there is scope to enhance pupils' voice in decision making within the school.
- Improvement is needed in some areas of school leadership and management, including involving parents in school policy development and the curricular role of the in-school management (ISM) team.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is good.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school should take steps to develop pupils' skills through more frequent opportunities to use information and communications technology (ICT) and to participate in group work, including project work.
- Team teaching and in-class support should be further expanded and developed.
- The school plan should be reviewed, in collaboration with parents as relevant, to ensure continuity and progression in the implementation of the curriculum and to provide effective guidance in organisational matters.
- As one means to increase pupils' participation in decision making, a pupils' council should be established.
- The principal and other school leaders should review various aspects of management and leadership in the school using the standards outlined in *Looking at Our School 2016* to guide improvement.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupils' learning, including that of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), is good. During the evaluation, pupils demonstrated high levels of participation in learning activities. In responses to Inspectorate questionnaires, only a few pupils indicated that ICT is used regularly and a minority only were of the view that they engage regularly in group work. It is recommended that pupils be given more regular opportunities to use ICT and participate in group work, including project work.
- Pupils write frequently in a variety of genres in English and the quality of their written work is commendable. Pupils read regularly and their comprehension skills have been developed effectively. However, pupils' oral language requires further development.
- Cuirtear béim inmholta ar nathanna agus briathra sa Ghaeilge. Is féidir le daltaí sna hardranganna ailt a scríobh agus bíonn cáilíocht a gcuid oibre go maith. *There is a commendable emphasis on the teaching of phrases and verbs in Irish. Pupils in the senior classes can write paragraphs and the quality of their work is good.*
- Learner outcomes in Mathematics are good overall, with some groups of pupils achieving a very good standard. Going forward, there should be increased emphasis in some classrooms on the development of oral mathematics and problem solving.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- Overall, the quality of teaching observed was good, with highly effective practice evident in a number of lessons. Teachers use ICT effectively as a resource for teaching. They plan adequately for their teaching but should plan for subject-specific vocabulary and the development of pupils' skills across the curriculum. As one means to develop more consistency of practice in this regard, all classroom teachers should consider using the same planning and recording template; this would make it easier for the school to monitor progression in pupils' learning across the curriculum.
- *The Continuum of Support* framework is used appropriately to support pupils with SEN. Currently, there is an overemphasis on withdrawing pupils from their classes to receive support. The use of small-group teaching and team teaching should be increased.
- The overall quality of assessment is good. SETs track pupils' progress very effectively and this practice should be implemented across the school.
- *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is implemented effectively in the infant classroom.

3. THE QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELLBEING

- The overall quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is good. The school places an emphasis on the successful integration and inclusion of pupils with SEN. In questionnaire responses, most pupils agreed that they are treated fairly and respectfully. However, only a few pupils indicated that they have a say in how things are done in the school. The school should explore ways to enhance pupils' voice and leadership within the school.
- The quality of care for the environment is good and is reflected in successful involvement in the Green Schools programme.
- Pupils engage in a range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities to support their learning and holistic development.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Improvement is needed in some areas of leadership and management.
- The board of management undertakes its duties in a committed manner. It ensures that accounts are certified annually and the school is well resourced. The building and grounds have been developed and maintained to a very high standard and provide a safe and healthy environment for pupils and staff.
- All required policies have been provided in the school plan. The board should put steps in place to ensure that a comprehensive review of both the curricular and organisational policies are conducted. Ideally, a strategic plan needs to be formulated to guide the cyclical review of these policies, and the board should seek the views of parents in the review process.
- The principal displays effective organisational skills in relation to the day-to-day running of the school. In-school communication is very good. The in-school management (ISM) team consists of the principal, deputy principal and an assistant principal. The duties of the members of the ISM team should be revised to reflect the school's priority needs, in accordance with *Department of Education and Skills Circular 70/2018*. The principal and other leaders within the school need to place a greater emphasis on developing curriculum leadership, collaborative practices and creativity in teaching and learning. They should review current practices in management and leadership using the standards outlined in *Looking at Our School 2016* as a guide for improvement.
- Termly newsletters are provided to parents, and an active parents' association provides valuable support to the school. In questionnaires, only a minority of parents agreed that their views are sought on school matters. It is advised that further communication systems be established between home and school with more frequent newsletters and regular updating of the school website with information on school activities and policy development.
- The school regularly provides placement for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and has valuable professional benefits for teachers, student teachers and the teacher education institution.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The overall quality of SSE is good. The school has engaged effectively with the process and SSE reports and school improvement plans have been generated. Teachers report that this process has had a positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils and parents were consulted in the earlier cycles of SSE. This should continue as there is a need to involve parents in the SSE process on an ongoing basis and to report to them annually on progress and outcomes.
- The school's capacity to develop further is very good.

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 St Ciaran's National School accepts the report of the recent WSE MLL and welcomes the following comments

- That the overall quality of pupils' learning is good
- That the overall quality of teaching is commendable
- That the quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is good
- That the quality of school self-evaluation is good

The Board confirms

- That all necessary steps have been taken to ensure that the school is fully compliant with regard to Child Protection

The Board accepts

- The need for a review of the school plan
- The need to explore ways to enhance pupils' voice and leadership within the 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.

Since the WSE MLL

- Team-teaching and in-class support has been developed with the expansion of station teaching which includes increased opportunities for pupils to use ICT
- The Board of Management has begun a systematic review of the school plan and aims to carry out a complete review during its term of office
- A review of the roles/duties of the school's ISM team has been carried out and a strategic plan is being developed
- Discussions have begun with senior pupils with a view to setting up a student council

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
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;