

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Ballynarry National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Ballyheelan Kilnaleck County Cavan
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	19378H

Date of inspection: 21-03-2019



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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 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

Dates of inspection	21-03-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meetings with principal and in-school management team• Meeting with representatives of the board of management• Meeting with parent representatives• Meetings with teachers• Review of relevant documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of parent and pupil questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback meeting with principal, deputy principal and teachers, and with parent and board of management representatives

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Ballynarry National School is a rural, mainstream, co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise. The school has four mainstream class teachers and one full-time special education teacher. A special education teacher, based in another local school, also teaches for a small number of hours in the school. There are currently eighty-nine pupils enrolled. Their attendance patterns are very good overall.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning achievements is good overall with very good outcomes evident in English and Mathematics; aspects of pupils' learning in Science and Music are underdeveloped.
- Teaching is of good quality overall with teachers displaying very high levels of commitment to continuing professional development; areas of teaching provision in Visual Arts lack appropriate continuity and development.
- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is very good.
- Leadership and management are of good quality overall; the in-school management (ISM) team's potential for curricular leadership has not yet been fully realised and the school's range of communication procedures with parents is not sufficiently comprehensive.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is good; there is need to involve parents in the process on an ongoing basis and to communicate the progress and outcomes of SSE to them annually.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should develop and implement comprehensive whole-school approaches to curriculum implementation in Science, Music and Visual Arts in order to provide for appropriate continuity and progression in pupils' learning.
- Curricular leadership should be prioritised by the ISM team with specific delineation of duties to support curriculum implementation, monitoring and review.
- The board and ISM team should adopt and use a wider and more effective range of communication procedures with parents.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of learning is good overall. Pupils demonstrate high levels of interest and motivation in their learning. During the evaluation, most pupils engaged well in discussions about their learning and they were confident in articulating many aspects of their learning. In the Inspectorate questionnaires, almost all pupils agreed that they like school and that they enjoy their lessons and learning.
- The learning achievements of pupils in Mathematics are very good. Pupils have a strong knowledge of computational procedures. They use appropriate strategies to solve problems; they justify and explain their answers and methods competently.
- Sa Ghaeilge, glacann na daltaí páirt sna ceachtanna le díograis and baineann siad úsáid an-mhaith as an Ghaeilge teagmhasach. Is inmholta an caighdeán atá bainte amach ag na daltaí i labhairt na teanga agus in achoimriú ar a gcuid léitheoireachta. Is scríbhneoireacht fheidhmiúil den chuid is mó atá i gcóipleabhair na ndaltaí. Ba chóir straitéisí uile-scoile a chur i bhfeidhm chun scríbhneoireacht neamhspleách na ndaltaí a leathnú. *In Irish, the pupils participate with enthusiasm in lessons and they use Irish incidentally very well. The standard that the pupils achieve in speaking the language and in summarising their reading is commendable. Pupils' copybooks contain mainly functional writing. Whole-school strategies to broaden pupils' independent writing should be implemented.*
- The principles and approaches of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* are implemented to very good effect. Integrated learning activities are planned carefully and worthwhile emphasis is placed on using a thematic approach to support pupils' learning.
- Pupils engage well in organised learning activities in all classrooms. During the evaluation, opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively were observed in the majority of lessons. In the Inspectorate questionnaires, a significant minority of pupils did not agree that they work in groups most days. Teachers should explore additional opportunities for pupils to engage in purposeful group learning experiences on a consistent basis.
- In Social, Environmental, Scientific Education (SESE), the pupils have produced high quality project work. Their research skills are well developed. They demonstrate a good knowledge of amenities and of places of historical interest in their local area. Pupils have participated in a limited range of scientific investigations; they lack sufficient knowledge and understanding of the concepts and skills of the science curriculum. Teachers should develop and implement comprehensive whole-school approaches to curriculum implementation in Science.
- Pupils sing a variety of songs confidently and with enthusiasm. There is need to develop pupils' understanding of music literacy on a whole-school basis and to provide consistent opportunities for pupils to engage in instrumental playing.
- Pupils demonstrate very high levels of enjoyment in their socio-dramatic play. It is commendable that the pupils enjoy regular opportunities to perform drama for the school community. The pupils report very positively about these experiences.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers display very high levels of commitment to continuing professional development. They create inclusive, orderly learning environments based on mutual respect, affirmation and trust. Teachers create vibrant, attractive displays that celebrate the pupils' learning achievements. In the Inspectorate questionnaires, all

parents agreed that teaching is good in the school and almost all pupils agreed that their teacher explains things clearly.

- In English, teachers provide pupils with a broad variety of reading experiences. They have developed pupils' oral language competencies and creative writing skills to a very good standard.
- In Visual Arts, teachers have successfully developed pupils' skills in construction, drawing and paint and colour. In order to ensure appropriate continuity and progression of pupil's skills in clay and print, a more comprehensive, whole-school approach to curriculum implementation is needed.
- Teachers make purposeful use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support their teaching. They have developed an action plan aimed at significantly enhancing pupils' use of ICT as a learning tool.
- Whole-school emphasis on pupils' use of non-reusable workbooks should be considerably reduced with a view to making increased provision for more engaging learning experiences.
- A wide range of assessment procedures is used effectively to assess pupils' learning in the majority of curricular areas. Diagnostic assessment is used appropriately to identify pupils' priority needs and to plan progressive programmes of learning. All teachers provide opportunities for pupils to engage in self-assessment and peer-assessment; the resultant information, complemented by teacher feedback, should be used to support pupils in formulating individualised targets to promote progression in learning.
- The *Continuum of Support* is implemented to support pupils with special education needs (SEN). Support is provided through withdrawal and in-class interventions. Teacher-pupil rapport is very supportive and affirming. Teachers' differentiation of approaches and strategies for pupils with needs should be documented in classroom support plans. In a minority of instances, targets in support plans should be more specific and measurable in order to monitor pupils' attainments more effectively.
- For the most part, teachers' short-term planning was of good quality with appropriate use of curriculum content objectives and skills. However, in some instances, planning was not satisfactory and it should be improved. All mainstream teachers' short-term planning should be completed on a fortnightly basis.

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

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is very good. A welcoming atmosphere permeates the school. Leaders and teachers demonstrate commitment to the holistic development of each pupil. All teachers have very good classroom management skills. Observed interactions between teachers and pupils and between pupils and their peers were positive and respectful.
- At whole-school level, many aspects of provision make an important contribution to the well-being of pupils. Teachers liaise effectively with external agencies to support pupils with SEN. The school has links with a local pre-school and post-primary schools; valuable activities are undertaken to support pupils in making positive transitions.
- Pupils participate in excursions and field trips. There is good emphasis on their physical fitness through a variety of sporting activities including co-curricular and extra-curricular initiatives.
- In the Inspectorate questionnaires, all parents agreed that their child is treated fairly and respectfully and that the staff helps their child's social and emotional development. Almost all pupils agreed that they get on well with other pupils and that there are clear rules against hurting others. A significant minority of pupils disagreed that they have a say in how things are done in the school. Consideration should be given to extending the range of opportunities

for pupils to engage in relevant decision-making roles to promote and facilitate the development of pupils' leadership capacities.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Leadership and management are of good quality overall. The board of management has a broad skill base; it meets regularly and addresses a range of responsibilities in an effective manner. It currently plans to develop an additional outdoor play area, as resources permit. The board is currently not undertaking its oversight role with regard to anti-bullying procedures. It should adhere to the guidelines in the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2013*, in this regard.
- The principal oversees the smooth day-to-day functioning of the school in an efficient manner. The ISM team consists of a principal, deputy principal and assistant principal. It undertakes a wide range of duties diligently and its members discuss teaching and learning priorities through informal conversations and interactions. The ISM team should meet formally on a regular basis with specific delineation of duties to support curriculum implementation, monitoring and review.
- During this school year, representatives from the parents' association were involved in a committee that has reviewed the school's policy on Relationship and Sexuality Education. In previous years, there was limited involvement of parents in policy formulation. Policies are shared with parents when they are reviewed; procedures should be developed to facilitate parents in fulfilling their partnership role in the development of relevant policies.
- In the Inspectorate questionnaires, almost all parents agreed that they were very satisfied with discipline, management and pupil welfare in the school. A significant minority of parents did not agree that the board reports annually to them on its work or that the school seeks their views on school matters. During a meeting with the parents' association, representatives indicated high levels of satisfaction with teaching and learning but that they would like the school's range of communication procedures with parents to be improved. To this end, the board, in collaboration with the ISM team, should adopt and use a wider and more effective range of communication procedures with parents.
- The school provides placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes can provide valuable professional benefits for teachers, student teachers, pupils and the teacher education institution.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of SSE is good. Previous priorities identified in earlier cycles of SSE included the promotion of pupils' English spelling capacities and the development of their problem-solving skills in Mathematics. While school improvement plans in these areas impacted positively on pupils' learning, they did not outline clear actions that need to be undertaken by teachers or specific criteria for measuring the success of their implementation. It is now timely to review these improvement plans and achievement of targets previously established with a view to embedding the most effective strategies in future practice.
- Teachers are currently focusing on the development of pupils' use of digital technologies. There is very good delineation of the actions that need to be undertaken by teachers in this improvement plan. Pupils were very well consulted in earlier cycles of SSE; teachers should re-engage them in the current cycle. There is need to involve parents in the SSE process on an ongoing basis and the progress and outcomes of SSE should be communicated to them annually.

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 Ballynarry National School welcomes the positive Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning report which affirms the effective management and leadership in the school and the high quality of teaching and learning. The board welcomes that the report recognises the school's significant strength in the quality of support for pupils' wellbeing and the staff's strong commitment to working collaboratively to create an inclusive learning environment where pupils feel safe and are treated fairly and respectfully. The board is pleased that the school's effective engagement in school self-evaluation was acknowledged and its positive impact on school practice affirmed.

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 acknowledges the findings and recommendations contained in the report and confirms that the following plans are in place to address the recommendations.

The development and implementation of the three curricular areas, Science, Music and Visual Arts, were assigned to three members of the ISM team at a recent meeting with a view to providing appropriate continuity and progression in pupils' learning.

Specific duties have been assigned to members of the ISM team to support curriculum implementation, monitoring and review.

The board and the ISM team are actively seeking a more effective range of communication procedures with parents.

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 <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;