

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil Bhréanainn
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Glen Avenue Cork
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	19427R

Date of inspection: 16-10-2019



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

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 from the board of management• Meeting with teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Analysis of parent and pupil questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal, deputy principal, teachers and a board of management representative

SCHOOL CONTEXT

S.N. Bhréanainn is a girls' primary school serving pupils from infants to sixth class. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross and the trusteeship of the Presentation order. The staff comprises of an administrative principal, five mainstream class teachers and four special education teachers (SETs) one of whom is part-time. The school also has two early intervention ASD classes; these classes were not evaluated as part of the WSE-MLL. It participates in Band 1 of Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. The school has a home-school-community liaison (HSCL) co-ordinator and implements a School Completion Programme (SCP). At the time of the evaluation, 99 pupils were enrolled. The school has experienced significant changes in staffing in recent times.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning is satisfactory overall and high quality learning experiences are provided for pupils; pupils' oral language and learning in Mathematics require improvement.
- The quality of teaching is good, with some very good practice observed; the recording of learning in monthly progress reports does not facilitate the effective monitoring of curriculum implementation.
- Teachers recognise that continuing professional development (CPD) and collaboration are intrinsic to their work; this impacts positively on the overall quality of teaching.
- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is very good and is a key strength of the school.
- The quality of leadership and management is good; management has established and maintained a safe, inclusive school environment.
- The quality of school self-evaluation is good.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school should formulate and systematically implement a plan to provide structured opportunities for pupils to develop their oral language competencies and use oral language in a variety of contexts.
- Increased emphasis should be placed on the development of the concept of number, the application of pupils' understanding of Mathematics to real-life contexts and on pupils' ability to express and describe their learning in Mathematics.

- Stronger mechanisms are required to support the ongoing review of the implementation of the whole-school plan and agreed improvement actions at classroom level.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of learning is satisfactory overall and a range of high quality learning experiences are provided for pupils. Pupils are successful in their learning in a number of areas but there is scope to improve their oral language and their learning in Mathematics.
- In infant classes, pupils' literacy skills are systematically developed through targeted focus on phonics, word analysis and purposeful discussion of shared writing. These pupils confidently recite a range of rhymes and demonstrate enjoyment in their learning. *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is characterised by language-rich experiences where pupils are facilitated to negotiate and make decisions through structured play-based learning.
- Pupils' oral language competencies in both English and Irish require improvement. The systematic provision of structured opportunities for pupils, across the school, to develop their vocabulary and use oral language in a variety of contexts is recommended. This will improve overall learner outcomes.
- The school strives to develop positive attitudes to reading through a range of initiatives. In lessons observed, pupils applied their comprehension strategies to engage with and create meaning when working with text. The school implements a visible, structured approach to the development of writing genres with a current focus on report writing. In senior classes, the quality of pupils' work in report writing is very good. Handwriting skills are of a very high quality. The recent introduction of a cursive writing programme is impacting positively on pupil learning outcomes with specific regard to the quality of pupils' spelling and presentation of written work.
- Pupils use concrete materials productively during mathematics lessons. They work independently and collaboratively when engaging in mathematical processes. Junior pupils are making very good progress in developing their early mathematical skills. To enhance pupils' learning in Mathematics, it is recommended that increased emphasis be placed on the development of the concept of number and on the application of pupils' understanding of Mathematics to real-life contexts, throughout the school. Some pupils have difficulty in expressing and describing their learning. Further emphasis on the development of mathematical language will have a positive impact on overall learning outcomes.
- Senior pupils ably describe their learning in scientific investigations and some demonstrate a good command of specific scientific language. Learning is supported through a valuable emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) based learning activities. The school benefits from its engagement with University College Cork in this regard.
- Particularly noteworthy learning achievements are in evidence in Music. The standard of musicianship displayed by the pupils in playing the flute is highly praised. Pupils' musical literacy skills and their confidence and performance are enhanced through participation in the school band and choir.
- Pupils enjoy a school environment that actively encourages physical activity through structured skills development and participation in team games and through field trips and orienteering in the local environment. The school participates in a range of national initiatives and grandparents' day is of particular importance in the school calendar.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The quality of teaching is good with some very good practice observed. Teachers are highly dedicated to their work and create an inclusive and safe learning environment which promotes respect, affirmation and trust. Classrooms are print-rich and pupils' work across the curriculum is celebrated through attractive displays.
- Teachers actively encourage all pupils to work with positive attitudes so that they can apply themselves and succeed in their learning. The implementation of a broad range of reward systems to promote positive behaviour is commended.
- Teachers are well prepared for lessons and use a range of resources to capture and engage pupils' interest. Lessons generally include a sequence of child-centred, hands-on learning activities. Careful attention is given to ensuring all pupils have a strong understanding of what is required for them to succeed in tasks.
- Teacher planning is of a good quality in general. In some instances, there is scope to review timetables to ensure that the integrity of the school day is maintained. While teachers prepare monthly records of learning, current practices require review to facilitate the effective monitoring of the implementation of the whole school plan and agreed improvement initiatives.
- The overall quality of assessment is good. Teachers use a range of approaches to assess pupil learning. Commendable work is now undertaken in monitoring learning of Mathematics in infant classes. While pupil attainment in English is monitored, assessment of oral language outcomes requires development.
- The SET coordinator has developed a successful approach to the implementation of the *Continuum of Support*. A range of models of support are implemented. In order to build on the good practice in place, there is a need to ensure support interventions are consistently planned to appropriately target the progression of pupils' identified learning needs. The team is currently exploring the use of digital technology in optimising the management of documentation. This initiative is highly praised.
- A number of pupils for whom English is an additional language are currently in receipt of support. It is advised that their language needs be assessed to establish baseline data as to their current needs and language capacity.

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

- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is very good. The board of management appropriately prioritises the support of pupils' wellbeing. This is a key strength of the school and ensures that a welcoming and nurturing environment where pupils can learn is maintained.
- The school is alert to the emotional, physical and social needs of individual pupils and to meeting these needs in a most sensitive manner. The school's commitment to promoting active co-operation between home, school and the relevant community agencies is highly praised.
- The school is committed to the holistic development of pupils and a broad range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities is provided for pupils.
- A variety of planned programmes and approaches is in place to promote pupils' personal and social development. The school has achieved an amber flag as part of its work in promoting positive mental health.
- The school is actively working to establish a parents' association.
- While the school implements some strategies to promote attendance, high rates of absenteeism among a small number of pupils is cause for concern. The school should increase its efforts to promote pupil attendance.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management is good. The board of management operates efficiently and members demonstrate a keen understanding of their roles. The board gives careful consideration to the formulation of school policy and is highly supportive of the teaching and learning priorities in the school. The board is advised to formally share their work with the wider school community.
- The principal demonstrates a deep understanding of the community the school serves and has established an open, inclusive learning environment. She manages challenging and complex situations in a fair and equitable manner.
- The in-school leadership team have a broad range of duties and work purposefully in fulfilling their roles. The regular review of these duties is advised to ensure appropriate balance in post-holders roles.
- The principal and in-school leadership team effectively promote a culture of collaboration. Teachers engage productively with a variety of CPD providers and processes are in place to ensure this enhances collective practice within the school.
- The school regularly 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, pupils and the teacher education institution.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of DEIS planning, including engagement in school self-evaluation, is good. The school has engaged in a process of reviewing curriculum policies and in review of its DEIS plan. Evidence has been gathered from a variety of sources to inform this process, including pupil and parental surveys, teacher input and analysis of standardised test results. However, stronger mechanisms are required to support the ongoing review of the implementation of the whole-school plan and agreed improvement actions at classroom level. Such monitoring mechanisms might include, for example, use of the monthly progress records and discussion of the impact of improvement initiatives at staff meetings.

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;

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 and staff of Scoil Bhréanainn welcome the written report of our recent WSE-MLL.

We are very pleased that the report acknowledged the highly dedicated staff and the commitment by all to creating a safe, inclusive environment for our pupils.

The recognition of the many positive learning experiences in Scoil Bhréanainn is very affirming; the Board looks forward to supporting the staff in implementing the recommendations.

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

In response to the recommendations as outlined in the report:

The school will develop and implement a structured oral language programme to enable increased opportunities for pupils to practise and increase their competencies in oral language.

The school will extend the current station teaching model in Mathematics beyond the junior classes. Increased time will be given to developing understanding of the concept of number. Increased emphasis will be placed on the teaching of mathematical language and the application of Mathematics to real life contexts in order to enhance the pupils' learning outcomes.

The school will introduce digital monthly progress reports to enable effective monitoring of learning at classroom level.