

**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>	Geesala Central School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Geesala Ballina County Mayo
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	19776T

**Date of inspection: 25-09-2019**



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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 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 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>	25-09-2019
<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 teachers</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analysis of parent and pupil 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 board of management representative</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Geesala Central School is a co-educational primary school in Geesala, Co. Mayo under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Killala. It participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the Department's programme for addressing educational disadvantage. Although situated in the Gaeltacht, the school is not participating in the Department's Gaeltacht Schools Recognition Scheme. A very small number of pupils come from homes where Irish is the first language. There are two mainstream class teachers, one of whom is the teaching principal, and one special education teacher (SET) who also works part-time in a nearby school. There were forty-two pupils enrolled at the time of the evaluation. School attendance is good overall.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is good; however, there is scope for more focus on addressing pupils' specific learning needs.
- The overall quality of teaching is good, with need to enhance team teaching approaches and in-class support.
- Support for pupils' well-being is very good.
- School leadership and management are good overall, with the principal demonstrating great commitment and diligence in her role; there is no parents' association currently.
- School self-evaluation (SSE) is good overall, with opportunities to develop the DEIS action planning process.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Activities and lessons across the curriculum should be differentiated more effectively to cater for the needs of individual pupils.
- Early intervention strategies, and team teaching approaches at each class level, should be further expanded and developed.
- A parents' association should be established to further enhance the parents' contribution to school life.
- The DEIS action plan should be updated, with revised specific targets set for each of the DEIS themes.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is good. During the evaluation, pupils were engaged in their learning and participated actively in the activities and lessons organised. Most learner experiences are stimulating and interesting, with opportunities provided to work together in pairs and in groups. These opportunities should be provided more regularly at each class level and across a wider range of curricular areas.
- Learner outcomes across the curriculum are good overall, with some pupils achieving a very high standard in English and Mathematics in particular. While pupils demonstrate a positive attitude to Irish, there is a need to place greater emphasis on developing their basic conversational skills.
- Skills development is given due attention in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE), with pupils developing their skills as historians and scientists while also accumulating appropriate knowledge. In Mathematics, it is recommended that more attention be given to developing pupils' problem-solving skills.
- There are very good samples of pupils' written work, project work and artwork on display in each classroom and in public areas of the school. Work in the pupils' copybooks indicate that a good range of topics is covered effectively.
- Improving standards in reading is one of the school's main priorities. Overall, pupils' standards in reading are good. There is a need ensure that reading activities are differentiated to cater more effectively for the range of pupil abilities in each classroom.

### 2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching is good. Aspects of the teaching are very good at some class levels, with very effective and successful teaching approaches observed in these instances. Preparation for teaching in mainstream and special education settings is good, although it would be worthwhile including more specific learning objectives in teachers' individual planning.
- Each teacher has developed a stimulating classroom environment with print-rich and maths-rich elements. Classroom libraries are well stocked with a wide variety of books, fiction and non-fiction.
- A range of teaching approaches is used in each learning setting including some effective team teaching. The provision of in-class support should be expanded, and improved early intervention strategies should be a central part of this. Specifically, it is recommended that *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* be introduced in the junior classes.
- Classroom management is good. There is a need for greater differentiation of activities, especially in English reading lessons. This should enable teachers to place greater emphasis on the needs of individual pupils at each class level.
- Teaching resources are used effectively in every learning setting. Concrete materials are used regularly to inculcate concepts in Mathematics. Information and communication technologies (ICT) are used effectively across a range of curricular areas, especially in the senior classes. There is an over-reliance currently on single-use workbooks. It is recommended that the use of workbooks be decreased and more emphasis placed on alternative methods of catering for the range of pupil needs in each classroom.
- The overall quality of assessment is good. Each teacher monitors and corrects the pupils' work, with constructive written feedback provided regularly. There is a need to analyse

assessment data in a more focused way to provide more targeted support for pupils with learning difficulties and special educational needs (SEN).

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

- The quality of care for pupils at each class level is very good. The pupils demonstrated very good levels of co-operation and behaviour and there was a positive and respectful relationship between them and their teachers. In questionnaire responses, the pupils agreed that they felt safe in the playground and in their class, and that all pupils were treated fairly and respectfully.
- School provision of support for pupils with learning difficulties and SEN is good. It is recommended that the level of in-class support be increased. Links with relevant agencies to support pupils with SEN are good, although there more attention should be given to the implementation of the recommendations in relevant professional reports.
- While links with local pre-schools and post-primary schools are very good overall, there is a need to further develop this aspect of school life as part of the DEIS action planning process.
- The school is implementing its Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) plan and the Stay Safe programme, as required.

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

- The overall quality of school leadership is good, with some aspects of leadership and management being very good. There is scope for improvement in a small number of areas including DEIS action planning and communication with parents.
- The board of management is properly constituted and meets regularly. School accounts are certified by an accountant annually, in accordance with the Education Act (1998). The board's role in school planning and policy development is limited currently. It is recommended that the DEIS action planning process be discussed as a standard item at each board meeting.
- The principal was appointed less than a year ago and, since then, has led and managed significant improvements, including in teaching and learning. She demonstrates conscientiousness and diligence in her role and very good commitment to the school.
- There have been recent developments to the school building and grounds, guided ably by the principal, and this ongoing work has resulted in the provision of a more attractive and stimulating educational environment for the pupils.
- There is good home-school communication with parents assisting with and organising a variety of activities and events throughout the year. There is no parents' association currently; it is recommended that a parents' association be established. This should provide a forum for parents to discuss relevant matters and to make a greater contribution to the development of school policy and DEIS action planning. In questionnaire responses, almost all parents agreed that their children felt safe and well looked after in the school and that the school is helping their children to progress with reading and in Mathematics.
- The school reported that it provides placements for student teachers regularly. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and is included among the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers, as it can provide valuable professional benefits for teachers, pupils and the teacher education institute.

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

- The quality of SSE is good overall, with worthwhile reflection on how to improve the school being an important part of each staff meeting, particularly in the past year. There is a need to revitalise the DEIS action planning under each of the DEIS themes, as each theme would benefit from more attention. The school's capacity for further and ongoing improvement 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 welcomes the content of this report. We were very pleased with how the evaluation was carried out and in a supportive way. The board appreciates that the report has recognised so many positive aspects of our school, and in particular we wish to commend the commitment of our staff. We are pleased that the report recognises that the support for pupils' well-being is very good. We will continue to build on the strengths identified and endeavour to incorporate best practice to further improve the teaching and learning within our 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.**

The staff and Board of Management of Geesala NS have looked at addressing the recommendations contained within the report and will continue to do so.

We have begun to make the following changes within our school to ensure that children with the most needs receive the most support:

- Staff members have committed to and have undergone training in Aistear with a view to commencing this early intervention strategy in January 2020.
- More in-class support has begun in the school. We aim to avail of teacher training on team teaching to equip all staff members with the skills and knowledge required to continue to implement best practice.

We are in favour of setting up a Parents Association when the new BOM commences in December 2019, as we value, welcome and appreciate all support and input from our wonderful parent body.

The DEIS action plan is currently being reviewed and updated and all members of our school community are re-focusing on the school needs and identifying areas of priority.



## 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;