

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Drimnagh Castle CBS National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Drimnagh Castle Long Mile Road Dublin 12
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	19837N

Date of inspection: 04-03-2019



**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 did not meet the requirements in relation to 1 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	04-03-2019
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, board of management representatives, and to a representative of the trustees

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Drimnagh Castle Christian Brothers School is an all-boys national school operating under the auspices of the Edmund Rice School Trust and the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. At the time of the evaluation, 403 pupils from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds and from a significantly wide catchment area were enrolled in classes from second to sixth class. Their range of educational needs is served and supported by a staff comprising a principal, sixteen mainstream classroom teachers, fourteen special education teachers (SET), and a team of eight special-needs assistants (SNA). Overall, attendance rates are very good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The principal, with very good support from the board of management and the in-school management team, provides exemplary leadership to the school community.
- The quality of pupils' learning is good; pupils demonstrate very high levels of engagement in their learning.
- Teaching in the school is of a high quality overall; there is a need to ensure a more appropriate balance between whole-class teaching, and collaborative and discovery-based learning.
- The quality of teachers' planning is commendable; there is scope for development regarding planning for language learning across the curriculum.
- The school engages effectively with school self-evaluation (SSE) and a range of well-structured and well-organised teaching interventions is in place which will benefit from a more in-depth analysis and use of assessment information.
- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is excellent and a particular strength of the school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should devote more time during lessons to the provision of independent and collaborative tasks that allow for the promotion of discovery-based learning and pupils' skills' development.
- Teachers should consistently plan for, teach and assess the pupils' language learning in all subject areas, and in particular, their specific oral language skills in Irish and English.

- Teachers in all support and mainstream settings should ensure that teaching interventions are guided by clear targets and tailored to pupils' specific learning needs based on a deeper analysis of assessment information.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of pupils' learning, including pupils with special educational needs (SEN), is good. Pupils see themselves as learners and demonstrate this in their positive approach to classwork. In response to questionnaires administered during the evaluation, most pupils indicated that they enjoy their lessons and learning.
- Pupils demonstrate a good level of knowledge of topics covered across the Primary School Curriculum. The intended lesson learning outcomes of lessons are achieved for the most part. In most settings, pupils' active listening skills are well-developed.
- A significant number of pupils can competently report on their learning. This level of oral language achievement should be a learning expectation for all pupils. Specific oral language learning outcomes at each class level should now be established and achieved through the pupils' engagement in activities designed to support their oral language skills' development.
- Classrooms and school corridors are used to display a wide variety of the pupils' work. Pupils' penmanship is of a consistently high standard. They sing enthusiastically with very good rhythm and intonation.
- Is léir go bhfuil dearcadh dearfach cruthaithe i measc na ndaltaí maidir leis an nGaeilge. Tá siad in ann ceisteanna simplí a fhreagairt agus tá raon mhaith de rannta, amhráin, frásaí agus foclóir foghlamtha acu. Ba chóir do gach oide amach anseo sprioctheanga faoi leith a roghnú do gach ceacht agus an teanga sin a mhúineadh go comhsheasmhach. Ní mór ansin, dul chun cinn na foghlama a chinntiú ó rang go rang.
A positive attitude towards Irish is evident among the pupils. They are able to answer simple questions and they have learned a good range of poems, songs, phrases and vocabulary. Each teacher should now select very specific language for each lesson and teach that language consistently. Progression in pupils' learning should then be ensured as they progress from class to class.
- Pupils demonstrate high levels of interest in reading and some pupils are achieving very good levels of reading attainment. A majority of pupils indicated in the questionnaires that they are doing well at reading. However, a significant number of pupils are reading at a level below their chronological age. A balanced approach to literacy instruction, informed by a deeper analysis of assessment, is advised in addressing pupils' individual reading abilities.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of mathematical concepts and number facts, while the quality of their work in copybooks is commendable.
- The opportunities for involvement in various school programmes and initiatives add to the quality of the pupils' overall learning experience.
- Pupils experience very positive learning environments in which interactions among pupils and between pupils and teachers are consistently respectful and positive.
- Very high-quality learning experiences were evident in some lessons where pupils engaged in discovery-based, collaborative learning tasks. However, in other lessons pupils experienced prolonged periods of whole-class teaching resulting in less time for activity-based learning and skills' development.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- Teaching is of a high quality overall. Teaching in the lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to very good. Teachers, in the main, are very effective communicators. Almost all pupils surveyed agree that their teacher explains things clearly.

- Lessons are generally well structured, with whole-class teaching approaches a consistent feature. Consideration should now be given to ensuring there is an appropriate balance between effective whole-class teaching and the provision of tasks supporting collaborative and discovery-based learning.
- All teachers consistently plan for their lessons. Teachers are now advised to include subject-specific language in short-term planning along with differentiated learning outcomes in key subject areas.
- Current approaches to differentiated provision include well-organised in-class supports. Teachers are advised to tailor interventions to pupils' specific learning needs in response to a deeper analysis of assessment information.
- Teaching for pupils with SEN is highly positive. A wide range of supports is in place. The Continuum of Support is embedded in practice. Teachers should ensure pupils' priority learning needs are clearly derived from the assessment information, and that targets are very specific and measurable. The use of weekly short-term planning in support settings is recommended in order to plan and track pupils' incremental learning.

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

- Support for pupils' well-being is excellent and a particular strength of the school. The staff demonstrates a deep commitment to the pupils' holistic development and well-being. A wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities is provided. Many of these activities stem from links established with local community organisations.
- Pupils have many opportunities to participate in various school initiatives. The establishment of a pupil council is advised to provide further structured opportunities for the voice of the learner to impact on the school's decision-making processes.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Leadership and management in the school is of a very high quality.
- The board of management is fully constituted, and carries out its range of legislative duties diligently. The board is well informed regarding the work of the school and the quality of teaching and learning.
- The principal leads the school in an exemplary manner. He is deeply committed to the further development of the school and to the well-being of each individual pupil.
- The in-school management team meets regularly and members carry out their range of duties diligently. Other staff members are enabled to develop their roles in curriculum leadership.
- The school management reported that it 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 school engages effectively with SSE and resultant actions are evident in classroom practice. Music has recently been identified as an area for further development. The SSE

framework should be used to address other priority areas and the in-school management team will play a pivotal role in this process.

- The school's capacity for further development is very good. A collaborative culture is established in the school which is focused on pupils' learning and overall well-being.

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 Drimnagh Castle C.B.S. N.S. welcomes the positive findings of our recent whole school evaluation.

The Board is pleased at the high level of commendations in all six findings.

The identification of the excellent support for pupil well-being is particularly welcomed as this is a key element of an ERST 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.

We accept the recommendations of the report and are committed to implementing them.

School staff will collaboratively review each recommendation and plan for its implementation in order to further enhance teaching and learning for the benefit of all of our pupils.

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;