Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Caherciveen N S</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>O' Connell Street</td>
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<td>Caherciveen</td>
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<td>Co. Kerry</td>
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<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
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Date of inspection: 20-03-2019
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.
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  20-03-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection activities undertaken</th>
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<tr>
<td>Meetings with principal and in-school leadership team</td>
<td>Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires</td>
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<td>Meeting with representatives of the board of management</td>
<td>Observation of teaching and learning</td>
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<td>Meeting with parent representatives</td>
<td>Examination of pupils’ work</td>
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<td>Meeting with teachers</td>
<td>Interaction with pupils</td>
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<td>Review of relevant documents</td>
<td>Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers, and to board of management representatives</td>
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SCHOOL CONTEXT
Caherciveen NS is a mainstream primary school located in the town of Caherciveen in Co Kerry. It is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Bishop of Kerry. At the time of the evaluation, there were 109 pupils on roll, the majority of whom have high levels of school attendance. Staffing includes six mainstream classroom teachers, two full-time special education teachers (SETs), one SET teacher shared with another school in the area and a part-time SET. The school also has three special-needs assistants (SNAs) and a part-time secretary and caretaker. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
• The overall quality of learning in the school is good; there is scope, however, to further develop provision in settings for pupils with special educational needs (SEN).
• The overall quality of teaching is good with very good practice noted in a number of classes; teachers’ collective practice requires further development.
• High-quality support is provided for pupils and there is a good range of initiatives in place to promote a positive school environment; the attendance of a minority of students is a cause for concern.
• While there is a number of positive features of leadership and management in the school, the overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory; there is scope to develop the curricular and instructional leadership in the school.
• The overall quality of school self-evaluation is satisfactory; there is need to significantly develop the DEIS action planning process

RECOMMENDATIONS
• A much more structured and systematic approach to assessment, target setting, monitoring and the recording of pupil progress should be implemented in settings for pupils with SEN.
• The approach to whole-school and classroom planning should be reviewed in a collaborative manner to ensure that it informs a progressive and developmental approach to curriculum implementation throughout the school.
• The principal and in-school leadership team should adopt shared responsibility for leading and reviewing teaching and learning in curricular areas.
• An updated DEIS action plan, with clear targets for improvement from an established baseline, should be collaboratively developed and implemented.
The school should extend the range of initiatives in place to promote improved attendance and ensure that attendance concerns are notified to An TUSLA in accordance with agreed procedures.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING
   • The overall quality of pupils’ learning in the school is good. Pupils demonstrate a well-developed ability to work collaboratively and independently and they generally have a clear sense of making progress and of their achievement. High levels of positive engagement in a wide range of tasks were observed and good levels of content mastery across a range of subjects were noted.
   • In the infant classes, pupils have access to playful learning experiences as part of Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and very good emphasis is placed on using a thematic approach to support pupils’ learning.
   • Sa Ghaeilge, ta scileanna éisteachta, tuisceana, focail aithint agus foghraíocht go maith. Chun chur le cumas cumarsáide na ndaltaí, b’fhiú anois béim ar leith a chur ar an ngramadach agus ar na briathra go háirithe ar bhonn uile scoile. In Irish, pupils’ listening, comprehension, word recognition and pronunciation are good. To further develop their communicative competence, greater whole-schools emphasis should be placed on grammar and on verbs in particular.
   • The overall quality of pupil learning in English is good with high overall standards achieved in reading. There is scope, however, to implement a more structured and systematic approach to the development of writing genres in both languages and to implement a more consistent approach to handwriting and the presentation of pupils’ work.
   • There is a positive attitude amongst pupils to Mathematics and they have good understanding of key concepts. Providing greater opportunities to describe, share, validate and critique mathematical operations and processes would enhance learning in this area.
   • Pupils with additional needs engaged in a positive manner in the lessons observed and teachers have a good sense of the progress being achieved in these support settings. However, a much more structured and systematic approach to assessment, target setting, monitoring and recording of pupil progress should be implemented.
   • In individual classes, examples of very good project work in Science were noted and the participation of some pupils in a robotics initiative greatly enhances both learning experiences and outcomes in this area. Attractive and creative samples of pupils’ work in Visual Arts were noted on displays. Participation in the Green-Schools initiative and the formation of a students’ council also provide opportunities for the development of pupils’ voice.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING
   • The overall quality of teaching in the school is good. The lessons observed involved well-defined teacher instruction, had a focus on content mastery and secured high levels of pupil attention. Aspects of very good practice, noted in some classrooms, included effective differentiation, the organisation of cooperative and discovery-based learning opportunities. There was also a focus on skills development and on the provision of positive, constructive feedback on learning.
   • All teachers prepared planning to support their teaching. However, the approach to whole-school and classroom planning should be reviewed by teachers in a collaborative manner to
ensure that it informs a progressive and developmental approach to curriculum implementation throughout the school.

- A range of intervention models has been introduced to support pupils with SEN and teachers have commenced introduction of the continuum of support process. As part of the continued development of this process, there is a need to assess the effectiveness and impact of each model of support on the learning experiences and learning outcomes of pupils with SEN.

- Teachers employ a good range of assessment approaches which include standardised testing, teacher-designed and commercially produced tasks and tests, monitoring of pupil work, teacher observation and some diagnostic testing in settings for pupil with SEN. There is scope, however, for more formative use of assessment data to inform planning for teaching and learning. Consideration should also be given to extending the range of assessment approaches to include opportunities for self and peer assessment and the implementation of a broader range of diagnostic tests.

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

- High quality support for pupils’ well-being is provided. Very positive and respectful attitudes were noted between teachers and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. A range of initiatives such as the daily mile, yoga and the student of the month awards all contribute to the promotion of a healthy and positive environment for pupils. In a questionnaire distributed to pupil as part of the evaluation, the majority of pupils expressed positive views of their school and their learning.

- While the overall levels of attendance of the majority of pupils are good, the attendance of a minority is a cause for concern. The school should extend the range of initiatives in place to promote improved attendance. School management should also ensure that attendance concerns are notified to An TUSLA in accordance with agreed procedures.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.

- The board of management is very supportive of the school and has proactively engaged in a broad range of activities including policy ratification, school refurbishment and extension and the management of financial matters.

- The principal was appointed to the school during the last academic year and works to ensure the provision of a caring and inclusive environment. She is supported by five assistant principals all of whom have been assigned an appropriate range of duties. To further develop curricular and instructional leadership in the school, the principal and in-school leadership team should adopt a shared responsibility for systematically leading a whole-school approach to reviewing teaching and learning in curricular areas. They should also ensure the development and implementation of an up-to-date three-year DEIS action plan for improvement.

- A vibrant and enthusiastic parents’ association was recently established in the school. A meeting with representatives of the association and responses from parental questionnaires indicate positive overall parental attitudes to the school. There is some evidence, however, that there is scope for development in the mechanisms for consultation with parents on aspects of policy formulation and review.

- 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 overall quality of school self-evaluation is satisfactory. The school has prioritised aspects of Mathematics for development and evidence of increased emphasis on this work is evident in classroom planning and practice.
- The school currently has a five-year DEIS plan. However, there is need to ensure that the DEIS action planning process has an impact on classroom planning and practice and leads to improvements in pupil learning outcomes. It is recommended that the school prioritise the development and implementation of an updated DEIS action plan, with clear targets for improvement from an established baseline, under each of the DEIS themes. The progress achieved on each of the targets should be monitored and reviewed at regular intervals.
**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 quality of the school’s provision of each area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Very Good</strong></td>
<td><em>Very good</em> 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 <strong>outstanding</strong> and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.</td>
<td>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</td>
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<td><strong>Good</strong></td>
<td><em>Good</em> 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.</td>
<td>Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement</td>
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<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong></td>
<td><em>Satisfactory</em> 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.</td>
<td>Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas</td>
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<td><strong>Fair</strong></td>
<td><em>Fair</em> 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.</td>
<td>Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils’ learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve</td>
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<td><strong>Weak</strong></td>
<td><em>Weak</em> 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.</td>
<td>Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;</td>
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Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management
Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

All members of the staff and Board of Management have read and discussed the report. The pupil survey results highlighted high levels of satisfaction amongst our pupils. Their satisfaction level was reflected in high attendance levels of the majority of pupils. Staff were pleased that the high quality of planning and teaching were recognised.

Confirmation was provided that the school is Compliant with Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017. Recommendations have been noted and the staff has already taken action to implement them.

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 has agreed to work more collaboratively on whole-school and classroom planning, target setting and assessment. We have agreed a more structured and systematic approach to the development of the writing genres in both languages and to implement a more consistent approach to handwriting. In view of this, our policy will be updated. A greater whole school emphasis will be placed on Irish grammar and on verbs in particular.

Our 3 year DEIS Action Plan for Improvement has been discussed and updated. Priority areas for development have been identified and whole-school actions have been agreed in relation to Problem solving in Maths, attendance, collaborative planning and assessment. Targets in the various DEIS themes will be drawn up based on evidence gathered from teachers, parents, pupils and assessment practices. These targets will be monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis. The school has made good efforts to extend the range of initiatives to promote improved attendance. Attendance concerns have been notified to An Tusla in accordance with agreed procedures.

The principal and in-school leadership team will adopt a shared responsibility for systematically leading a whole school approach to reviewing teaching and learning in curricular areas. This will impact on classroom planning and practice and so improve pupil learning outcomes.