

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	St John the Baptist Boys' National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Cashel Co. Tipperary
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	20155R

Date of inspection: 07-03-2019



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
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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 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	07-03-2019
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 special education teachers• Meeting with teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives

SCHOOL CONTEXT

St John the Baptist is an all-boys mainstream Catholic primary school. Teaching staff consists of an administrative principal, eleven mainstream teachers, eight education support teachers and one teacher who caters for the needs of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. There are currently 282 boys enrolled in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupil learning outcomes and experiences is very good in general with many pupils attaining to very high levels; scope exists to develop the literacy and numeracy attainment of a number of pupils.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good but planning to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties merits review.
- The quality of assessment is satisfactory; scope exists to refine the manner in which pupil attainment is evaluated, benchmarked and recorded.
- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is exceptionally high and is a key strength of the school.
- The quality of leadership and management is of a very high standard; the principal, board and parents work collaboratively to ensure that a focus is maintained on high quality provision for the pupils in the school.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is very good; action planning for improvement is impacting very positively on pupil learning outcomes and experiences and on teachers' individual and collective practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school should review current provision for pupils who are experiencing significant difficulties in literacy and numeracy and ensure that bespoke approaches to addressing their needs are identified and implemented.
- Current planning to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties should be reviewed to ensure that specific improvement targets are clearly identified and pupil progress is regularly monitored and recorded.
- A whole-school approach to assessment for and of learning across the curriculum areas is required and assessment data should be used to prioritise pupils in need of support and to inform the organisation and evaluation of suitable interventions.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of pupil learning outcomes is very good in general with many pupils attaining to very high levels. There is, however, scope to develop the literacy and numeracy attainment levels of a number of pupils. Current provision for these pupils should be reviewed to ensure that bespoke approaches to addressing their needs are identified and implemented.
- The quality of the learning experiences provided for pupils is very high. All pupils engaged enthusiastically and actively in the lessons observed with very high levels of participation noted in whole-class discussions. They have acquired an admirable ability to analyse, think critically, solve problems and to interact effectively with others. The quality of pupils' learning experience would be further augmented through increased use of digital technologies.
- Almost all pupils are making very good progress in literacy commensurate with their abilities. Pupils' oral language skills are very well developed and they converse freely and confidently on a range of topics. Pupils are familiar with and use a wide range of word identification skills, they engage with a variety of texts and are encouraged to read to satisfy personal interests. Pupils' handwriting skills are well developed and they are facilitated to write in a wide range of genres.
- Tá caighdeán ard sroichte ag na daltaí i snáitheanna áirithe sa Ghaeilge. Cuirtear an t-ábhar teagaisc in oiriúint do raon aoise agus suime na ndaltaí agus glacann siad páirt go fonnmhar san obair. Bhí na páistí in ann ceisteanna a fhreagairt, abairtí a chumadh agus réimse dánta agus amhrán a chanadh le lánmhuinín. *Pupils learning in Irish is good. Lessons taught are suitable to the age range and interest level of the pupils and they take an active part in their work. The pupils were able to answer questions, formulate sentences, sing songs and recite poems with full confidence.*
- Pupils' numeracy skills are very well advanced and they approach and complete number operations with confidence. They are facilitated to engage with developmentally appropriate and socially relevant lesson content in each strand of the Mathematics curriculum. They use mathematical language effectively to communicate their learning and to clarify ideas and concepts. The analysis of strand specific assessment data to inform interventions and to provide support to pupils who experience difficulty in Mathematics is advised.
- In Social, Environmental and Scientific Education, pupils actively engage with a range of content which has successfully enabled them to develop an informed and critical understanding of social, environmental and scientific issues.
- Pupil learning outcomes in arts education is very good. They are facilitated to explore, clarify and express ideas, feelings and experiences through the wide range of arts activities organised.
- The quality of pupil learning outcomes in Physical Education (PE) is excellent. Pupils engage in all strands of the PE curriculum and have an acute awareness of the contribution physical activity makes in promoting healthy lifestyles and wellbeing. Their experiences have contributed to their keen sense of fair play, the development of cooperation skills and an acceptance of success and failure.
- Pupils' engagement with the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum has resulted in their acquiring a respect for cultural difference; an appreciation of civic responsibility; a respect for the rights, views and feeling of others and a sense of responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching in mainstream and special education settings was very good with the quality of lessons observed ranging from satisfactory to excellent. Teaching approaches and organised activities support and challenge the diversity of pupils' learning needs. Resources are very well used to motivate pupils and to support their achievement of learning targets. Pupils with additional learning needs are well-supported in-class through purposeful differentiated activities which enable them to engage with lesson content and to experience success. There is a strong sense of purpose and of care in classrooms and all teacher-pupil interactions were observed to be affirming and encouraging. Pupils are developing the skills of working independently and are facilitated to work with others in collaborative learning activities.
- In general, teachers prepare and plan well for their lessons though there is scope to develop the planning process for pupils in receipt of support. Some excellent planning practices were observed. In these instances, a baseline of current pupil attainment was clearly outlined, specific learning targets were stated, appropriate learning approaches were identified and pupil progress was regularly monitored and recorded. It is recommended that this approach to planning to meet the needs of pupils with additional learning needs be extended to all settings.
- The overall quality of assessment is satisfactory. Individual teachers use a range of strategies to assess pupil progress and to inform planning but the implementation of a whole-school approach to assessment for and of learning across the curriculum areas is required. Assessment data should also be used to inform the prioritising of pupils in need of support and the organisation of appropriate interventions. The exemplary assessment practices observed in some settings should inform this work. The promotion of pupil self-assessment and the monitoring and evaluation of pupils' work are notable features of current practice.

3. THE QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELLBEING

- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is exceptionally high and is a key strength of the school. The school is characterised by a climate of trust, respect and confidence which welcomes and celebrates diversity and inclusivity. It deals sensitively and effectively with learners' concerns and is alert and responsive to their emotional, physical, social and emotional needs. There is a genuine commitment to the holistic development of each pupil and this is reflected in the extensive range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities promoted.
- Pupils' behaviour in the course of the evaluation was excellent. They display a very strong sense of community and of belonging. The participation of pupils in various committees very successfully promotes student voice and has led to the development of key skills that enable them to prepare for active and responsible citizenship.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management in the school is very good. The board of management works in a highly effective manner. Representatives display a keen awareness of the school's strengths and challenges. The board manages the emerging and prioritised school needs in a systematic and collaborative manner. Effective mechanisms are in place for communication and consultation with parents. These include frequent newsletters, annual reports and optimal use of the school's website along with meaningful engagement with a highly effective parents' association.

- The principal demonstrates excellent leadership skills and has successfully promoted a school culture which is exemplified by openness and a focus on very high quality provision for its pupils. He very effectively promotes teamwork and distributed leadership in the best interests of the school.
- The school leadership team discharges a very wide range of duties, that are aligned with prioritised areas of need, in a collaborative and highly effective manner.
- The school regularly provides placements for student teachers. This engagement in initial teacher education programmes is highly praised and provides valuable professional benefits to teachers, student teachers, pupils and the teacher education institution.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of SSE is very good. The principal and the leaders in the school successfully promote a learning culture. Collaboratively, staff identify areas for improvement and high-quality actions plans have been drafted to affect change. The engagement of pupils, parents and the board in these plans is particularly noteworthy. School improvement initiatives have impacted positively on pupil achievement, attainment and wellbeing and on teachers' individual and collective practice.
- Teachers use monthly progress reports, formal meetings and planning time to reflect critically on the impact of their classroom practice. They regularly engage in continuous professional development that develops their own practice, meets the needs of the pupils and the school, and enhances collective practice. This good practice is highly commended.
- Successful improvement initiatives are reflected in the cyclical review of whole-school approaches and are incorporated into teachers' planning and practice.

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 welcomes the WSE-MLL report on St John the Baptist BNS. We believe it to be an accurate appraisal of our school which reflects positively the hard work, dedication and talent of our school community.

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 report provides a clear roadmap for the school to continue its ongoing journey towards providing and maintaining the best educational provision possible for the boys in our care. Self-reflection and evaluation are at the heart of our practice and the extent of professional dialogue and concrete actions in St John the Baptist BNS before, during and after the whole school evaluation means we are confident that the recommendations within the report will be addressed thoroughly in a sustainable manner. Indeed, this process has already commenced. School staff is positively and professionally engaging with each of the recommendations outlined. The board is confident that this will lead to improvements in the quality of provision provided.