

**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>	Esker Educate Together N.S.
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	The Glebe Esker Lane Lucan
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	20274C

**Date of inspection: 17-10-2018**



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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(s) 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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

## **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>	17-10-2018
<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 parent representatives</li><li>• Meeting with teachers</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher 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, teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Esker Educate Together National School is a co-educational primary school located in Lucan, County Dublin and operates under the patronage of Educate Together. The majority of pupils have English as an additional language. The school participates in the Department's Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) programme and receives support through the School Completion Programme. There are sixteen mainstream class teachers, twelve special education teachers (SET), a home-school community-liaison (HSCL) teacher and an administrative principal. There were 422 pupils enrolled at the time of the evaluation and while most pupils attend very well, the school has robust structures in place to improve the poor attendance of pupils, where necessary.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is very good.
- The overall quality of teaching, including the teaching of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good, though there is scope to look at the targets set and to further develop pupil's communication skills in English and Irish.
- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is highly commendable; all teachers are committed to the well-being of their pupils and a strong ethos of care permeates the life and work of the school.
- The overall quality of leadership and management is very effective; the principal provides visionary leadership to the school community.
- The school builds strong relationships with parents; it values and supports the active parents' association in fulfilling its partnership and advisory role.
- The quality of school self- evaluation is very good.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- The process of target setting throughout the school should be refined further, to ensure that all targets are specific, measurable and used to inform regular reviews while supporting the progression of learning.
- Teachers should extend the range of oral language teaching methodologies they use in order to enhance pupils' communication skills in English and Irish.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of pupils' learning is of a very high standard. Pupils are highly engaged, focused and motivated. Learning intentions are shared very effectively and consistently by teachers. Pupils demonstrate an ability to work both collaboratively and independently. They have a real sense of ownership of their learning and are very capable of talking about and explaining many aspects of their learning.
- The learner experiences are very rich and varied in many classrooms. The explicit development of specific oral language was a feature of many lessons observed. Nevertheless, as pupils progress, the focus on skill development in language learning should be more consistently planned for and supported throughout the school. Teachers should extend the oral language teaching methodologies they use to create purposeful opportunities for the pupils to engage in oral language activities to enhance communication skills in both English and Irish. *Ní mór deiseanna rialta a thabhairt do na daltaí an Ghaeilge a chleachtadh i dtascanna fíorchumarsáideacha. Regular opportunities should now be provided for pupils to engage in purposeful communicative tasks in Irish.*
- *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* has been successfully implemented in the junior classrooms. Plenary sessions at the beginning and end of Aistear sessions ensure that collaborative learning and social interactions are nurtured and developed as pupils learn purposefully through play. Teachers engage in evidence-based interventions supporting the teaching of literacy and numeracy. In the majority of lessons observed there was a good balance between teacher-led input and the facilitation of collaborative and active learning. Pupils' achievement in summative assessments, including standardised tests, are in line with or above realistic expectations.

### 2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching is very good with lessons observed ranging from exemplary to satisfactory. All teachers create attractive, pupil-centered learning environments to support the teaching and learning of curriculum subjects. A wide range of carefully chosen resources successfully enriches teaching and supports pupils in their learning. In response to questionnaires administered during the evaluation all parents agreed that teaching in this school is of a high quality.
- The commitment teachers demonstrate with regard to improving their own teaching practice and the quality of the pupils' learning outcomes is a significant strength of the school. The principal and other leaders in the school promote a culture of continuous improvement where creativity and innovation is promoted and shared.
- Overall the quality of assessment is good. A range of assessment data is gathered in all classes and at whole-school level. Screening practices are well-embedded, though the use of diagnostic testing in Mathematics needs further development. Given the school context, assessment practices appropriately factor in the needs of pupils with English as an additional

language. The process of target setting should be reviewed to ensure that assessment data is closely aligned to priority learning needs and learning objectives. Associated targets, in turn, should be specific, measurable and used to inform regular reviews while supporting the progression of learning.

- Teachers provide additional supports for pupils through a combination of in-class support and withdrawal of individuals and groups within the school. The practice of reviewing initiatives and interventions to ensure the maximum benefit for all pupils is highly commendable. The co-ordination of group-teaching programmes is very good and well-established. There is a need, however, to review such approaches, with a particular focus on enhancing pupils' oral language development, as they progress through the school.

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

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is a significant strength of the school. There is a strong commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of pupils. Regular assemblies celebrate the diversity of school life and celebrate important moments providing a whole-school opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate pupils' achievements.
- The strong links that have been developed and nurtured with the parents, the local and wider community and outside agencies are a notable feature of the work of the school. A wide range of initiatives ensures that parents and members of the community play an active part in many aspects of school life. The principal, deputy principal and the HSCL co-ordinator work diligently to support and develop these relationships. There is an active parents' association in the school.
- Pupils' voice is nurtured and promoted through an array of school committees, including an active Students' Council. The school recognises pupils as stakeholders, values their views, and ensures their involvement in the operation of the school. In meeting with members of different committees, pupils reported that they have a voice within the school community and that their voice is heard and acted on appropriately.

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

- The quality of school leadership and management is very good. The board of management meets regularly and it discharges its financial, legislative and leadership duties very effectively. Members of the board of management have defined roles and adhere to principles of good governance. They are very focused on the needs of the school and supportive of the principal and school staff.
- Management and leadership within the school are of a very high quality. The principal fosters a highly collaborative school culture. This facilitates rich professional conversations among staff. School leadership is characterised by a visionary approach to a child-centred education in partnership with parents and a school culture of innovation, reflection and evidenced-based practice. She is ably assisted by the deputy principal and in-school management team who attend to a wide range of duties while working collaboratively to

create an inclusive, active learning environment. The school demonstrates a high level of commitment to inclusion and to the holistic development of each pupil.

- The school's management has been very successful in encouraging and facilitating teachers' continuing professional development (CPD). This has contributed to the high level of consistency in practice evident throughout the school. The very effective leadership in the school is evident in the culture of improvement and in teachers' openness to exploring and reviewing teaching approaches and methodologies.
- The school reported that it regularly provides placements for student teachers. The school has developed close links with Maynooth University's Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education. 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 school self-evaluation (SSE) is very good. The school has engaged very effectively with the SSE process in the development of their DEIS plan. Key areas have been identified for improvement with a range of actions devised and applied in each classroom to develop and address these areas. There is evidence of school self-evaluation impacting positively on teachers' collaborative practices leading to improvements in learning in all classes.

## 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.

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;