

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Ballinteer Educate Together National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Notre Dame Campus Upper Churchtown Road Churchtown Dublin 14
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	20400E

Date of inspection: 16-10-2019



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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 on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

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	16-10-2019
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, and board of management representatives

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Ballinteer Educate Together National School is a developing co-educational school currently situated on the Notre Dame secondary school campus between Churchtown and the village of Dundrum in County Dublin. The school is under the patronage of Educate Together. Currently, there are 390 pupils enrolled and attendance levels are very good. The teaching staff comprises an acting principal, fifteen mainstream class teachers, and six special education teachers, one of whom is shared with a neighbouring school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning is good overall, with some very good learning outcomes achieved by a range of pupils across various areas of the curriculum.
- Teaching is of a high quality overall; there is scope for development in the quality of differentiated support provided for pupils.
- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is very good and is underpinned by the school's ethos of inclusivity.
- Teaching for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is highly skilled; in some instances, targets in support plans are not specific and measurable and do not effectively record progression for pupils.
- Leadership and management are of a very high quality; the board of management, parents' association and principal work cohesively to sustain and enhance the quality of provision for pupils.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is good, with scope for development regarding the communication, implementation and monitoring of agreed SSE actions and targets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers in all settings should ensure that sufficiently differentiated support, informed by assessment, is provided during learning tasks in order to optimise learning outcomes for all pupils.
- In order to better record incremental progression for pupils with SEN, targets in support plans should be consistently specific, achievable and measurable.
- The school should ensure that actions and targets from SSE are consistently implemented in all settings, communicated appropriately to parents, and regularly monitored in terms of their impact on pupils' learning.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of pupils' learning is good overall, with some very good learning outcomes achieved by a range of pupils across various areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils demonstrate high levels of engagement in their learning. Their positive learning outcomes are supporting their overall sense of well-being.
- Pupils can explain the purpose of their learning. They communicate with very high levels of fluency in some instances and overall, their recall of past learning is of high quality. Pupils' ability to recall poetry varies across the settings and should now become a more consistent feature of their overall learning experience.
- Pupils read confidently with very good levels of comprehension in line with their reading abilities. An analysis of assessment information indicates steady progress in pupils' reading attainment.
- Very high quality learning outcomes in writing were noted in a number of settings. There is a variation in the quality of pupils' handwriting and penmanship. A co-ordinated emphasis on this aspect of pupils' writing over time is advised.
- *Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is being used to provide younger pupils with valuable, integrated language-learning experiences.
- Commendable learning outcomes are achieved by pupils in Mathematics. Many pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of number concepts and number strategies.
- Pupils work collaboratively during lessons, and they work particularly effectively in pairs.
- The pupils are provided with good quality learning experiences across the curriculum. Within this provision, the school should ensure pupils have regular opportunities to develop subject-specific skills pertaining to each area of the curriculum.
- Pupils engage very well with learning tasks. However, the level of difficulty for some pupils is impacting on the optimisation of their learning outcomes. It is recommended that pupils are appropriately supported and challenged during learning tasks to ensure that all derive optimum learning from the tasks provided.
- Is léir go bhfuil dearcadh dearfach ag na daltaí i leith na Gaeilge. Tá roinnt amhrán, frásaí agus abairtí ar eolas acu agus tá siad ábalta ceisteanna simplí a bhaineann leo féin a fhreagairt. Ní mór do mhuinteoírí an t-ionchur teanga nua, idir fhoclóir agus struchtúir cainte, a mhúineadh do na daltaí i ngach rang chun cabhrú leis na daltaí an teanga a úsáid go neamhspleách. Mar chuid de seo, moltar deiseanna rialta a thabhairt do na daltaí an teanga nua a chleachtadh agus a inmhéanú i ngach ceacht.
Pupils have a positive attitude towards Irish. Some songs, phrases and sentences have been learned by them and they are able to answer simple questions relating to themselves. Teachers should teach the pupils in all classes the new language input, including the vocabulary and speech structures, to help the pupils to use language independently. As part of this, regular opportunities should be given to the pupils in each lesson to practise and internalise the new language.
- The learning experiences for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are of a high quality and are provided in line with their identified learning needs.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- Teaching in the school is of a high quality overall.

- Teaching is underpinned by the teachers' very high levels of respect for the pupils. Classroom management is of a high quality overall, and interactions observed in each of the settings during the evaluation were positive and reflective of the school's inclusive ethos.
- In all settings, lessons are well structured. Pupils are enabled to work independently and collaboratively in pairs. Within some lessons, pupils are given structured opportunities to report on their learning through oral language presentations. Overall, there is a good balance between teacher talk and pupil talk during the course of the lessons.
- Teachers demonstrate a high level of preparedness for teaching in terms of the quality of classroom planning and the range of learning tasks provided during lessons. More differentiated support is required in order to optimise the learning outcomes for as many pupils as possible.
- In some settings, very good use is made of assessment information to monitor pupils' learning in key areas of the curriculum. However, this practice is not consistent throughout the school. Approaches to classroom-based assessment should be documented in the school's whole-school assessment policy and implemented in all settings.
- Teachers' collaborative practice is at a commendably high level. A positive collegial atmosphere prevails in the school.
- Teaching for pupils with SEN is highly skilled. Individual support plans are being devised and implemented through the use of the Continuum of Support. In some support plans, targets for pupils are not sufficiently specific and measurable.

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

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is very good.
- The school's ethos of inclusivity is fostered through a wide range of carefully planned interventions and approaches.
- A student council has been successfully established and members actively promote a culture of social responsibility among the pupils.
- Communication between the parents' association and the board of management is very effective and parents are very supportive of the school.
- Teachers and special-needs assistants (SNAs) are encouraged to engage in professional development with a view to enriching the supports provided for pupils.
- A wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities is provided and is impacting positively on pupils' well-being.
- The school has established strong and very effective links with outside professional agencies with a view to enhancing provision for pupils with SEN.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Leadership and management in the school is of a very high quality.
- The board of management is highly commended with regard to the manner in which it has addressed significant challenges relating to the change of premises; a safe and attractive learning environment is maintained. Members are well informed regarding teaching and learning in the school.
- The acting principal leads the school in a highly efficient manner. She espouses a clear vision for the development of the school centred on teaching and learning.
- The members of the in-school management team, some of whom have been recently appointed, are all operating in an acting capacity. They carry out their range of duties commendably. As the team becomes established, it will be instrumental in monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning priorities.

- The school facilitates the placement of student teachers from initial teacher education school placement programmes.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of school self-evaluation is good overall. The school's current focus is on Mathematics. The SSE process has been used effectively to establish clear targets and actions for improvement. The ISM team will play an important role in monitoring the implementation of the school improvement plan (SIP) across all classroom settings. The school should ensure that a summary of the SIP is communicated to parents.
- The school's capacity for further development is very good.

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;