

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Assumption Junior School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Sisters Of Charity Walkinstown Dublin 12 D12EH70
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	20450T

Date of inspection: 09-10-2019



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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	09-10-2019
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 and teacher questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers, and to trustee and board of management representatives

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Assumption Junior School is a co-educational junior primary school catering for boys from junior infants to first class, and for girls from junior infants to second class. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, and under the trusteeship of the Religious Sisters of Charity. School staffing includes an administrative principal, eighteen mainstream class teachers and ten support teachers, two of whom are based in special classes for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). There are 402 pupils enrolled currently. The attendance of most pupils is very good with the attendance of a small minority of pupils a cause for concern; commendably, the school is actively pursuing a multi-agency approach to address this challenge.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching is very good; teachers use a range of very effective approaches to optimise pupils' active engagement in learning activities.
- Intended learning outcomes for most lessons are clear, relevant and challenging; there is potential in some instances to include a greater focus on ensuring that learning experiences are differentiated appropriately to meet the needs of more able pupils.
- Pupils' learning is very good overall and pupils present as confident, motivated learners.
- The quality of leadership and management is very good; the principal is leading all aspects of the school's provision successfully, ensuring very high standards of teaching and learning.
- Support for pupils' wellbeing is very good; the ethos of the school is realised through policies and practices that promote inclusion and care for pupils.
- The school self-evaluation (SSE) process is very effective and is impacting positively on pupils' learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should ensure that planning and teaching is appropriately differentiated so that lesson content fully challenges all learners, particularly more able pupils.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of pupils' learning is very good; pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum which is appropriately focused on their local environment.
- Pupils are motivated, enthusiastic learners who work well independently and collaboratively and take pride in their work.
- Pupils' learning in literacy is very good. While many pupils discuss their knowledge of topics previously covered with commendable confidence, there is scope for a small number of pupils to further develop this skill. Pupils' attainment in reading has been steadily improving in recent years and guided reading groups enrich pupils' reading experiences. In a few instances, attainment for more able pupils would be optimised by a greater focus on additional challenge during whole-class reading lessons. An increased emphasis on comprehension skill development and on higher-order questioning is advised. The whole-school focus on improving pupils' writing skills is proving successful. Recent writing samples completed by pupils are very good in terms of both presentation and content.
- Baineann caighdeán an-mhaith le torthaí foghlama na ndaltaí i nGaeilge. Léiríonn siad dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge. Tá ar a gcumas abairtí simplí a chumadh go cruinn, chomh maith le ceisteanna bunúsacha a chur agus a fhreagairt. *Pupils' learning outcomes in Irish are of a very good standard. They demonstrate a positive attitude to Irish. They are able to compose simple sentences accurately and to ask and answer basic questions.*
- Numeracy learning outcomes are very good. Pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of key concepts, and can use a broad range of mathematical strategies. More able pupils would benefit from additional challenge in their learning experiences. In the lessons observed, pupils were not consistently facilitated to apply their learning in real-life contexts. Regular opportunities should be provided for pupils to apply their mathematical learning to their own lives.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The quality of teaching is very good and is characterised by well-structured lessons, very effective engagement with pupils and the use of a wide range of teaching approaches. In the Inspectorate questionnaire, almost all parents stated that teaching is good in the school.
- Teachers' preparation is of a high standard and all lessons include a clear emphasis on pupils' overall language development. Commendably, teachers' planning for English lessons identifies target vocabulary; however, pupils' independent use of subject-specific vocabulary in other areas of the curriculum could be developed further. Key topic-specific vocabulary should be included in teachers' planning for all curricular areas.
- Very good attention is paid to the development of pupils' skills in Physical Education, Visual Arts and Music. While teaching in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education is effective and includes a commendable focus on the development of pupils' literacy, there is a need to ensure that lessons also emphasise the development of pupils' subject-specific skills.
- The highly effective implementation of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is supporting pupils' social and communication skills in a structured environment.
- The teaching, practices, and systems in place to support pupils with additional learning needs are very good and reflective of the school's ethos. Teaching approaches in the special classes for pupils with ASD are very effective. A range of evidence-based ASD-specific

teaching approaches is used to very good effect, reflecting a child-centred approach to learning and teaching.

- Assessment practices are very good. Very effective systems are in place to facilitate the recording of useful information on pupil attainment during in-class support sessions. Pupils receive high-quality formative feedback on their learning. Structured teacher observations are very effective in providing valuable insights regarding pupils' attainment. A wide range of screening and diagnostic assessments is used to support pupils' learning.

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

- Support for pupils' wellbeing is very good. The ethos of the school is realised through practices that promote inclusion and very high expectations for pupils' holistic development.
- The school presents as a supportive and child-centred environment; all observed interactions were very respectful.
- In response to the Inspectorate questionnaire, almost all parents stated that they were happy with the school. A significant minority of parents were unsure, or disagreed, that they had been informed of the details of the relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy. The board is advised to review the effectiveness of its procedures for communicating the RSE policy to parents.
- Communication within the school and with the wider school community is very good, and is facilitated by informative newsletters which include helpful updates on SSE. While the school website is an effective means of showcasing pupils' achievements, consideration should be given to exploring additional opportunities to promote the school's profile across a wider catchment area.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management is very good. The board of management is very supportive of the school and proactively engages in a broad range of activities including policy review and school refurbishment. The school building and grounds are maintained and resourced to a very high standard. In the Inspectorate questionnaires, all teachers and almost all parents stated that the school is well run.
- The principal has sustained and continues to foster a very positive school climate which is characterised by a culture of collaboration and very high standards in teaching and learning. A notable dimension of this culture is the development of teachers' leadership capacity. Individual teachers demonstrate praiseworthy skill in working collaboratively and in sharing their expertise to enhance provision for pupils.
- The in-school leadership team is very effective; they are proactive in leading learning and in sustaining the guiding vision for the school.
- There is an active parents' association in the school. Further consideration should be given to the affiliation of the parents' association with the National Parents' Council.
- The school facilitates the placement of student teachers from initial teacher education (ITE) school placement programmes; this engagement in ITE programmes is welcome.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of school self-evaluation is very good. Agreed targets and actions are leading to identifiable improvements in learner experiences and outcomes.

- A clear framework has been devised to guide the ongoing development, implementation and ongoing monitoring of school policies and plans. The policies and plans that have been reviewed are contributing significantly to the very effective functioning of the school.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board is delighted that this report affirms the hard work and dedication to the school displayed by all members of the school staff. The Board also acknowledges the inspectorate's findings in relation to the very good quality of teaching and of pupil learning.

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 In-School Management Team have met and discussed the recommendation of the report. The following is our plan to address it:

- At our staff meeting in January all teachers will look at higher order questioning methods in order to increase differentiation for all of pupils and for our more able pupils in particular.
- The ISM team as year group leaders will ensure that differentiation is prominent on the agenda at all team planning meetings.
- The ISM team members will monitor and give feedback on progress at ISM meetings.
- A whole-staff review will take place during term 3.

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 <i>very good</i> 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;