

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil Naomh Cualán
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Borrisoleigh Thurles County Tipperary
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	20451V

Date of inspection: 19-09-2019



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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	17-09-2019 – 19-09-2019
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• Review of relevant documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of parent and pupil questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Naomh Cualán is a co-educational primary school located in Borrisoleigh, County Tipperary, which operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly. It was formed in 2014 following the amalgamation of two schools and continues to operate on a dual campus. The staff comprises an administrative principal, seven mainstream teachers and three special education teachers (SETs), one of whom is shared with a local school. There are two special classes for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs). At the time of the evaluation, there were 186 pupils enrolled. Attendance levels are very good overall.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- Overall, the quality of pupils' learning is good; there is scope to develop their oral-language skills.
- The overall quality of the teaching observed was good.
- The support provided for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good; the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) *Continuum of Support* framework has yet to be embedded at whole-school level.
- Pupils' wellbeing is supported very effectively by teachers and school management.
- The quality of school leadership is good, and the principal and other school leaders foster an inclusive and respectful school climate.
- The quality of the school self-evaluation (SSE) process is good.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pupils' oral-language skills in English and Irish should be developed using a structured, communicative approach.
- All teachers should use student support files effectively to ensure that pupils' needs are identified, addressed and tracked appropriately at each level of the *Continuum of Support* framework.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is good. In most of the lessons observed, pupils were engaged collaboratively in their learning and were motivated to learn. They had access to high-quality learning resources.
- The majority of pupils could transfer their skills and knowledge across a range of subjects. The learner outcomes from the majority of lessons observed were of a good standard, and in a minority of lessons learner outcomes were of a very high quality.
- Learning in Mathematics is very good overall. In the lessons observed, pupils were engaged successfully in meaningful and appropriately challenging learning activities. In summative assessments, including standardised tests, learner outcomes are very good overall.
- The overall quality of learning in literacy is good. The school has adopted a whole-school focus on the improvement of pupils' oral language; however, this is not systematic or progressive. Oral-language skills in English should be developed using a structured, communicative approach. Oral and writing skills should be integrated more effectively. Pupils have access to well-stocked libraries and their reading skills in English are good.
- Ar an iomlán, bhí caighdeán na léitheoireachta sa Ghaeilge go maith. Ní raibh formhór na ndaltaí in ann Gaeilge a labhairt le leibhéal cuí líofachta. Ba chóir scileanna labhartha na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge a fhorbairt a thuilleadh. *Overall, the standard of reading in Irish was good. The majority of pupils could not speak Irish with an appropriate degree of fluency. Pupils' oral-language skills in Irish should be further developed.*
- A whole-school digital learning plan has been developed. There is scope to develop pupils' active use of digital technologies to support their learning. Pupils' skills in musical performance are celebrated very successfully.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- Overall, the quality of teaching was good. During classroom observations, the quality of the teaching ranged from excellent to fair. Most teachers had prepared well for lessons and had designed appropriately challenging learning tasks. In questionnaires, almost all parents agreed that teaching is good in the school.
- Teachers had a very positive rapport with pupils and had developed attractive and stimulating learning environments. The majority of teachers used a wide range of teaching approaches to enhance the learner experience. *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* was used effectively to support pupils' cross-curricular language development through play.
- Where practice was of a very high quality, learning activities had been designed to facilitate very good co-operative learning and engagement by pupils. Higher-order pupil discussion was facilitated very effectively. Subject-specific skills and language were developed very successfully.
- In a few settings, there were insufficient opportunities for pupils to engage in higher-order learning tasks and pupil engagement was not maximised. Teachers in all classes should ensure that pupil engagement is maintained throughout all stages of the learning process.
- Bhain na múinteoirí úsáid éifeachtach as cluichí chun na daltaí a spreagadh chun foghlama sa Ghaeilge. Ní raibh struchtúr cuí, áfach, ar fhorhóir na gceachtanna a breathnaíodh. Ba chóir an cur chuige cumarsáideach a chur i bhfeidhm go hiomlán i ngach ceacht. *During lesson observations, the majority of teachers used games effectively to motivate pupils to learn in*

Irish. However, the majority of lessons observed lacked appropriate structure. The communicative approach should be implemented fully in all lessons.

- Pupils with SEN are supported through withdrawal and in-class models of support. In a minority of settings, the in-class support needs to be used more effectively. The NEPS *Continuum of Support* framework has been introduced but has yet to be fully embedded. All teachers should use student support files effectively to ensure that pupils' needs are identified, addressed and tracked appropriately at each level of the framework. Targets devised for pupils with SEN should be specific and measurable.
- Pupils in the ASD classes are supported in developing language and numeracy skills through group work and individual station work. Pupils in these classes are provided with regular opportunities to participate meaningfully in mainstream classes. In questionnaires, all parents with children in the special class agreed that their child feels safe and well looked after in the school.
- Overall, the quality of assessment is good. Most teachers implement a range of assessment strategies to track and monitor pupils' progress, including pre-testing and post-testing for initiatives, concept checklists and pupils' self-assessment-and-learning folders. The SETs use diagnostic testing effectively. In questionnaires, most pupils agreed that their teacher talks to them about how to improve their work.

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

- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is very good. The commitment by teachers and school management to creating an inclusive learning environment is highly commendable. In questionnaires, almost all parents agreed that their child is treated fairly and respectfully in the school.
- Pupils' holistic development is enhanced through their engagement in a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Teachers engage in continuing professional development to address and support relevant aspects of pupils' wellbeing.
- Pupil voice is accommodated effectively in the SSE process.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Overall, the quality of school leadership is good. The board of management oversees the management of the school effectively. The building is maintained to a very high standard. The board has appropriately prioritised the development of a single campus to ensure that pupil welfare and safety is maximised. To further develop communication with the parent body, the board should publish an annual report on the operation of school.
- The recently appointed principal demonstrates good leadership skills and continues to develop established practices in relation to pupil wellbeing and the sharing of teacher expertise. He fosters a collaborative school climate and promotes a culture of distributed leadership.
- The principal is supported effectively in his role by the deputy principal and the assistant principal. Going forward, the meetings of the in-school management team should be conducted on a more formal basis.
- The school reported that it provides regular placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome as it can provide valuable professional benefits for teachers, student teachers and pupils.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The overall quality of the SSE process is good, with a published school improvement plan (SIP) for literacy. All partners were involved effectively in the process. Assessment data was used to select the area of focus and to review and evaluate improvement. There was evidence during the evaluation that agreed strategies were impacting positively on teachers' practice in classrooms.
- To build on current good practice, regular monitoring of the impact of agreed strategies on pupils' oral-language skills should be implemented.

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 Scoil Naomh Cualán, Borrisoleigh. We believe it to be an accurate appraisal of our school which reflects positively the hard work, dedication and talent of our school community. The report acknowledges the many strengths of our school and in particular the emphasis placed on student well-being. We value the recognition that the overall quality of teaching and learning is good and we appreciate affirmation of the dedication and commitment of staff, pupils, parents and management. We are also pleased with the recognition and affirmation of the high quality of leadership and management of the school.

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 Board of Management is happy to implement the recommendations made by the Inspectorate as we believe in and encourage best practice in all areas of school life in order to provide optimum learning experiences for the pupils of Scoil Naomh Cualán. The report identifies recommendations in relation to pupils' oral-language skills in English and Irish and the use of student support files.

To address the recommendation in relation to the oral language skills of our students, we have adapted the focus of our SSE process to place more emphasis on the teaching of a variety of spoken texts and to link them with their respective written genres. The school is also actively engaged with the P.D.S.T. to enhance curricular development in this area and in particular in the use of the 'communicative approach' in our lessons.

To assist our teachers in developing their use of student support files, we have already received whole-school training from the NCSE (National Council for Special Education) which has helped our staff to effectively embed the NEPS 'Continuum of Support'.

Our school staff is positively and professionally engaging with both of the recommendations outlined and the board is confident that this will lead to improvements in the quality of provision provided.

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;