

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

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| Ainm na scoile / School name | Moyne Community School |
| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Moyne Co Longford |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number | 91436D |

Date of Evaluation: 18-04-2018



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. Quality of school leadership and management
2. Quality of teaching and learning
3. Implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations
4. The school's self-evaluation process and capacity for school improvement

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 did not meet the requirements in relation to 5 and 7 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken.

WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

| Dates of inspection | 16-04-2018 - 18-04-2018 |
|---|---|
| Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with Board of Management• Meetings with principal and deputy principal• Meetings with key staff• Review of relevant documents• Student focus-group interview | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with parents• Analysis of Parent, student and teacher questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of students' work• Interaction with students• Feedback to senior management team, board of management and teachers |

School context

Moyne Community School is a co-educational, school with a current enrolment of 638. The school operates under the joint trusteeship of Longford Westmeath Education and Training Board and the Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnois and offers the Junior Certificate, Junior Cycle School Award, Transition Year (TY), the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of school leadership and management is satisfactory; the day-to-day running of the school is good, but action is required by the board and senior management team to improve their oversight and leadership roles.
- The school offers a very broad and balanced curriculum, however some of the resources allocated to the school to support students with special educational needs (SEN) are not used for their intended purpose.
- A positive learning environment is promoted through the school's code of behaviour and the good range of pastoral supports provided.
- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from fair to very good in the lessons observed; student attainment is not in line with expectation and there is significant scope to improve the use of assessment for learning (AfL) strategies.
- Good school self-evaluation (SSE) processes are in place but strategies are not consistently implemented.
- Implementation of recommendations from previous inspections is not satisfactory and merits action.

Recommendations

- The board of management should access training to ensure that they fully understand their statutory roles and responsibilities, and should take greater oversight in the development of an overarching action plan to support the achievement of school priorities in particular in relation to teaching, learning and improving student attainment.
- The senior management team should take a pro-active leadership role in the systematic use of available data to inform planning and to set targets for improved outcomes in teaching, learning and student attainment.

- Senior management should further develop its own leadership role and should take greater oversight of the distributed leadership of staff, with particular emphasis on the facilitation of leadership roles and continuing professional development (CPD) to build greater capacity for staff.
- The resources allocated to the school for students with SEN should be used fully for the intended purpose in line with CL 0014/17 and the current model of provision for students with SEN should be reviewed.
- A whole-school approach to the integration of AfL, including written formative feedback by teachers needs to be implemented.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.

Leading learning and teaching

The well-established senior management team is in place since 2009. Board meeting minutes indicate that the principal keeps the board well informed of school issues and activities, and of wider educational developments through sharing of Department correspondence.

The board supports student learning through a range of scholarships and grants. The principal presents broad data on attainment in certificate examinations to the board, however members were unaware of the disparity between this data and student baseline data. To ensure that students achieve their potential the board should take a more pro-active leadership role, including more robust interrogation of the data provided. The senior management team should take a pro-active lead in the systematic use of available data to track student attainment and set targets for improvement in the areas identified.

Some highly effective timetabling practices are in place, including appropriate provision for almost all subjects, and concurrent timetabling of core subjects from second year. However, there are a few anomalies in the senior cycle timetable which need to be addressed. Option bands prohibit access to Physical Education for some students and limit instruction time for others, affecting compliance with Circular Letter M29/95. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is not currently provided in TY nor consistently delivered in senior cycle. Current job-sharing arrangements place significant restrictions on the timetable. The recent development of a job-sharing policy should take cognisance of Circular Letter 0075/2015 to ensure that the educational needs of students take precedence over all other considerations.

The school offers a very broad and balanced curriculum. However there is low uptake of certain subjects at senior cycle. Currently a significant number of resource hours that have been allocated to the school for students with SEN are used to preserve these smaller classes. This should be addressed without delay by school management and a curriculum review is recommended to address how these subjects may be sustained in a more resource-effective manner. This review should also address the anomalies in the timetable outlined above.

The quality of the TY programme is very good and numbers participating continue to grow. TY offers a strong social and work programme which fosters links with the local community. Commendably, students are assessed in TY by tracking their progress and participation through portfolio assessment. Very good structures and practices are in place for evaluating TY and reporting to parents on students' achievement and participation. A core team should be put in place to build capacity among staff and to ensure the programme continues to evolve.

The school's mission of providing a holistic education for all students underpins the range of pastoral supports in place. Members of the care team meet regularly and the principal or deputy principal sometimes attend. In line with good practice a member of the senior management team should attend all care meetings.

There is good provision for the delivery of guidance through timetabled lessons at senior cycle and Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) at junior cycle. The guidance plan documents the programme for delivery of guidance and its links with SPHE. Personal counselling is available to all students as appropriate.

SPHE is delivered by a large team of teachers and a co-ordinator role is not currently assigned. To ensure consistent delivery of SPHE management should proactively facilitate teacher CPD, with a view to building a trained core team and a co-ordinator from within the team should be assigned.

A very good transition programme is in place for first-year students, including pre-enrolment visits to the school and provision of a short subject sampling programme. Their transition from primary school is further supported by student mentors and the recently introduced Wellbeing programme. This programme should be kept under review to ensure that the supports for students are maximised.

Year heads are in place for all year groups except TY. They meet weekly and have strong links with the care team. To support the work of year heads and meet the needs of students the school should consider reintroducing a tutor system.

A few good practices are in place to support students with SEN including the development of a school provision plan. The model of provision consists mainly of group withdrawal and some team teaching. The majority of resources provided for students with SEN are currently used for other purposes and this should be addressed in line with Circular Letter 0014/17. The current arrangement whereby students with Irish exemptions are grouped together for additional support does not meet the diverse needs of these students. All staff should familiarise themselves with *The Guidelines for Post-Primary School: Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools*, and systems should be put in place to identify and support students adequately. Management should also proactively encourage more teachers to avail of CPD with a view to establishing a core team of teachers with the requisite expertise.

Managing the organisation

The current board of management, established in 2017, is correctly constituted and meets regularly. While some members have received training, up-to-date training should now be accessed by all members to ensure that they are aware of their statutory role and responsibilities.

A very good range of policies has been developed in consultation with stakeholders. It is good practice to sign and date policies on review. The admissions policy should be reviewed to address the issue of delayed admission of students with SEN.

The day-to-day running of the school is good. Senior management presents as a cohesive team with individual and complementary skills. They meet daily and have clearly delineated roles. Responses to staff questionnaires indicate that communication within the senior management team and with staff is good.

The middle-management team comprises five Assistant Principals (APs) and four special duties teachers (SDT). All APs act as year heads with additional pastoral and administrative responsibilities. They are clearly committed to their posts and contribute significantly to the overall management of the school. SDTs have a range of responsibilities that support the day-to-day running of the school however there is some overlapping of duties which should be addressed.

The code of behaviour facilitates a positive learning environment and a highly effective merit system has been introduced for first-year students to promote positive behaviour. Students' behaviour during the evaluation was exemplary and this was corroborated by the results of the teacher questionnaires.

The school building and extensive grounds are well maintained. Many of the classrooms visited had created attractive learning environments through subject-related displays. However, some materials are significantly out-of-date and should be removed. All classrooms are equipped with ICT equipment but data from questionnaires indicated that it is rarely used. Most classrooms were not equipped with window blinds which mitigated significantly against the use of ICT. This should be addressed.

Leading school development

Members of the board articulated their vision the school in terms of continuing to provide a holistic education in line with the school's mission statement. In order to fulfil their commitment *to enabling students and staff to develop their full potential within the school's formal and informal curriculum, in a friendly, safe and caring environment* school management should use the SSE process to first instigate and then monitor the initiatives necessary to bring this vision to full fruition.

School development planning is included on the agenda for some board meetings. A school improvement plan (SIP) has been developed by the board in consultation with senior management and staff. This should be shared with all stakeholders.

The parents' association is strongly supportive of the school. Parents are encouraged to participate in school life and the focus-group of parents indicated that communication with staff and management is very good. Parents' input to relevant school policies is facilitated after they have been developed. The board should consider mechanisms for greater parental input to policy development. A range of effective means is used by the school to communicate with parents including text messages, social media and letters.

Developing leadership capacity

There is significant scope for the development of leadership capacity for staff and for senior management to develop their own leadership capacity through CPD in the area of leading learning.

Teachers have attended CPD provided nationally for the new Junior Cycle specifications. Commendably there has been some recent engagement in whole-school, internally developed workshops in effective teaching and learning methodologies and a small group of teachers are participating in TL 21. To ensure that strategies gleaned from CPD are consistently implemented and achieve the desired impact in the classroom greater oversight and a more proactive approach from senior management are needed.

Staff are afforded opportunities to develop leadership roles as subject co-ordinators and through the wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities they provide. Good practice is evident where working groups such as the wellbeing team and homework committee have been formed from within the general body of staff to support forward planning. Senior management now need to take a pro-active role to ensure consistent implementation of agreed strategies and practices and to further build capacity of staff through effective distributed leadership. Mechanisms for participating staff to report on developments from working groups and share learning from CPD with all staff should be instigated.

A review of posts has recently been instigated by the principal in consultation with staff and a number of additional posts has been allocated to the school. The principal, in collaboration with staff has correctly identified Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and SSE as priority needs to be addressed by the additional posts. To ensure that the post structure meets the needs of the school the current schedule should be reviewed with a greater focus on improved outcomes in teaching, learning and student attainment. Clear job descriptions should be provided for post-holders and assigned roles and responsibilities should be carried out in line with Circular Letter 0003/2018.

Very good opportunities for student leadership are promoted through the work of the student council and the sixth-year mentoring system. Further opportunities are provided through the Young Social Innovator programme, the enterprise programme in TY and the excellent range of extra-curricular activities.

2. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

The quality of the teaching and learning observed was good or very good in the majority of lessons and satisfactory in some. Teaching and learning required significant improvement in a small minority of lessons.

Learner outcomes and experiences

Classroom interactions were congenial, supportive and caring. A very good rapport was noted between teachers and students. Teachers circulated throughout most lessons, directed their attention appropriately and in most instances responded well to students' needs.

A positive learning environment was noted where students' efforts were affirmed and encouraged, and students generally showed high levels of interest and enthusiasm. The ability to work independently was demonstrated where students were active and the level of challenge was appropriate.

Teachers provided students with opportunities to collaborate in some lessons through group and pair work. This was most effective when well-structured through clearly assigned student tasks and roles. Overall further refinement of skills associated with group work and a clear rationale for its use is needed to maximise learning.

Students are generally taught in mixed-ability settings with banding and some streaming in core subjects. The timetable facilitates movement between levels at the discretion of individual subject departments. However, as was highlighted in the last Whole School Evaluation, Management, Leadership and Learning report in 2011, current analysis of certificate examination and baseline data still indicates that student attainment is not in line with student potential and there is an urgent need to improve both uptake and attainment at higher level in almost all subjects. While it is good practice to concurrently timetable for the purpose of level change senior management should take greater oversight to ensure continuity, consistency, and high expectations and outcomes for students.

Teachers' individual and collective practice

Lessons were generally well prepared with appropriate resources and materials sourced in advance. Where learning was most effective, the selected teaching approaches and activities were differentiated to match the wide range of students' abilities. This approach should be extended to all lessons.

Learning intentions were shared with students in some lessons. This was most effective where teachers outlined what students should be able to do as well as know. Lessons were generally well structured and paced, however a number lessons in first year finished early as part of the homework strategy. This should be reviewed to ensure that sufficient time is provided for students to review the learning intention and to discuss how the assigned homework would help to improve learning.

A variety of teaching approaches was evident many of which were traditional. In the best lessons, where a more active, student-led approach was taken, and prior knowledge and interests were exploited, student engagement and expectations of learning were best. The lecture-style approach with student note taking that featured in some lessons was less effective in engaging students and should be avoided.

There was considerable variation in teachers' use of assessment to improve learning. AFL strategies were used effectively in a few lessons. This very good practice should be embedded in all teachers' practice. Effective oral feedback was given to students in many lessons. However while student work is generally monitored, written feedback was limited. A consistent whole-school approach should be taken to the provision of written formative feedback on key pieces of student work.

Teachers used a range of questioning approaches. In most lessons efforts were made to distribute questions evenly, however strategies could be used to ensure that certain students do not dominate and that questions are targeted to meet the differentiated needs of students. Questioning was most effective in eliciting substantial student response when the wait time was sufficient and when scaffolding was used to prompt memory. In many lessons greater use of higher order questions should be used to develop critical thinking skills.

Classroom management was very good with high expectations of student behaviour and well-established classroom routines. In some instances lateness to class impeded the lesson start, particularly after morning break. Ways of minimising this should be investigated.

Good practice noted in subject plans included details of learning outcomes, methodologies and assessment practices. This approach should be expanded across all subject departments. Literacy and numeracy strategies were documented, but were not consistent and did not include target setting. Plans included analyses of attainment in certificate examinations. A whole-school approach to the use of assessment data including baseline data to set targets for improved student outcomes should be taken to inform future planning in all subjects.

Commendably teachers provide a very good variety of extra-curricular activities that create excellent opportunities for student learning and success beyond the classroom.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

Recommendations common to many of the previous inspections related to issues of school improvement planning, use of data and target setting for improved students outcomes, engagement in CPD, the provision of written formative feedback, and the embedding of AfL strategies. Implementation of recommendations varies considerably and overall requires improvement.

Leadership and Management

Overall senior management has not taken sufficient oversight or leadership of the implementation of previous key recommendations. Senior management has revised the class formation for Mathematics in first year as recommended in the subject inspection report, however streaming is still in place from second year. An LCVP co-ordinator is now in place, however a core team has not been developed. Parents' and student councils have been re-established. Recommendations on Physical Education provision and the elimination of the study period at senior cycle have still to be addressed.

Teaching and Learning

Some recommendations such as students' personal engagement with Mathematics have been implemented, while others relating to use of data and target setting for improved student outcomes, the provision of written formative feedback and the embedding of AfL strategies generally require further development.

Senior management informs teachers of the recommendations arising from inspection reports. However, greater oversight is needed to ensure that subject departments act on recommendations.

4. THE SCHOOL'S SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS AND CAPACITY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The School's Self-Evaluation Process

Some good SSE processes are in place such as the gathering of data from a range of sources and the development of teams to explore strands. Highly committed staff members have contributed to a range of strategies including literacy, numeracy and improvement in homework. There is however a need for more consistent implementation and review of the agreed strategies with a greater focus on whole-school teaching and learning approaches.

The School's Capacity for Improvement

In order to implement the recommendations and to ensure improved outcomes for students, leadership capacity needs to be built in the school. With improved leadership and consistent engagement with the SSE process the school should then have capacity to progress the school improvement agenda. The findings and recommendations contained in this WSE-MLL report should be viewed as such an opportunity providing an informative roadmap to ensure school improvement.

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 in each area.

| Level | Description | Example of descriptive terms |
|--------------|---|---|
| Very Good | <i>Very good</i> 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 <i>outstanding</i> 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 | <i>Good</i> 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 | <i>Satisfactory</i> 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 | <i>Fair</i> 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 | <i>Weak</i> 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

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The board of management commits to implementing the recommendations from this inspection report. A systematic review of the findings and recommendations will be the focus of the Board work.

The Board welcomes the findings of a positive learning environment with a broad and balanced curriculum. The existence of good SSE processes will be a foundation for ongoing school development and improvement.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

Having listened to the feedback of the Inspectors and received the WSE–MLL report the Board of Management and senior management have begun to address recommendations and finding reported.

- Child Protection. The Board have always placed on the agenda an oversight report. The Board have always been made aware of any issues that arise between meetings. Following training for the DDP and advice from PDST, the new form of report has been in place and recorded in the minutes since April 2018. An RSE co-ordinator and committee have been established and training is being accessed by all teachers involved in this area.
- Training. The Board are accessing training by our management body the ACCS.
- Oversight. Teaching and learning is now a fixed agenda item under the Principals report for each Board of Management meeting and the Board have committed to enhance a school vision of personal, social and educational excellence in relation to improving student attainment and setting priorities for improving teaching and learning .The Board have committed to increasing its oversight role.
- Data collected from previous State Examinations will form the basis of a review of student attainment levels and for setting targets to increase level of participation at higher levels. This data will be discussed and reviewed by the Board, senior management team and staff.
- The board is extending the distributed leadership capacity in the school with introduction of the new posts of responsibility. A review of the needs and priorities has taken place and will form the basis for this process.
- The Board has committed to ensuring that the allocation for SEN students is fully used for the intended purpose. A review of the SEN provision model will take place.
- Senior management have already begun a systematic procedure for fully integrating AfL and Homework Strategies, including written formative feedback by all subject departments. Targets and goals have been set for 2018/19 school year and formal feedback procedures will be implemented.
- A digital strategy has been agreed as the third focus for SSE in 2018/19 in addition to our Homework and AfL strategies.
- PE will be provided to all senior students in 2018/19.
- A class tutor system has been introduced for the 2018/19 school year.