

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 | Cashel Deanery |
| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Cashel Co Tipperary |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number | 19696V |

Date of inspection: 05-10-2017



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 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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

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| Dates of inspection | 05-10-2017 |
| Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with principal• 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 pupil questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal, teachers and parent and board of management representatives |

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Cashel Deanery is a co-educational, vertical primary school under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory. The school has a staff of two mainstream teachers and a newly appointed special education teacher who works in the school for 16.8 hours per week. There are currently 36 pupils enrolled in the school. Pupil attendance levels are good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupil learning is good with exemplary practice noted in the area of oral language development; the provision of enhanced literacy displays to scaffold pupil learning would further support language learning.

- Cé go bhfuil cáilíocht na foghlama sa Ghaeilge go maith ar an iomlán, tá gá anois na suímh chainte a bheith chomh chumarsáideach agus is féidir.
While the standard of pupils' learning in Irish is good overall, there is a need now to ensure that opportunities for pupil talk are as communicative as possible.
- The quality of teaching in the school is of a high standard overall; there is scope, however, to take a whole-school approach to developing provision for pupils with learning difficulties.
- The overall quality of pupils' wellbeing is of a highly commendable standard.
- The quality of school leadership is of a very high standard; however, the seeking of significant financial contributions from families should be reviewed.
- The school continues to utilise aspects of the school improvement process in managing the implementation of the *Primary Languages Curriculum* (PLC) and other school priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Greater environmental support for language learning should be provided to enhance learner outcomes.
- Tá gá breis deiseanna cumarsáide sa Ghaeilge a chruthú chun an teanga nuafhoghlamtha a dhaingniú trí athchleachtadh i gcomhthéacsanna cumarsáideacha.
There is a need to provide further communication opportunities to consolidate newly acquired language through practice in communicative contexts.
- There is a need to collaboratively review provision and practice in special education.
- The board should review current practice in relation to the significant financial contributions asked of parents.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupils' learning achievements is commendable. Pupils present as enthusiastic learners who are highly interested in their learning. Teachers are praised for the organisation of a broad range of meaningful collaborative learning opportunities. The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to support and extend pupil learning is particularly noteworthy.
- Pupil's attainment in English is good. Pupils' language skills are developed to a very high standard as a result of the cross-curricular, language-rich, learning experiences provided. Pupils take pleasure in their reading tasks and read with meaning and competence generally. Very good standards of handwriting were observed.
- Tá gnóthachtáil na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge go maith, ar an iomlán. Tá foclóir leathan ag na daltaí. Léann siad le brí agus tuiscint i gcoitinne. Is féidir le roinnt daltaí struchtúr maith a chur ar abairtí simplí. B'fhiú anois, áfach, breis deiseanna cumarsáide a chruthú chun an teanga nuafhoghlamtha a dhaingniú trí athchleachtadh i gcomhthéacsanna cumarsáideacha. *The learning achievement of pupils in Irish is good overall. Pupils have a broad vocabulary. They read with meaning and understanding in general. The majority of pupils can create simple sentences. It is now worthwhile, however, to provide further communication opportunities in order to deepen pupils' newly acquired language through practice in communicative contexts.*

- The quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics is of a very high standard. Pupils derive much enjoyment from their engagement in structured activities that emphasise the social element of learning maths. Pupils use rich mathematical dialogue when involved in whole-class and collaborative tasks. As pupils reflect on their understanding of mathematical concepts, their learning logs provide further opportunities to use language acquired in explaining and clarifying their mathematical thinking.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The quality of teaching observed during the evaluation was of a high standard overall. Teachers plan valuable, language-rich learning experiences which enable pupils develop the skills necessary for life-long learning. Bespoke curriculum plans effectively inform individual teacher planning and provide good direction to ensure the progressive development of pupil learning. At whole-school level, individual pupil attainment is carefully monitored to inform the teaching and learning process.
- The quality of teaching in English is of a good standard with exemplary practices noted in the development of oral language skills. Strategies used to develop speaker-listener relationship are having a very positive impact on pupil learning. Development of classroom environments needs to now focus on ensuring that appropriate environmental support exists to strengthen language learning outcomes. Reading for pleasure is meaningfully encouraged through use of a range of reading materials and opportunities to read for a variety of audiences. Continued monitoring of reading attainment will ensure the appropriateness of texts in progressing pupils' reading skills. The systematic development of writing skills is praiseworthy. School improvement initiatives in spellings are continuing to positively impact attainment levels for many pupils.
- Ar an iomlán, tá caighdeán maith ag baint le teagasc sa Gaeilge. Múintear ceachtanna deachéimnithe. Ghabh éifeacht ar leith leis an teagasc nuair a tugadh deiseanna do na daltaí an teanga a bhí cleachtaithe acu a úsáid chun fíorchumarsáid a dhéanamh agus a gcuid scileanna labhartha a fhorbairt trí ghrúpobair, chluichí teanga, agus obair bheirte. Cleachtann na daltaí scríbhneoireacht fheidhmiúil go rialta, tá scóip anois scríbhneoireacht chruthaitheach a fhorbairt go córasach.

Overall, the quality of teaching of Irish is of a good standard. Lessons are well structured. Where particularly effective practice was noted, opportunities were created for pupils to use the language learned in a real communicative manner and to develop their thinking skills through language games, group and pair work. Pupils practise functional writing regularly and there is now scope to systematically develop their creative writing.

- The quality of teaching in Mathematics ranges from good to very good. Purposeful opportunities are provided for pupils to use and manipulate concrete materials to deepen their conceptual understanding. Lessons are structured to ensure that pupils regularly experience maths as a social activity. As pupils progress from class to class, their understanding of number is incrementally consolidated. The provision of increasingly challenging learning activities for pupils with a strong number sense should now be considered.
- The teaching of Science is characterised by language-rich learning opportunities during which pupils are actively engaged in collaboratively broadening their scientific knowledge. Teacher questioning was observed to be particularly effective in developing pupils' higher order thinking skills.
- Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the caring and welcoming atmosphere provided throughout the school. Teachers consult with each other and outside agencies in

addressing pupils' learning needs. A range of models of support is currently being implemented. There is, however, scope to further develop provision in this area. This will involve a collaborative approach to identifying and implementing assessment and intervention strategies which align with progressing identified priority learning needs of pupils.

- The quality of assessment in the school is highly commendable. Teachers implement a variety of summative and formative assessment strategies in order to gain comprehensive insight into pupils' levels of attainment. These insights are shared with learners and are effectively motivating and empowering them to progress in their learning.

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

- The support for pupils' well-being is of an exceptionally high standard. The promotion of pupil-voice is central to the ethos of the school. Pupil responses to questionnaires administered were very positive. All pupils were of the opinion that Cashel Deanery is a good school and that their teachers listen to them and to what they have to say. The regular congregation of the school community for curricular and co-curricular activities is proving to have a very positive impact on learners' sense of belonging and identity.
- Confirmation was provided that the board of management has formally adopted the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* without modification and that the school is compliant with the requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Very significant strengths are evident in the quality of school management. Members demonstrate their dedication through engagement with capacity-building seminars. A strategic plan has been developed to guide and progress the work of the board in ensuring opportunities that exist to cyclically consider and review whole-school policies and plans. It is recommended that the board review current practice in relation to contributions asked of parents so that these are kept to a minimum, voluntary and decided upon in regular consultation with parents.
- The principal is a highly effective leader who is deeply invested in the advancement of teaching and learning in the school. She has created a culture in which all stakeholders are committed to bringing the school forward positively and constructively. The special duties teacher provides particularly valuable support in the realisation of the guiding vision for the school. All parents who responded to questionnaires issued stated that they feel that the school is well run.
- An active parents' association provides valuable support to the school and contributes meaningfully to the sense of community that permeates all aspects of school life in Cashel Deanery.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The school had engaged very effectively in the school self-evaluation (SSE) process up to April 2016. Specific literacy and numeracy improvement initiatives identified as a result of engagement with all stakeholders, have been embedded into whole-school practice. These continue to positively impact classroom practice.

- The school continues to utilise aspects of the school improvement process in addressing whole-school priorities for development. The highly effective use of action planning to facilitate the meaningful implementation of the *Primary Languages Curriculum* is particularly noteworthy.

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. Overall, learners have access to a basic level of provision. 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; |

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 of Cashel Deanery welcomes the findings in this WSE MLL. We are delighted that the report highlights the commendable learning achievements of pupils. We are proud that pupils were noted to be enthusiastic learners who are highly interested in their learning. We are pleased that the report recognises that the teaching observed was of a high standard overall. The report positively affirms that individual pupil attainment is carefully monitored to inform the teaching and learning process. Wellbeing of pupils in our school being of paramount importance was recognised. The Board concurs that very significant strengths are evident in the quality of school management.

Area 2 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 of Cashel Deanery note the recommendations made in the WSE report and plan to work towards the implementation of these.

The staff is endeavouring to replicate the exemplary practice of oral language noted in the school in enhanced literacy displays which will scaffold pupil learning.

We recognise the need to introduce further opportunities to consolidate newly acquired language by the pupils in Irish. We are fully engaging in implementation of the new Primary Language Curriculum and this will further enhance the development of this recommendation. We plan to provide meaningful activities and opportunities in which to do this.

We have made huge strides in collaboratively reviewing provision and practice in special education. With the recent changes in the Special Education Model, we are now fortunate to be a position where we finally have a special education teacher based solely with us on a temporary basis. Going forward, this will ensure more cohesive planning and provision for pupils in the support setting.

The Board of Management has reviewed current practice in relation to the financial contributions being asked of parents and changes have been made.