

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation**  
**Management, Leadership and Learning**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	S N Leitir
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Leiter Baillieborough Co. Cavan
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	18564W

**Date of inspection: 20-11-2019**



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An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Scileanna  
Department of  
Education and Skills

## **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 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

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	20-11-2019
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meetings with principal and in-school leadership team</li><li>• Meeting with representatives of the board of management</li><li>• Meeting with parent representatives</li><li>• Meeting with teachers</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Felim's National School is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kilmore. The staff includes an administrative principal, eight mainstream teachers, two special education teachers (SET) and access to an additional SET. There are 202 pupils enrolled and attendance levels are very good overall.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The quality of pupil learning is very good; pupils engage in a wide range of learning activities and enjoy their learning.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good with very high levels of planning and preparation for lessons; there is variance in the extent to which reading experiences are differentiated in accordance with pupils' abilities in both English and Irish.
- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is very good; pupils' sense of identity is nurtured in a positive learning environment.
- The quality of leadership and management is very good; the principal and in-school management team actively promote a culture of collaboration.
- Procedures for the review and development of whole-school curricular plans are very well established; in a minority of instances, aspects of whole-school plans are not fully contextualised to the school and its learners.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is very good; teachers adopt a reflective approach to the process of improvement.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- A whole-school approach should be adopted to ensure that teachers provide more consistent opportunities for pupils to engage in differentiated literacy experiences in both Irish and English to cater for pupils' varying abilities.
- Whole-school curriculum plans should place additional emphasis on the incremental development of learning content and skills in order to further guide and support teachers' classroom practice and enhance pupil learning.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of pupils' learning is very good. Pupils are motivated to learn and their overall attainment is at a very good standard. During the lessons observed, the pupils demonstrated high levels of interest and participation in their learning. Pupils could articulate their learning very well across the range of curriculum subjects.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to be active in their learning and to engage in play-based learning, increasing their autonomy and effectiveness as learners. Pupils have ample opportunities to collaborate and co-operate with each other in their learning and this was particularly praiseworthy during lessons observed in Drama and Physical Education.
- Pupils engage in a wide range of responses to poetry including recitation from memory. The pupils across all classes have regular opportunities to engage in song singing in English and Irish. Performances observed during the evaluation were very accomplished. Pupils' phonological skills are developing very well and they use a broad range of strategies to engage with text.
- Is féidir leis na daltaí páirt ghníomhach a ghlacadh ag imirt cluichí teanga i nGaeilge agus usáideann siad an teanga nua-fhoghlamtha go cumasach le linn na gceachtanna. *Pupils actively engage in language games in Irish and use the newly acquired vocabulary capably during lessons.*
- Overall the presentation of pupils' work in copybooks and on classroom displays is highly commendable. The majority of pupils have developed very high quality skills in penmanship.
- Pupils engage in a wide range of scientific experiments and they ably communicate their learning from these investigations. Theme-based approaches are very well embedded in classrooms and pupils are provided with many opportunities to participate in integrated projects of work.
- Pupils' knowledge of their local environment is of very high quality. They demonstrate keen understanding of the importance of environmental awareness and care.
- In the questionnaires distributed during the evaluation, almost all pupils agreed that they enjoy school, their lessons and learning.

### 2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching is very good. Teachers are to be highly commended for their creation of attractive and stimulating learning environments. All teachers demonstrate very effective classroom management skills. The consistent very high levels of preparedness for lessons by teachers is highly commendable; they develop pupil-centred resources and very engaging presentations to support learning. They create investigation areas and additional resources to stimulate the pupils in their learning and to foster a desire for exploration.
- Teachers deliver instruction of a very high quality which is directed at eliciting deep pupil engagement. They provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities to engage in active and collaborative learning and enable the pupils to make meaningful links between lesson content and their learning in other subject areas. They use a range of very effective questioning techniques skilfully.
- Teachers communicate new concepts and skills clearly to the pupils. They model a range of suitably challenging vocabulary and support pupils to use this language in a variety of meaningful contexts. They provide pupils with varied opportunities to explain, justify and discuss their problem-solving strategies and approaches.

- Teachers work collaboratively to develop and implement a range of very effective literacy interventions in English. During the evaluation, in a minority of instances, teachers provided reading experiences for pupils that were differentiated in accordance with their varying abilities. Possibilities exist for teachers to provide more consistent opportunities for pupils to engage in differentiated literacy experiences in both Irish and English lessons to support pupils with varying abilities.
- Teachers use a broad range of assessment strategies and analyse the information purposefully to inform teaching and learning. They share success criteria with the pupils so they can assess their own learning through self-assessment and peer assessment. Special education teachers' assessment practices are very well developed including purposeful use of diagnostic assessment where relevant.
- Teachers adopt a suitable variety of teaching methodologies to support pupils with special educational needs. Teachers' interactions with pupils are very skilful, caring and affirming. Provision in special education teaching is very closely aligned with pupils' prioritised learning needs.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELLBEING**

- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is very good.
- During the evaluation, observed interactions between teachers and pupils and between pupils and their peers were very positive and respectful.
- Teachers make worthwhile efforts to promote and facilitate pupil leadership in relevant decision-making. This is evident through a variety of initiatives including pupil involvement in caring for the environment, the promotion of physical activity and digital learning.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities to participate in a wide range of co-curricular activities and their achievements in various aspects of their learning are celebrated.
- School staff has developed many valuable links with pre-schools and post-primary schools to support pupils as they transition from one sector to the next.

### **4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

- The quality of leadership and management is very good.
- The board of management meets regularly and is very committed to supporting the ongoing professional development of teachers. The board has developed the school infrastructure to a high level. Channels of communication are very well established with meaningful opportunities for parents to contribute to their child's learning and to engage in policy development where relevant. The parents' association is very supportive of the work of the school and it communicates regularly with the board and the parent body.
- The principal, supported by the deputy principal, has fostered a collaborative culture in the school community that is focused on pupils' learning and wellbeing. In the questionnaires distributed to parents as part of the evaluation, almost all parents reported that the school is well run and they feel welcome in the school. The in-school management team (ISM) undertake a wide range of duties diligently. Team members are reflective in their approach and are very committed to leading school development.
- Procedures for the review and development of whole-school curricular plans are very well established with many recently reviewed policies providing very good guidance and support to inform teachers' classroom practice. In a minority of instances, aspects of whole-school curriculum plans are not fully contextualised to the school and its learners. Future reviews of

whole-school curriculum plans should place additional emphasis on the incremental development of learning content and skills.

- The board reported that it provides for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and is included among the standards in the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers as it can provide valuable professional benefits for student teachers and the teacher education institution.

## **5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION**

- The quality of SSE is very good. There is a systematic approach to engaging in the SSE process. There has been constructive consultation with all the relevant stakeholders.
- In previous cycles of SSE, the implementation of initiatives has been carefully tracked and monitored. The staff has prioritised key areas for development in literacy and numeracy including problem-solving in Mathematics. The systematic promotion of the writing genres in English has had a notable impact on pupils' learning and is very well embedded in teachers' practice.
- The ISM team is currently developing an improvement plan to support digital teaching and learning. Teachers are very committed to engaging in professional development. They work with colleagues to help them select and align digital technologies with effective teaching strategies to expand learning opportunities for all pupils. Teachers are in the process of evaluating, demonstrating and reflecting collaboratively on the use of digital technologies to innovate and improve their educational practice.

# **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 and is delighted that the very positive findings of the report highlight the many strengths of our school.

We are extremely proud that the report acknowledges that:

- The quality of teaching and learning is of a very good standard, whereby teachers deliver instruction of a very high quality directed at eliciting deep pupil engagement by providing pupils with a wide range of opportunities to engage in active and collaborative learning, which pupils enjoy.
- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is very good and pupils are provided with opportunities to participate in a wide range of co-curricular activities and their achievements in various aspects of their learning are celebrated.
- The quality of leadership and management is very good and that a collaborative culture that is focussed on pupils' learning and wellbeing is fostered by the school community.
- The high quality of the systematic approach to engaging in the SSE process.
- Our school meets the requirements in relation to Child Protection Procedures.

### **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 acknowledges and accepts the recommendations in the report and will support the implementation of these recommendations.

Plans to implement the recommendations are currently being addressed by the Board of Management, Principal, ISM Team and staff.

- The Principal and staff will review current practices and research best practice in relation to creating a whole school approach to ensure more consistent opportunities are provided for pupils to engage in differentiated literacy experiences in both Irish and English.
- In future reviews of our whole-school curriculum plans, we will ensure that there is additional emphasis placed on the incremental development of learning content and skills across the whole school.



## 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
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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 <b>very good</b> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;