An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Whole School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning

Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Cavan No 1 National School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Farnham Street Cavan County Cavan
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	11517B
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	19-10-2023
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	06/03/2024

What is a 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' wellbeing
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.

Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and tackle bullying

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Child Protection</td><td>Anti-bullying</td></tr>
<tr><td>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 (revised 2023).
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 (revised 2023).</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013) and this policy is reviewed annually.
2. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides a report to the board at least once a term on the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template provided in the Procedures) since the previous report to the board.
3. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils.
4. The school has appropriate initiatives in place to promote a positive and inclusive school culture and environment.
5. All teachers visited report that they have read the school's policy on anti-bullying and that they are aware of their roles and</td></tr>
</table>

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, (revised 2023). 7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE). 8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.	responsibilities in preventing and tackling bullying.

The school met the requirements in relation to checks 1 to 6 and 8 of the child protection checks. It did not meet the requirements of check 7 of the child protection checks. However, the school subsequently furnished evidence of compliance with this requirement. The school met all the requirements in relation to the anti-bullying checks above.

Whole-school evaluation – management, leadership and learning

Date of inspection	19-10-2023
Inspection activities undertaken • 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 • Pupil focus group	• Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher 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

Cavan No 1 National School is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Bishop of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh. The school has a diverse, multicultural population where different languages are experienced in the home; there are a substantial number of pupils with needs in English as an Additional Language (EAL). At the time of this evaluation, the school had three mainstream class teachers, two special education teaching posts for pupils with special educational needs (SEN), and a teacher for pupils with needs in EAL. There were 66 pupils enrolled and enrolment trends were stable.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning was very good. Pupils were motivated to learn and demonstrated very good levels of interest and participation during learning.
- The quality of teaching was very good. Teachers differentiated their teaching very effectively to address the breadth of ability within their multi-grade classrooms.
- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing was very good. Interactions between teachers and pupils were very positive and supportive during the evaluation.
- The quality of overall leadership and management was commendable, with certain areas requiring improvement.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) practices was effective.
- A very inclusive atmosphere was in evidence during the evaluation, with care taken to pay attention to the needs of individual pupils.

Recommendations

- Acknowledging the role of the board of management in supporting the operation of the school, the board's role has not been developed to an appropriate extent. Going forward, the role of the board should be developed, informed by the *Governance Manual for Primary Schools*.
- As the whole-school plan for Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) was not absolutely clear about how its mandatory aspects should be delivered on a whole-school basis, the board should make provision for the review of this policy as a matter of priority.

- As the quality of *cuntais mhíosúla* (monthly progress records) was not consistent on a whole-school basis, school leadership and teachers should ensure that a revised, shared approach is maintained for the recording of monthly progress reports going forward.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

- The quality of pupils' learning was very good. Overall attainment among the pupils was improving or at a very good standard in accordance with the outcomes and skills of the curriculum.
- The pupils experienced a broad and balanced curriculum and participated in a very extensive range of valuable co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. The quality of work on display was admirable. In questionnaire responses, all parents strongly agreed or agreed that their child was doing well at school and they all expressed satisfaction with the school.
- The quality of pupils' learning experiences in literacy and numeracy was commendable; well-prepared and well-structured experiences developed pupils' skills very successfully. Very worthwhile oral language learning activities were observed during the evaluation. In the context of the wide range of home languages present, the school was very successful in developing pupils' oral language abilities.
- Learning outcomes in lessons observed and work samples evaluated in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE), in Music, Visual Arts, and Drama were very good. Ghlac daltaí páirt go fonnmhar ina gcuid eispéiris fhoghlama sa Ghaeilge. Léirigh siad inniúlacht oiriúnach ina gcuid scileanna teanga bunúsacha. *Pupils participated enthusiastically in their learning experiences in Irish. They demonstrated suitable proficiency in their basic Irish language skills.*
- Pupils were motivated to learn and demonstrated very good levels of interest and participation during learning. They were able to work both independently and collaboratively in a purposeful and productive manner. It was evident that pupils saw themselves as learners and they demonstrated this in their positive and reflective approach to their work. Pupils displayed initiative, self-reliance, positive self- esteem and self-confidence and demonstrated positive learning dispositions actively across many subjects.
- The quality of learning outcomes and the progression of learning of pupils with additional and special educational needs was very good. A very inclusive atmosphere was evident. Pupils' engagement in lessons observed in special education settings was highly commendable. A range of support models were used including early intervention, in-class support, group and some individual withdrawal. Learner experiences for certain pupils would be further enhanced through increasing their timetabled individualised withdrawal support.

2. The quality of teaching

- The quality of teaching was very good. The teaching of certain lessons observed during this evaluation was exemplary.
- Clear explanation characterised teaching in all lessons observed. Pupils regularly and confidently contributed their opinions and experiences to class discussions. They were respectful of and interested in the opinions and experiences of others.
- Lessons were interesting, stimulating and taught with enthusiasm. In a high number of lessons, teachers made excellent use of talk and discussion. Effective discrete grade-level teaching was implemented well: best practice observed during the evaluation

emphasised content pitched carefully at appropriately challenging levels that accommodated the breadth of ability within the multi-grade classroom. Teachers' use of structured physical material in many lessons and visual resources to explain concepts constituted very effective practice.

- In the questionnaires, which the Inspectorate administered as part of the evaluation, most parents strongly agreed or agreed that teaching was good in the school. All parents strongly agreed or agreed that the school was helping their child to progress their reading and Mathematics. All pupils who completed questionnaires indicated their teacher taught them in ways that helped them to learn and helped them to improve their work.
- Teachers worked very effectively with one another and with parents to support pupils with identified learning needs. Early intervention to develop language and to support pupils with needs in EAL, was particularly commendable. Provision for pupils with needs in EAL was of a high quality and based upon appropriate diagnostic language assessments. Well-structured, effective lessons for pupils with SEN were observed, which gave suitable priority to the development of pupils' language and communication, literacy, numeracy and socialisation skills. Commendably, all teachers in support roles expressed a strong desire to remain agile and responsive in their organisation and practices to meet the different levels of need in the school.
- High-quality learning environments have been established in support teaching rooms and a good range of resources were observed in use during the evaluation. Individualised support plans outlined pupils' priority needs clearly. In a number of plans, however, targets were not specific enough and were presented more as goals or as strategies. All targets need to be measurable, specifically linked to priority needs and time-bound to best support individualised forward planning and the recording of progress.
- All teachers' practical preparation for their lessons was very commendable.

3. The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing

- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing was very good. Interactions between teachers and pupils were very positive and supportive during the evaluation.
- Almost all pupils who completed a questionnaire agreed they knew the school rules and that they knew to whom to go if they experienced bullying at school. All parents who completed a questionnaire indicated that the school was aiding their child's social and personal development.
- The positive climate established on a whole-school basis and the pleasant atmosphere in classrooms contributed significantly to the pupils' wellbeing. Teachers communicated high expectations in respect of pupils' engagement in learning and behaviour while at school.
- Pupils' questionnaire responses indicated that almost all who completed a questionnaire felt safe and cared for in school, and safe in class and in the playground most or all of the time. All indicated that they got on well with the other children in their class most or all of the time. All indicated that the adults at school treated everybody with respect all of the time.
- In their focus group with the inspector, the pupils described the school as a safe place. They also said they would welcome more guest speakers to enhance their learner experiences.

4. The quality of leadership and management

- The quality of overall leadership and management was commendable, with certain areas requiring improvement.
- The board of management was very supportive of the school community and met regularly. Its members expressed pride in the quality of the staff and of the collaboration that was well established among the teachers. However, there is scope to develop the role and operation of the board going forward and for practice and responsibilities to be better informed by the *Governance Manual for Primary Schools.* There is need for greater distinction of the responsibilities of the board from those of in-school management. The members of the incoming board of management would find it beneficial to access training that is available to support the operation of boards of management. The creation of roles on the board with devolved responsibilities should be considered.
- The principal demonstrated a very good understanding of the school context. Day-to-day operation and leadership of the school were highly commendable and duties were undertaken with care and diligence. A plan had been established for the review of protocols and policies on a cyclical basis. Very commendably, the principal, deputy principal and special-duties post holder worked collaboratively and there was a strong sense of teamwork in evidence among the teachers and staff.
- At the time of the evaluation, the whole-school plan for Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) did not contain enough clear guidance on how its mandatory aspects, Stay Safe and Relationships and Sexuality Education, should be delivered on a whole-school basis. The board should make provision for the review of this policy as a matter of priority.
- The overall quality of classroom and school displays in support of learning was very good. Pupils' work was celebrated in commendable ways.
- In a meeting with the inspector, the officers of the parents' association commended the school's attention to the needs of individual pupils, the quality of teaching in the school, the openness of the principal and staff, and its wholesome atmosphere.
- Most parents who completed a questionnaire as part of the evaluation, were of the opinion that the school was run well and that there was a good atmosphere in the school.
- Monthly progress records were maintained, but practice was inconsistent with some records referring to commercial schemes covered and other material rather than the outcomes of the curriculum. To ensure the monitoring of progress in learning, school leadership and teachers should ensure that a revised, consistent approach for the recording of monthly progress reports is maintained going forward.
- The school reported that it provided placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcomed and is included among the standards of the Teaching Council's *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers,* as it can provide valuable professional benefits for teachers, student teachers, pupils and the teacher education institution.

5. The quality of school self-evaluation

- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) practices was commendable. The school had engaged openly in the process and valuable areas for improvement were identified through discussion and analysis of information.
- The teachers demonstrated a commitment to ongoing school improvement through discussion about teaching methodologies and through reflection on their own practice.
- There is scope for the members of the in-school management team to use the SSE process actively in supporting the implementation of the *Primary Mathematics Curriculum.* More use of *Looking at Our School 2022: A Quality Framework for Primary Schools* is advocated to enhance and support this work.

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 of Cavan No 1 N.S. is pleased with this very positive WSE/MLL report. It acknowledges and affirms the dedication and commitment of the school staff, the Board of Management, the Principal, the in-school management team, the Parents' Association and the parent body of our school.

The Board is pleased that the report identifies and acknowledges the high standard of teaching and learning in our school. It also highlights and affirms the provision made for pupils with special educational needs and for those pupils that are learning English as an Additional language.

The Board is particularly pleased that the culture of respect, the positive school atmosphere and the support and care for pupils' wellbeing have been acknowledged. This was endorsed by positive feedback from parent and pupil questionnaires.

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 welcomes the recommendations contained within the report. It was recommended that the role of the Board should be developed, informed by the Governance Manual for primary Schools. We hope to develop the role and operation of the Board going forward regarding practice and responsibilities. We will also access training if available.

It was recommended that our whole school plan for SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) be made absolutely clear about how its mandatory aspects should be delivered on a whole school basis. This policy has been redrafted with clear guidance re mandatory aspects and this policy has since been reviewed and ratified by the Board.

It was recommended that all teachers use a revised and shared approach for the recording of monthly progress reports going forward. This has been adopted by all staff since WSE. The school appreciates the opportunity to implement the recommendations going forward.

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 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;