An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Cloonlyon National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Cloonlyon Charlestown County Mayo
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	12936D

Date of inspection: 26-11-2019

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 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 of the school was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.
4. The Child Safeguarding Statement meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.
5. The records of the last three board of management meetings record a child protection oversight report that meet the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2017.
6. The board of management has ensured that arrangements are in place to provide information to all school personnel on the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2017
7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE, Wellbeing).
8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

Dates of inspection	26-11-2019
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	• 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

Cloonlyon National School is a co-educational, rural school that operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Achonry. The school has a teaching principal, two other class teachers and two special education teachers (SETs). There was an enrolment of forty-seven pupils at the time of this inspection. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education for educational inclusion.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of learning is good.
- The quality of teaching is good, with outstanding provision for *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.
- There is scope for more effective use of assessment data as a basis for early intervention and for differentiated teaching.
- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is very good, with very positive pupil-teacher relationships and care for pupils observed.
- The quality of leadership and management is good; the roles of deputy and assistant principals have not been reviewed in accordance with Department of Education Circular 0044/ 2019.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is good; the school plan does not provide sufficient guidance for classroom planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The principal and teachers should agree and implement whole-school approaches to the differentiation of learner experiences for particular individuals and groups, including those requiring early intervention, on the basis of available assessment data.
- The school should review the responsibilities of holders of promoted posts in accordance with Department of Education Circular 0044/ 2019.
- The school plan should be revised with a view to providing more useful guidance regarding the content of class programmes.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of learning is good. The relationships observed were extremely positive. The pupils were very engaged in their learning and they discussed their learning with confidence.
- Labhraíonn na daltaí agus na múinteoirí Gaeilge go neamhfhoirmiúil i rith an lae agus déanann siad a ndícheall chun Gaeilge a chur chun cinn. Bíonn na daltaí sna hardranganna in ann ábhar an cheachta a phlé as a stuaim féin. Labhraíonn na daltaí sna ranganna go léir Gaeilge le spraoi. *Pupils and teachers speak Irish informally throughout the day and make every effort to promote Irish. Pupils in the senior classes are able to use the language taught independently. There is evidence that pupils in all classes enjoy speaking Irish.*
- During English reading, pupils participate in activities that promote fluency and self-correction such as echo reading, choral reading and paired reading. Written work is of a high standard and well presented, and the pupils demonstrate good ownership of their learning in their oral preparation of chosen topics.
- It is evident from the lessons observed and from interactions with pupils that learner outcomes in Mathematics are generally of a high standard. The use of mathematical games has developed the pupils' computational skills. Mathematical language is taught discretely. Pupils have opportunities to use manipulatives and examples from their environment to enhance their understanding of concepts.
- The pupils' learning in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) is developed through activities in the local environment and the use of artefacts, photos, documents, maps and digital technology.
- The pupils develop very good levels of musical literacy in their tin-whistle playing. Learning in Visual Arts is supported by the inputs of local artists and the school's involvement in teacher-artist partnerships through the Creative Ireland programme.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The quality of teaching is good. There is good planning and recording by individual teachers. The school has a culture of collaboration. Good practice and resources from continuing professional development (CPD) are shared consistently. The learning environments provided are print rich and stimulating. Pupils' work from all areas of the curriculum are celebrated. Group work is used extensively and there are frequent opportunities for discussion.
- The provision for *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is outstanding. The dedicated *Aistear* areas remain open and in use during the day and the Aistear theme and language are reinforced consistently through teaching in other curricular areas.
- Team teaching is used effectively in Mathematics and very effectively in English. However, this good practice is not evident in all classrooms. In the provision of supplementary teaching, the school is over-reliant on withdrawing pupils, and in-class support is not used as effectively as it should. The school should place a greater emphasis on in-class support in the provision of supplementary teaching for pupils with additional needs.
- Teachers' practice shows a commendable emphasis on the development of curricular skills, particularly in Physical Education and History. In English, comprehension skills and writing genres are taught discretely. Some teachers use manipulatives to support the understanding of mathematical language and concepts. However, this practice is not implemented consistently throughout the school. The teaching of subject-specific language is good in all classes.

- The quality of assessment is satisfactory. The use of teacher observation is good and provides a basis for positive and beneficial feedback to pupils. The school uses the results of standardised attainment tests to inform its DEIS action plan, to determine its teaching resources and to track and monitor pupil and class progress. There is scope for improvement in how assessment data is used to inform the differentiation of learner experiences for particular individuals or groups. Teachers should revise how formal diagnostic testing is used to support early intervention. The principal and teachers should agree and implement whole-school approaches to the differentiation of learner experiences for particular individuals and groups, including those requiring early intervention, on the basis of available assessment data.

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

- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is very good. Responses to pupil questionnaires show great positivity towards the school. Care for the pupils is very evident and pupil voice is acknowledged through meaningful consultation. The widespread use of group work is effective and the openness with which teachers encourage the pupils to reflect on their learning is commendable.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management is good. The board of management is highly supportive of the school. The principal oversees the preparation and implementation of the DEIS action plan as well as initiatives in relation to literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. The in-school management team contributes significantly to school development. The school should review the responsibilities of holders of promoted posts in accordance with Department of Education Circular 0044/ 2019.
- There is evidence of very good communication and collaboration throughout this school community. Parents are consulted over policy development and the school maintains very effective links with outside agencies and with post-primary schools. Requests from initial teacher education placement programmes are facilitated.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is good. The school engages meaningfully in the SSE process within the context of the DEIS action plan and reviews its implementation regularly. The teachers are very committed to school improvement. Their engagement in SSE has led to developments such as *Aistear,* thematic work in SESE, the use of comprehension strategies in spoken Irish and in English poetry and the use of *Literacy Lift-off*. Parents are involved in the SSE process and are kept informed of developments.
- The school plan does not provide sufficient guidance with regard to teachers' individual long-term planning. As a consequence, teachers in some instances are overly reliant on the pupils' textbooks for the content and sequence of class programmes. The school plan should be revised with a view to providing more useful guidance regarding the content of class programmes.

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 is very encouraged by the many positive findings in the report. In particular, the board is delighted with the finding in relation to pupils' well-being, with very positive pupil-teacher relationships and care for pupils observed. The board is also pleased that the report highlights the outstanding provision for *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* within the school.

The board greatly welcomes the report and views it as a valuable resource in identifying strengths of the school, as well as identifying areas for growth and development into the future.

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 welcomes and acknowledges the recommendations in the report and fully supports the implementation of these recommendations.

The school's assessment policy is currently under review with a view to consolidating and improving the implementation of a whole-school approach to learner experiences throughout the school. Particular focus will be given to a more targeted use of diagnostic testing to support early intervention strategies.

The responsibilities of holders of promoted posts have been reviewed in accordance with Department of Education and Skills Circular 0044/2019 and these responsibilities will be reviewed with the principal annually in June of each year.

A timetable has been drawn up to review the content of curricular areas with the aim of providing more useful guidance regarding the content of class programmes.

THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum, which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the of quality the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	***Very good*** applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is ***outstanding*** and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	***Good*** applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a *very good* standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	***Satisfactory*** applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	***Fair*** applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	***Weak*** applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;