An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Coolick National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Coolick Kilcummin Killarney
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	10014Q

Date of Evaluation: 06-02-2017

AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS AGUS SCILEANNA | DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS

WHAT IS A WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION: MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING?

Whole-School Evaluations – Management, Leadership and Learning report on the quality of teaching and learning and on the quality of management and leadership in a school. They affirm good practice and make 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:

1. Teaching and learning
2. Support for pupils' wellbeing
3. School leadership and management

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; a response was not received from the board.

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	10-02-2017
Inspection activities undertaken • Meeting with principal and deputy principal • Meeting with chairperson of the board of management • Meeting with parent representatives • Meeting with teachers • Review of relevant documents	• Analysis of parent and pupil questionnaires • Observation of teaching and learning • Examination of pupils' work • Interaction with pupils • Feedback to senior management team and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Coolick National School is a rural, co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kerry. It is situated nine kilometres north of Killarney in County Kerry. There are 102 pupils on roll and attendance levels are very good. The school has four mainstream class teachers and two special education teachers, both of whom are shared with schools in the locality.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The board of management, the principal and teachers fulfil their duties in a very conscientious manner.
- In general, high levels of pupil attainment are achieved in literacy and numeracy, with scope for further developing creative writing in Irish.
- Teaching and learning is good with some very good practice observed; there is scope to further develop the school planning and assessment processes in mainstream and special education settings.
- The school promotes a caring ethos and respectful relationships between teachers and pupils were evident during the evaluation.
- A very positive relationship exists between the school, the parents' association and the general parent body.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To further develop teaching throughout the school, links should be developed between whole-school curricular planning and classroom planning to facilitate less reliance on textbooks to guide curriculum implementation.
- In special education settings, more specific learning targets should be developed and the monitoring and recording of pupils' progress should be reviewed.
- A whole-school approach to assessment should be developed to ensure greater consistency throughout the school.
- Sa Ghaeilge, moltar béim sa bhreis a dhíriú ar scríbhneoireacht neamhspleách, chruthaitheach. *In Irish, greater attention should be given to the development of independent and creative writing skills.*

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS OF PUPILS

- In general, high standards of pupil attainment are achieved across a range of subjects, and particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy. Stimulating learning environments are created throughout the school. During the evaluation, the classroom atmospheres observed were positive, task orientated and conducive to learning. Pupils have opportunities to engage in a wide range of learning experiences and apply themselves well to their tasks. They demonstrate a good ability to work collaboratively and independently.

- Sa Ghaeilge, cuirtear an béim ar leathnú foclóra agus labhraíonn na daltaí le muinín. Tá stór breá rannta, dánta agus amhráin ar eolas acu, rud a chuireann lena bhfoghraíocht agus rithim na teanga. Tá scileanna éisteachta agus tuisceana na ndaltaí go han mhaith agus léann siad na téacsleabhair le brí agus le tuiscint. Moltar béim sa bhreis a dhíriú ar scríbhneoireacht chruthaitheach sna h-ardranganna. *In Irish, there is a significant emphasis on vocabulary development and pupils speak confidently. They have a variety of poems and songs which contribute to pronunciation and rhythm when using the language. The pupils' comprehension skills are very good and they read with fluency and expression*. *It is recommended that greater attention be given to the development of creative writing skills.*

- Pupil achievement in Mathematics is very good and standardised assessment data indicate that pupils are performing very well. They demonstrate high levels of understanding of key concepts in Mathematics and an ability to apply mathematical processes to a range of real-life contexts and scenarios. There is a clear, structured approach to teaching using concrete manipulatives and a variety of active learning methodologies. There are opportunities to extend the use of the school environment to enhance mathematical understanding.

- In English, the overall quality of pupil attainment is high. Pupils were observed to be very confident in their use of oral and written expression. A number of initiatives, including *Aistear*, contribute positively to pupils' experiences in this area. In general, very good reading standards were noted. Samples of pupils' writing across a variety of genres ranged from good to very good.

- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) receiving support teaching engage actively in their lessons and are progressing commensurate with their abilities

2. QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching in the school during the evaluation was high. Teachers utilise a wide range of resources and methodologies to create stimulating and challenging lessons. Project work is a feature of provision in many classrooms. Teachers prepare long and short-term plans and approach their work in an organised manner with a clear focus on learning outcomes. To further develop teaching throughout the school, it is recommended that links be developed between whole-school curricular planning and classroom planning to facilitate less reliance on textbooks to guide curriculum implementation.

- Teachers in SEN settings develop individual education plans (IEPs) for all pupils in receipt of support. Pupils' strengths, needs and learning targets are identified in many IEPs. In some instances, targets are too general and the development of more specific targets is recommended. Reviewing the approach to tracking and monitoring pupils' progress is also

recommended. A good range of models of support are implemented which include withdrawal of individual pupils, small group tuition and some in-class support. An ongoing review of the impact of in-class station teaching approaches on pupil learning outcomes is also recommended.

- Pupils' progress is assessed regularly using standardised tests in literacy and numeracy, teacher-designed and commercially-produced tests and tasks and some generic checklists. To ensure greater consistency throughout all classes, it is recommended that a whole-school approach to assessment be adopted. Furthermore, while pupils' work in copies and workbooks is monitored, extending the use of positive constructive feedback would be beneficial.

3. SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELL-BEING

- There is a very high level of care for pupils in this school and a positive atmosphere permeates school life. Respectful pupil-pupil and pupil-teacher relationships were observed in all classes. Pupils are very well behaved and courteous. An appropriate code of behaviour and anti-bullying policy are implemented. Responses to questionnaires administered as part of the evaluation indicate that the majority of pupils are very positive about their school. A discussion with pupils regarding their attitudes to reading and Mathematics is advised with a view to exploring pupils' perceptions of their own competence and abilities in these subjects.

- Very positive home-school relationships were in evidence during the evaluation. The school is very welcoming and some parents assist with various initiatives in classrooms. The parents' association actively supports the work of the school through the organisation of events and the provision of additional resources to enhance the pupils' educational experience. In response to questionnaires administered during the evaluation, parents expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the school.

- 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. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management in this school is very good. The board of management is very supportive of the school. It has been instrumental in the provision of high quality facilities and resources for the school community. The board is properly constituted and meetings are convened on a regular basis. Minutes are maintained and all accounts are certified annually in accordance with Section 18 of the Education Act 1998. It is recommended that an account of income and expenditure be provided at each board meeting. In addition, the board should provide the wider school community with an account of its work on an annual basis.

- The principal is highly conscientious and very committed to the school and to the achievement of high standards. She is ably supported by the deputy principal who attends to a wide range of duties in a conscientious manner. Together they play a key role in building a vibrant learning community and promoting a very good level of pastoral care.

5. SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The school has actively engaged in the school self-evaluation process. Areas for improvement have been clearly identified in literacy and numeracy. There is evidence that the work on 'listening and speaking' in oral language is impacting positively on pupils' learning outcomes.

- This is a vibrant reflective school community which demonstrates a strong commitment to continuous improvement in the educational provision for the pupils in its care.

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 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;