An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Whole School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning
Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil an Spioraid Naomh (Boys)
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Bishopstown Cork
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	20077A
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	25/01/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	22/04/2024

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 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' 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 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.

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).
6. The board of management has ensured that arrangements are in place to provide information to all school personnel on the</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) or Bí Cineálta (2024) and this policy is reviewed annually.
2. The school's current anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils.
3. The school has appropriate initiatives in place to promote a positive and inclusive school culture and environment in line with their current policy.
4. All teachers visited report that they have read the school's current policy on anti-bullying and that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities in preventing and tackling bullying.</td></tr>
</table>

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.	

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

Whole-school evaluation – management, leadership and learning

Date of inspection	25/01/2024
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

Scoil an Spioraid Naomh is an all-boys primary school located in Bishopstown, Cork. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross. At the time of the evaluation, 394 pupils were enrolled in the school. It had a staffing of an administrative principal, sixteen mainstream class teacher posts, and eight special education teaching posts, one of which was shared with another school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning was good overall with some very good lessons observed. Pupils presented as articulate and confident learners.
- The overall quality of teaching in mainstream and special education settings was good with some very good practice noted.
- Support for pupils' wellbeing was of an exceptionally high standard. The school had an open, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere.
- Overall the quality of leadership and management was highly commendable.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) was exemplary; engagement in the SSE process had created a responsive school culture in which the emerging needs of the pupils were prioritised.

Recommendations

- Teachers should ensure that learner-centred approaches and strategies are consistently used to foster pupils' engagement and to challenge learners. This should include a whole-school approach to the development and enhancement of skills such as critical and digital literacy.
- Teachers should extend the assessment approaches currently used for literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and further develop pupil self and peer-assessment strategies.
- Teachers should begin to collaboratively implement early intervention initiatives for Mathematics on a phased basis.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

- The overall quality of pupils learning was good with some very good lessons observed. Pupils presented as articulate and confident learners. They engaged well in learning activities and they were motivated to learn. Interactions among pupils and between pupils and teachers were respectful and conducive to wellbeing.
- Playful and engaging learning approaches including *Aistear* were used to very good effect to enhance language development in the junior classes. The pupils used thematic vocabulary and phrases and this supported them in making meaningful connections in their learning across the curriculum and to real-life experiences. The junior classes recited rhymes and poems enthusiastically and the senior classes competently presented oral reports. Overall, the pupils read with good fluency and expression. A guided reading initiative was in place to support pupils' development as readers and this was effectively monitored. Pupils' writing was displayed in the classrooms and in the school environment. While the school had commendably invested in library books, it is advised that a broader range of reading genres be added, including books written in Irish.
- Pupils demonstrated a positive attitude to Mathematics. Effective use of relevant mathematics resources supported pupils during learning activities. Pupils' mathematical vocabulary was suitably extended and they employed a range of mathematical strategies. In examples of highly effective practice, the pupils had opportunities to explain their reasoning in response to problem-solving tasks and this good practice should be extended across the school. Commendably, some teachers had commenced training in *Mata sa Rang*. It is recommended that teachers begin to collaboratively implement early intervention initiatives in Mathematics on a phased basis.
- Sna ranganna inar breathnaíodh múineadh na Gaeilge, chothaigh na múinteoirí meon dearfach i leith na Gaeilge. Ar an iomlán, bhí na daltaí in ann rannta agus dánta a rá le brí agus le fonn. Ba chóir an cur chuige cumarsáideach a úsáid go leanúnach i ngach rang chun scileanna teanga na ndaltaí a fhorbairt agus a threisiú. Ba chóir úsáid shóisialta na teanga lasmuigh de na ceachtanna Gaeilge a chur chun cinn ar fud na scoile. *In the classes where the teaching of Irish was observed, the teachers promoted a positive attitude to Irish. In some classes the pupils recited rhymes and poems with meaning and enthusiasm. The communicative approach should be used on an ongoing basis to enable pupils to develop and strengthen their language skills. The social use of the language outside of Irish lessons should be promoted throughout the school.*
- In Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) the quality of both engagement and outcomes in learning was very good. Pupils participated in valuable project work and in some SESE lessons observed, high levels of active collaboration were noted. These practices should be extended across the school and the pupils should be encouraged towards further involvement in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)-related activities and skill development.
- Pupils enjoyed collective, creative exploration in Arts Education lessons. The middle classes were developing a sense of pulse in Music and achievement in Visual Arts was celebrated in classrooms and in the corridors. A thematic approach to learning was observed in senior classes where pupils explored History through Drama, Visual Arts and English.

2. The quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching across mainstream and special education settings was good with some very good practice noted. Where very good practice was observed, lessons were well structured with a strong focus on pupil-centred approaches. Pupils were active and demonstrated ownership of their learning.

- Teachers employed a range of methodologies to capture pupils' interest and maintain their engagement. Approaches used included whole-class discussion, station teaching, pair and group work, story, and direct teaching.
- Classroom environments were positive and good quality displays supported pupils' learning. Teachers' recorded preparation and classroom management were very effective. Pupils responded well to their teachers based on affirming and respectful relationships.
- Teachers should ensure that learner-centred approaches and strategies are consistently used to foster children's engagement and to challenge learners.This should include a whole-school approach to the development and enhancement of skills such as critical and digital literacy.
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) were successfully supported through a combination of in-class and withdrawal teaching. Recorded preparation referenced the learning outcomes of the Primary Language Curriculum (PLC). Use of the PLC Progression Continua would further inform the specificity of targets to support pupils' learning.
- Teachers demonstrated effective assessment practices in literacy and numeracy. It is recommended that these assessment approaches be extended across the curriculum in written and digital formats. To further develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for their learning, pupils should be encouraged to reflect on and identify their progress through self and peer-assessment strategies.

3. The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing

- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing was of an exceptionally high standard. The school had an open, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. All staff were aware of pupils' needs and supported their wellbeing. Programmes such as *Fun Friends* and *Friends for Life* were being implemented in the school.
- In responses to the pupil surveys, almost all pupils said that they have learned about bullying and that clear rules were in place in the school.
- The school culture where respect, inclusion, care and diversity was promoted provided strong support for pupils' wellbeing. All parents who responded to a survey conducted as part of the evaluation said that their child felt safe and looked after in the school.
- The school provided leadership opportunities for pupils through the students' council and the Green Schools Committee; this enhanced the role of pupil voice in school life and supported preparation for lifelong learning.
- In the pupil focus group discussion, pupils spoke very highly of their school and they had a strong sense of belonging to Scoil an Spioraid Naomh. They described their enjoyment of sport and partaking in quizzes. They reported their specific interest in project work, chess, and the student council.

4. The quality of leadership and management

- Overall the quality of leadership and management was highly commendable, with some exemplary practices observed.
- The school had a committed and dedicated board of management, which met regularly and played an active role in developing the school community.
- The principal led the school community very successfully and demonstrated exemplary practices in regards to managing the organisation. He practised clear communication skills with all members of the school community and effectively modelled respectful relationships. He communicated a coherent vision for the school, was dedicated to school improvement, and demonstrated highly commendable leadership skills.
- The in-school leadership team worked diligently and ably assisted the principal. They had responsibility across a range of areas and developed these successfully. There was evidence of collaboration with all staff to improve pupil learning, and teachers shared

their new learning and expertise with one another. Continued engagement with this good practice is encouraged.

- The parents' association provided valuable support to the school with their work positively enhancing the learning experiences of the pupils.
- The school regularly provides 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 teacher education institutions.

5. The quality of school self-evaluation

- School self-evaluation (SSE) was of an exemplary quality with very significant strengths. The six-step process of SSE was embedded in the school and all members of the school community had a voice in and an awareness of the school improvement plan. The school's strategic engagement in the SSE process had created a responsive school culture in which the emerging needs of the pupils were considered to be of most importance. At the time of the evaluation SSE was focused on specified aspects of four areas: numeracy, literacy, digital learning and wellbeing. This work was successfully led by members of the in-school leadership team.

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	Examples of descriptive terms
Excellent	**Provision that is excellent** is exemplary in meeting the needs of learners. This provision provides an example for other schools and settings of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Excellent; exemplary; outstanding; exceptionally high standard; with very significant strengths
Very good	**Provision that is very good** is very effective in meeting the needs of learners and is of a very high standard. There is potential to build on existing strengths to achieve an excellent standard.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful
Good	**Provision that is good** is effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to build on existing strengths in order to address the aspects to be developed and achieve a very good standard.	Good; of good quality; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; strengths outweigh the shortcomings; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist
Requires improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard** is not sufficiently effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is good or better.	Fair; less than effective; less than sufficient; evident weaknesses that are impacting on learning; experiencing difficulty; shortcomings outweigh strengths; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard** is not meeting the needs of learners. There is immediate need for significant action to address the areas of concern.	Weak; poor; ineffective; insufficient; unacceptable; experiencing significant difficulties; serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated; requiring significant change, development and improvement to be effective

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 Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh (B) welcomes this affirming report and notes the many positives highlighted within it. We are very pleased that staff collaboration is recognised as fostering a positive school culture which encourages respectful interactions at all levels of the school community.

Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

We will prioritise the development of whole school approaches to assessment to monitor pupils' learning across the curriculum.

We have already commenced nuanced early interventions in our junior classes in relation to teaching and learning in Mathematics.

We will support the professional development of our staff in the promotion of pupil centred learning in the areas of digital and critical literacy.

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