An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Whole School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning

Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	S.N. Naomh Ailbhe
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Geevagh Via Boyle Co. Roscommon
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	20575Q
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	22/02/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	15/05/2024

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 on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

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>
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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 checks 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 of the child protection checks. It did not meet the requirements of check 5 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	22/02/2024
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 Náisiúnta Naomh Ailbhe is a co-educational primary school located in Geevagh, Co. Sligo. The school is a recent amalagation of Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Pádraig, Geevagh and SN Naomh Sheosaimh, Kilmactranny. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Elphin. It had a teaching principal functioning in a concessionary post, four mainstream class teachers, two special education teachers (SETs) based in the school and two special needs assistants (SNAs) working in the school. It also had the services of three part-time SETs at the time of the evaluation. There were 92 pupils enrolled in the school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- Overall, learning was of a very good quality; pupils displayed very positive dispositions to learning.
- Teaching was of a very high standard overall; teachers were affirming, supportive and respectful of pupils in lessons observed.
- Overall, support for pupil wellbeing was of a very high quality.
- Overall, the quality of school leadership and management was very good.
- The quality of SSE was good overall.

Recommendations

- The in-school management team should develop a strategic plan for the development of whole-school curricular policies.
- The in-school management team should provide regular opportunities for parents and pupils to have input into the systematic development and review of school policy and school self-evaluation (SSE).
- The in-school management team should update the school's communication platform to support more meaningful communication with the parent body and the wider school community.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

- Overall, learning was of a very good quality. Pupils displayed very positive dispositions to learn, were highly motivated and engaged consistently in the learning activities. They

eagerly answered questions and were willing to share their learning when recalling previous learning experiences.

- In surveys administered as part of the evaluation, almost all pupils agreed that their teachers listened to them and taught them in ways that helped them to learn. In surveys administered to parents, almost all parents agreed that the teaching was good and that their child was doing well in the school.
- During a meeting with a focus group of pupils in the senior classes, pupils spoke very positively about their experience of the school.They described their enjoyment of participating in a range of activities including projects, trips and the use of digital technologies.
- During the focus group, pupils spoke positively of their enjoyment of reading. Across the school pupils were given regular opportunities to read high quality material. Approaches such as book club enabled them to develop their understanding and capacity to discuss book preferences. High quality samples of the writing genres were displayed.
- Sna ceachtanna Gaeilge, léigh na páistí sna hardranganna go líofa agus le foghraíocht cruinn. Bhí leibhéal maith tuisceana agus stór focal cuí ag go leor daltaí. Bhí na daltaí in ann abairtí simplí a úsáid i réimse aimsir. Sna ceachtanna Gaeilge a breatnaíodh, bhí na daltaí muiníneach ag labhairt le chéile. *In the senior classes, pupils read fluently and with good pronounciation in Irish lessons. They demonstrated a good level of understanding and many pupils demonstrated a good vocabulary. Pupils were able to make simple sentences in a different tenses. In Irish lessons observed, pupils were confident in speaking with each other.*
- Pupils in the junior classes were supported in their learning through the thematic implementation of *Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and experienced choice and voice in their participation.
- Pupils used concrete materials effectively to support them as they explored new mathematical topics. Pupils' attitudes to Mathematics were positive overall, and levels of achievement in this area were very good.
- In the lessons observed, pupils had frequent opportunities to work independently and some high quality group work was observed. Where learner experiences were most effective, there was a very appropriate balance of teacher-led input and pupil participation.
- Pupils engaged productively in a range of project work and practical activities in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE), which was displayed in classrooms. The celebration of local history was a notable feature of the school and a range of guest speakers have visited the school to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. Overall, pupils' learning was enriched through engagement in a broad range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

2. The quality of teaching

- Overall teaching was of a very high quality. In all lessons observed, teachers were supportive and respectful of pupils. Very good classroom management skills were in evidence and pupils' behaviour was exemplary. Learning environments were bright, stimulating and well organised.
- Teachers' visible and recorded preparation was highly effective and reflected their knowledge of the curriculum and pedagogy. They prepared a range of meaningful learning activities that supported pupils' learning. Teachers communicated high expectations to pupils and lessons were highly structured and purposeful.
- Teachers provided a broad and balanced curriculum for their pupils. They also provided pupils with a wide range of stimulating learning experiences that extended beyond the classroom. School trips to support experiential learning were notable.
- Support was delivered primarily by withdrawal to small groups and to individual pupils. The continuum of support was used effectively to identify and support pupils learning across the school. School support plans were in place that described appropriate

learning targets. It is recommended that the school significantly increases its model of in-class support.
- Assessment practices were effective overall. Approaches utilised included checklists, teacher designed tests and teacher observation to assess pupil progress. Standardised tests were analysed in order to track and monitor pupil progress. Teachers maintained assessment records that were clear, useful and easy to interpret. Pupils were beginning to develop self-assessment skills.

3. The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing

- Overall, support for pupil wellbeing was of a very high quality. Across the school, a safe and nurturing environment was established in which pupils' individuality and creativity was affirmed. Pupils' sense of identity and belonging were carefully fostered in the school and pupil achievement was celebrated. The school has put in place a number of initiatives to support wellbeing.
- The outside spaces in the school were attractive and provided pupils with opportunities to engage in a range of activities. There were buddy benches in place to promote inclusion.
- Overall, pupils were exemplary in their attitudes and their dispositions to learning. Almost all parents agreed that there was a good atmosphere in the school and that they felt welcome in in the school.
- Teachers and leaders implemented a wide range of activities to enhance pupils' wellbeing. Pupils participated in a range of individual and team sports. Each pupil had the chance to be a team captain at some stage in primary school, providing them with the opportunity develop leadership skills.
- The school choir provided pupils with the opportunity to develop the confidence in performing for an audience. The school also placed a strong emphasis on dramatic performance and the development of pupils' imaginative and communication skills. Overall, the entire staff demonstrated a strong commitment to nurturing the pupils' holistic development. To continue developing pupil voice and sense of responsibility, it is recommended that the school re-establish the student council.

5. The quality of leadership and management

- Overall, the quality of school leadership and management was very good. The newly formed board of management was very supportive of the school. Members of the board gave willingly of their time to support the school and took their role in governance very seriously. They communicated a clear guiding vision for the school. As the school continues to develop, the school should draft a policy on staff rotation.
- The school was maintained to a high standard. High quality outdoor facilities were provided for pupils, including a basketball court and gymnastic equipment. The school recently fundraised to extend the footpath to provide access to a community astroturf pitch.
- The principal demonstrated excellent skills in cultivating a very positive school climate. He fostered a culture of collaboration among staff and had developed a set of action plans to drive forward key school priorities, both administrative and curricular. Staff used meetings very effectively to reflect on and change practice. In-school management had put structures in place to ensure meetings were purposeful and focused. However, while staff developed aspects of curriculum collaboratively, it is timely to develop curriculum leadership further. Procedures for the systematic review and development of whole-school curricular policies should be established.
- In parent surveys, most parents agreed that they were informed of key aspects of school life. However, a minority of parents were unsure of some aspects of school practice. To

support greater and more meaningful communication with the parent body, the board of management should update its communications platform.

- The principal and in-school management team had maintained very effective relationships with local early years' settings and post-primary schools to support pupil transitions as they commenced and concluded their primary education.
- The school reported that it regularly provided placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome.

5. The quality of school self-evaluation

- Overall the quality of SSE was good. The implementation of a whole-school approach to cursive handwriting from a previous application of SSE was impacting learning positively. The focus at the time of the evaluation was on Wellbeing and Gaeilge. As part of the SSE process, the school gathered evidence from parents and pupils and developed a number of key actions deriving from this information. To maximise the impact of SSE, the School Improvement Plan should be summarised and shared with wider school community.
- While parent and pupils were included in the SSE process through the use of questionnaires, parental and pupil engagement into policy development was limited. Therefore the school should develop structures for parents and pupils to have input into the systematic development and review of school policy on an ongoing basis.

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; approp riate 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