An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Child Protection and Safeguarding Initial Inspection Report

INITIAL REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	St Farnan's Post Primary School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Prosperous Co. Kildare
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	70720G
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	16/01/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	15/05/2024

What is a child protection and safeguarding inspection?

A Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection (CPSI) is a focused inspection of the implementation of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools (revised 2023)*. These procedures provide direction and guidance to school authorities and to school personnel in relation to meeting their statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015. They also provide direction and guidance in relation to the continued implementation of the best practice, non-statutory guidance set out in Children First National Guidance 2017. The CPSI inspection model examines the implementation of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools (revised 2023)* in schools through conduction ten checks based on the procedures.

The CPSI inspection process consists of two inspections: an **Initial Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection** and a **Final Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection**. The two inspections are typically carried out in a school within a relatively short timeframe. This is a report on an Initial Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection.

What happens during an initial child protection and safeguarding inspection?

During an initial CPSI, inspectors:

- Engage with learners about their learning in Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)
- Invite all parents to complete an online parent survey that explores issues relevant to school climate and parents' awareness of the school's child protection procedures, including the school's anti-bullying procedures
- Hold meetings with:
    - Designated Liaison Person (DLP) / Deputy DLP
    - Chairperson of board of management
    - A sample of school personnel
    - The SPHE coordinator
- Review the following documents:
    - Board of management minutes
    - Child safeguarding statement and risk assessment
    - Relevant school plans
    - The school's IT Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
- Review child protection records, where these have been created.

How to read this report

The checks conducted during this inspection are based on the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023).*

The first section of the report indicates the extent to which the school was compliant with each of the checks conducted by indicating, in respect of each of the stated checks, whether the school was:

- Fully compliant
- Substantially compliant
- Partially compliant
- Not compliant

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.

Some of the checks may not be relevant to a particular school, for example a school that has never had a concern in relation to child protection will not have any child protection records. In such cases, the report indicates that the check does not apply to the school by stating *Not Applicable* after that particular check.

It should be noted that the term 'school personnel' as referred to in this inspection report is used as a generic term to cover all adults who are involved in the operation of the school. It covers employees and voluntary workers and includes parent association members when they are working in the school. These personnel include, for example, teachers, special needs assistants, caretakers, secretaries, cleaners, voluntary workers in the school, paid or voluntary tutors, and parent association members helping with aspects of the work of the school.

Where a school is less than fully compliant with a particular requirement, the report provides some additional evaluative comment on the check. It also advises actions that the school should take in order to comply more fully with the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*.

The report also provides an evaluative comment on the school's planning for and implementation of the Social Personal and Health Education curriculum and the Stay Safe programme / Relationships and Sexuality Education programme as evident during the inspection. In providing this overview, reference is made to the appropriate quality level of the Inspectorate's Quality Continuum:

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Requires improvement to achieve a good standard
- Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard

A *Guide to Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections* was published on the website of the Department of Education in January 2019 and can be accessed at www.gov.ie. This Guide details how CPSIs are carried out and also provides the framework used by inspectors in arriving at judgements about a school's compliance with the aspects of the *Child Protection Procedures (revised 2023)* that are checked during the inspection.

Child protection and safeguarding inspection report

The checks detailed below derive from the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*. These procedures are designed to ensure that schools provide a safe and secure environment for all our children and through appropriate curriculum provision, provide for the incremental development of the life skills that will empower students to keep themselves safe.

In order to meet these aims, the procedures set out a number of requirements on schools relating to communicating with members of the school community about child protection matters; training of school personnel and board members in respect of child protection; reporting about child protection to the board of management; and fulfilling certain reporting and record keeping obligations in relation to child protection matters. They also detail the mandatory aspects of the curriculum that are designed to develop students' knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours through Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme.
Responsibility for ensuring the school is fully compliant with these checks rests with the board of management. The Inspectorate will monitor the board's progress in achieving full compliance.

Aspects of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)* checked	**Fully Compliant Substantially Compliant Partially Compliant Not compliant Not applicable**
1. The school had communicated the required aspects of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)* to relevant stakeholders.	**Fully Compliant**
2. A Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and a deputy DLP have been appointed in line with the requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*.	**Fully Compliant**
3. The board of management reported that it is aware of and discharges its responsibilities to provide information to all school personnel relevant to child protection and to ensure that available training is undertaken by all or some members of staff as required.	**Substantially Compliant**
• **Additional Information**: Almost all members of school personnel who were interviewed as part of the evaluation, were aware of the procedures to be followed if they have a child protection concern. A small number of staff were not clear on the reporting procedure for specific circumstances. • **Action Advised**: The board of management should ensure that all school personnel are informed and fully aware of the procedures to be followed should they have a child protection concern.	
4. The board of management reported that it is aware of its responsibilities in relation to vetting of all school personnel and report that they discharge these responsibilities.	**Fully Compliant**
5. A child safeguarding statement and risk assessment have been prepared in line with the template and requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023).*	**Fully Compliant**
6. The minutes of the board meetings that were checked contained a record of a child protection oversight report being provided in line with the requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*.	**Fully Compliant**

7. Correct record keeping procedures were found in the child protection cases examined.	**Fully Compliant**
8. The procedures to report child protection concerns were fully implemented in the records examined.	**Substantially Compliant**
• **Additional Information:** The procedures to report child protection concerns were fully implemented in the majority of records examined. In a minority of cases, a record of the information communicated by the DLP to the parent/carer of the child about whom the report is being made to Tusla or a record of the decision made by the DLP not to inform the parent/carer and the reasons for not doing so was not available. • **Action Advised:** Relevant files should include a record of the information communicated by the DLP to the parent/carer of a child about whom the report is being made to Tusla or a record of the decision made by the DLP not to inform the parent/carer and the reasons for not doing so. Optional template C, available on the Department of Education website, may be used for this purpose.	
9. The procedures to report allegations or suspicions of abuse against school personnel were fully implemented in the records examined. *(These personnel include, for example, teachers, special needs assistants, caretakers, secretaries, cleaners, voluntary workers in the school, paid or voluntary tutors, and parent association members helping with aspects of the work of the school.)*	**Not Applicable**

10. Curriculum Check	
There was a Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme for all students in Junior Cycle.	**Yes**
There was a Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme for all students in the school.	**Yes**

The quality of planning for and implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE programme requires improvement to achieve a good standard. A review of SPHE and RSE planning documents indicated that the school had planned for the implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE programme, however the required lesson contact time for SPHE at Junior Cycle, as set out in Circular 0028/2023, is not currently provided.

At the time of inspection, the school had no SPHE co-ordinator. A large number of teachers are currently delivering the SPHE and RSE curriculum. The school should establishment a core team of teachers to support a more cohesive approach to planning for and review of provision in order to improve learner outcomes and experiences.

Students who met with the inspectors during the inspection demonstrated a good understanding of several key topics of SPHE and RSE such as mental health, anti-bullying and consent. The students demonstrated very good capacity to provide valuable perspectives about ways in which SPHE and the RSE programme could be further enhanced to better support their needs. These perspectives could be used to inform ongoing development of SPHE and RSE provision.

Almost all parents who responded to a survey administered as part of the Child Protection and Safeguarding (CSPI) inspection agreed that their child was safe and well looked after in school and that their child was treated with respect by school personnel. Most parents reported an awareness that their child learned about bullying and RSE in the school.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

We have taken on board the recommendations from the initial Inspection including prioritising a smaller core Team for SPHE and RSE instructions for school year 2024-2025.

We are transitioning to one hour classes for 2024-2025 so will be meeting our mandated 100 hours of SPHE in Junior Cycle so we will not have a shortfall of less than 10 hours in the SPHE curriculum over 3 years, going forward.

We have put procedures in place to make sure that staff use optional templates when bringing a Tusla referral to the DLP.