An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Child Protection and Safeguarding Final Inspection Report

Ainm na scoile/School name	St Marys N S
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Aghamore Ballyhaunis Co. Mayo
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	15030Q
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	25-05-2023
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	04/10/2023

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 2017*. 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 2017* 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 a Final Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection.

What happens during a final child protection and safeguarding inspection?

During a final CPSI, inspectors:

- Engage with learners about their learning in Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Stay Safe
- Conduct a focus group meeting with representatives of the parents' association / parent representatives on the board of management to 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 2017.*

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

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 2017*.

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:

- Very good
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Fair
- Weak

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 2017* that are checked during the inspection.

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.

Child protection and safeguarding inspection report

The checks detailed below derive from the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*. The Inspectorate will monitor the board's progress in achieving full compliance. 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 Stay Safe programme.

Aspects of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* 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 2017 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 2017*.	**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.	**Fully Compliant**
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 2017.*	**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 2017*.	**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.	**Fully Compliant**
9. The procedures to report allegations or suspicions of abuse against school personnel were fully implemented in the records examined.	**Not Applicable**

(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.)	

10. Curriculum Check	
There was a programme for Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) for all children in the school.	**Yes**
The Stay Safe programme was implemented within the school.	**Yes**

The overall quality of planning for and implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the Stay Safe programme was good. The SPHE policy, including Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), delineated how the curriculum was being implemented across the school. The policy had been enhanced by the addition of an appendix to guide the delivery of the substance abuse programme which was also taught in the school.

Pupils in the group discussions presented as positive learners and shared many aspects of their learning in SPHE. They demonstrated good knowledge of the subject-specific language and their overall learning in the strand *Growing and changing.* They described the changes, both physical and emotional, that children experience as they grow and develop. They displayed confidence with regard to their knowledge of health and well-being. They shared their learning on topics such as safety and making decisions.

The pupils described a broad range of learning experiences which included group work, drama, story, games and videos; these supported them to acquire knowledge and skills in SPHE. They shared their commendable records of learning which included venn diagrams, concept maps, reflection sheets, drawings and notes with the inspection team. The school had plans to implement a whole-school approach to assessment in SPHE in the next academic year; the successful assessment strategies already in use by the school can be incorporated into this approach. This will enable the pupils to revisit previously covered content and support them in becoming more articulate in discussing their learning.

The parent representatives who met the evaluation team were very positive regarding the work of the school in supporting pupils' learning in SPHE, the positive school climate and atmosphere, and the effective communication and collaboration between home and school.