An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Whole School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Colehill Mixed N S
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Colehill Co. Longford
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	14672F
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	16/10/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	26/01/2026

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 inspector 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

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.

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.

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>Bí Cineálta</td></tr>
<tr><td>1. The name of the DLP and the child safeguarding statement (CSS) are prominently displayed near the main door of the school / in the reception area. Following the school's adoption of the updated procedures 2025, it is also required to display a student-friendly version incorporating the name of the DLP beside the CSS.
2. The school's child safeguarding statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited were aware of who to go to if they had a child protection concern.
4. The school's child safeguarding statement meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2023 or the updated procedures 2025.</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy using Appendix A of Bí Cineálta, it is reviewed annually (or earlier if required) and includes a student/pupil friendly version that is displayed where students/pupils and the school community can see it.
2. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, staff, parents and pupils/students.
3. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides an update to the board at each ordinary board meeting that meets the requirements of Bí Cineálta.
4. The school has appropriate initiatives in place to promote a positive and inclusive school culture and environment.
5. All staff visited report that they have read the school's Bí Cineálta policy and that</td></tr>
</table>

5. The minutes of the last three board of management meetings contain a child protection oversight report in line with the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2023 or the updated procedures 2025. 6. The board of management has ensured that arrangements are in place to provide information to all school personnel on the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2023 or the updated procedures 2025. 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	they are aware of their roles and responsibilities in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

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

Whole-school evaluation – management, leadership and learning

Dates of inspection	14/10/2025 – 16/10/2025
Inspection activities undertaken • Meetings with principal and in-school leadership team • Meeting with representatives of the board of management • Meeting with parent representatives • Meetings 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

Colehill Mixed National School is a co-educational primary school located outside Ballymahon, Co. Longford. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise. At the time of the evaluation, the teaching staff consisted of four mainstream class teachers and two special education teachers (SETs), one of whom was shared with another school. There were ninety-six pupils enrolled in the school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning was good.
- Teachers' practice was good with some very good practice also observed.
- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing was of a very high standard and pupils experienced a respectful, welcoming and inclusive school culture.
- There was very effective leadership and management in the school and it was evident that school leaders promoted a culture of improvement.
- The parents' association provided valuable support to the school.
- School planning processes to promote school improvement were good.

Recommendations

- In all lessons, teachers should expand the use of collaborative and playful learning experiences to give pupils further opportunities to explore, to justify answers and to engage in high quality discussions with other pupils.
- Chun caighdeán na Gaeilge labhartha a fheabhsú, ba chóir do na múinteoirí úsáid a bhaint as an gcur chuige cumarsáideach agus tuilleadh deiseanna a thabhairt do na daltaí an Ghaeilge a úsáid i gcomhthéacsanna éagsúla. To improve the standard of spoken Irish, teachers should use the communicative approach and provide pupils with more opportunities to use the Irish language in different contexts.
- To ensure that pupils gain an increased sense of ownership over their learning, the school should embed formative assessment approaches, including self- and peer-assessment strategies.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

- The quality of pupils' learning was good. Pupils displayed positive dispositions towards their learning and participated enthusiastically in lessons.
- Pupils' English language skills were well developed. They demonstrated good ability to speak clearly and confidently in English. They recited a range of rhymes and poetry in both English and Irish with enthusiasm. Across the school, pupils demonstrated varied responses towards their enjoyment of and enthusiasm for reading, and promoting their overall interest in reading had already been identified by the school as an area for development. To this end, the school had recently developed a very attractive well-stocked library located centrally in the school to encourage and increase pupils' interest in reading. Pupils had regular opportunities to choose books and read for enjoyment in this stimulating reading space. During the focus group, pupils spoke with pride about their new library space.
- Pupils completed functional writing tasks and free-writing activities, and they had a good knowledge of the writing genres. They were able to link the writing genres with a variety of audiences. Pupils' handwriting skills were developed systematically and, in the main, their work was well presented.
- Bhí dearcadh dearfach ag daltaí maidir le foghlaim na Gaeilge ar an iomlán agus rinne siad iarracht mhaith ceisteanna a fhreagairt bunaithe ar na téamaí a bhí á bplé acu sa rang. Múineadh na ceachtanna Gaeilge trí Ghaeilge, mar is cuí. Ach ní raibh formhór na ndaltaí muiníneach no líofa in úsáid an stór focal nua a d'fhoghlaim said chun comhrá a dhéanamh lena chéile. Chun caighdeán na Gaeilge labhartha a fheabhsú, ba chóir do na múinteoirí úsáid a bhaint as an gcur chuige cumarsáideach agus tuilleadh deiseanna a thabhairt do na daltaí an Ghaeilge a úsáid i gcomhthéacsanna éagsúla. Pupils were positively disposed to learning Irish and they made a good effort to answer questions based on themes they were discussing in class. Irish lessons were taught through Irish, as is appropriate. However, most pupils lacked confidence and fluency in using their new vocabulary to communicate with each other. To improve the standard of spoken Irish, teachers should use the communicative approach and provide pupils with more opportunities to use the Irish language in different contexts.
- Pupils demonstrated very good understanding and application of a variety of mathematical concepts. Their knowledge of number, patterns, data and shape, and their ability to apply Mathematics to real-life situations were very good. Initiatives such as the development of Mathematics trails and the celebration of Maths week was impacting positively on pupils' learning experiences. Opportunities exist to provide pupils with further opportunities to use concrete materials during all lessons and to provide further levels of challenge to extend pupils' mathematical understanding and thinking.
- Pupils had opportunities to develop their digital learning. They conducted research for projects, played mathematical games and in some cases, developed typing, editing and publishing skills. During the pupil focus group, pupils expressed a desire to use digital technologies more frequently.
- Pupils had a very good understanding of place and space and they demonstrated pride in their local environment. They capably identified local historical and geographical landmarks. They had opportunities to discuss and investigate in *Social, Environmental and Scientific Education* subjects and they enjoyed participating in the Green School programme and going on nature walks.
- Learning environments in the school successfully supported and celebrated learning. During the focus-group discussion, pupils reported that they liked learning in their attractive school environment and they particularly enjoyed doing Art, Drama and Physical Education. They articulated the benefits of exercise and how it contributes to positive well-being. Their artwork was celebrated and showcased throughout the school and attractive murals were on display in the school playground. Pupils showed very good appreciation of music, singing and drama and senior pupils were learning how to

play the tin whistle. They also had opportunities to participate in the school choir, in Scór competitions annually and perform for the school community.

2. The quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teachers' practice was good, with very good practice also observed. Teachers had a clear focus of learning in their lessons and communicated these effectively to pupils. They skilfully used a range of questioning techniques to stimulate substantial response and facilitate engagement with lesson content. Differentiation was evident in all settings. Excellent classroom displays were used effectively to support and celebrate pupils' learning. In questionnaires, almost all parents agreed that teaching was good in the school.
- Pupils experienced some independent, pair and collaborative learning tasks during daily lessons. However, many of the learning experiences were overly teacher-led and dependent upon textbook activities. A much greater range of learning experiences is advocated in all classes, particularly learning experiences that enable pupils to work together and to develop their skills across the curriculum. In all lessons, teachers should expand the use of collaborative and playful learning experiences to give pupils further opportunities to explore, to justify answers and to engage in high quality discussions with other pupils.
- Effective examples of teachers' collaborative practice were observed during the evaluation. Mainstream and special education teachers (SETs) cooperated very successfully to deliver in-class support interventions for pupils.
- All teachers used a range of valuable assessment approaches. These included teacher observations, checklists, work samples and teacher-designed tasks and tests. While pupils' written work was corrected regularly, there was scope for teachers to provide pupils with clear and constructive feedback in copybooks. To ensure that pupils gain an increased sense of ownership of their learning, the school should embed formative assessment approaches, including self- and peer-assessment strategies. This will support pupils more effectively in monitoring and reflecting on their own learning and understanding the quality of their work.
- The quality of support for pupils with additional learning needs was very good overall. Teachers used the *Continuum of Support* very effectively to identify the needs of all pupils. Pupils with special and additional educational needs were supported through a combination of withdrawal and cooperative teaching models. While comprehensive support plans were compiled for pupils, in the majority of instances, learning targets in pupil support plans were too broad and were not sufficiently specific to inform weekly lessons. Teachers should ensure targets are sufficiently specific and measurable to have optimum impact on pupils' progression and achievement in their learning.

3. The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing

- Support for pupils' wellbeing was of a very high quality. The school and the wider school community provided an inclusive and welcoming learning environment. Positive relationships were observed between pupils and teachers.
- Special education teachers identified appropriate social and emotional targets and organised meaningful interventions to support pupils' wellbeing. These included the use of appropriate resilience-building programmes.
- Pupils had opportunities to contribute to decision-making on whole-school issues. Pupil participation was fostered and promoted through their participation in a student council and in worthwhile initiatives such as the Amber Flag for wellbeing.
- Strong links had been developed and nurtured with parents and the local community. The parents' association provided valuable support to the school. Responses to the

parent questionnaires indicated that the school was well run and that there was a good atmosphere in the school. All parents who completed the parents' survey agreed that they feel welcome in the school.

4. The quality of leadership and management

- The quality of leadership and management was very good. The board of management had a clear understanding of its role and discharged its leadership and management responsibilities effectively. They met regularly and demonstrated very good commitment to enhancing the quality of educational provision in the school. The board was very well informed on achievements in teaching and learning and on all school developments.
- The principal promoted a welcoming, open and inclusive culture within the school. Her management of the organisation and promotion of a culture of improvement was highly commendable. She had fostered very effective relations, capacity building and shared responsibility in the school.
- The in-school leadership team carried out a range of duties diligently and organised worthwhile co-curricular opportunities across the school in support of pupils' learning overall. There was scope for leaders to further develop their curriculum oversight role to ensure that whole-school plans guide classroom practice. This will support the identification of teachers' professional learning needs going forward as well as provide robust mechanisms to support progression of pupils' learning across all curriculum areas.
- Teachers collaborated successfully to review the school's current needs. However, some of the curricular policies were outdated and did not reflect current curricular developments. School leaders had begun to systematically review and update whole-school plans across the curriculum. As part of this review, consideration should be given to exploring how pupils' digital literacy skills could be developed across the curriculum as they progress through the school.
- Procedures to support the mentoring and induction of teachers were well established in the school. During the evaluation, the school reported that it regularly provided placements for student teachers.

5. The quality of school self-evaluation

- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) was good. The school engaged effectively with the SSE process to identify areas for improvement. Positive approaches towards fostering well-being had impacted positively on the whole school community. Teachers had collaborated successfully in reviewing the school's current needs. Literacy was the current focus for SSE, with the development of further high-quality literacy initiatives underway at the time of the evaluation.

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

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of Colehill Mixed National School welcomes the publication of this Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning report and is pleased that it reflects the positive, inclusive atmosphere and strong sense of wellbeing evident across the school community. The Board acknowledges the very effective leadership and management practices highlighted, as well as the high quality of support provided for pupils' wellbeing.

The Board notes the recommendations outlined in the report and is committed to working collaboratively with school leadership and staff to build on existing strengths and to support ongoing school improvement. We also wish to acknowledge the pupils, parents and staff for their continued dedication and valuable contribution to the life and work of the school.

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

Following the Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning, the school community has carefully considered the recommendations and has taken, or plans to take, the following actions to further enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

To address the recommendation to expand the use of collaborative and playful learning experiences, teachers have begun to review lesson planning with a particular focus on active methodologies. Staff meetings and Croke Park hours will be used to share good practice in pair work, group work, talk-and-discuss strategies and play-based learning. Teachers are increasingly incorporating learning stations, problem-solving tasks, drama, oral language activities and collaborative projects across curriculum areas. Textbook use will be reviewed to ensure it supports, rather than dominates, teaching and learning. The school plans to continue professional learning in active and inclusive teaching approaches to further support high-quality pupil discussion, exploration and engagement.

In response to the recommendation to improve the standard of spoken Irish, teachers have committed to embedding the communicative approach more consistently across all classes. Oral language targets are being prioritised in planning, with an increased emphasis on structured pair and group talk, cluichí teanga, role-play, and the use of Irish in meaningful, real-life contexts. Common language phrases are being developed and will be displayed to encourage daily informal use of Irish throughout the school day. Teachers are also reviewing resources to support vocabulary development and oral fluency. Progress in pupils' confidence and use of spoken Irish will be monitored through observation, oral tasks and pupil feedback.

To ensure pupils gain a greater sense of ownership over their learning, the school has begun to further embed formative assessment practices. Teachers are developing success criteria with pupils and providing clearer, more focused feedback on written and oral work. Self-assessment and peer-assessment strategies are being introduced in an age-appropriate manner. These approaches will support pupils in understanding learning goals, reflecting on their progress and identifying next steps in learning.

The school will monitor the impact of these actions through ongoing school self-evaluation, staff collaboration and pupil voice, ensuring continuous improvement in teaching, learning and pupil outcomes.