

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Our Lady Of Lourdes
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Ballinlough Cork
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	17313P

Date of inspection: 04-04-2019



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

WHAT IS 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' well-being
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.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

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 2017.
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 2017.
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, 2017
7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE, Wellbeing).
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

Dates of inspection	04-04-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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

Our Lady of Lourdes NS is a mainstream school for girls operating under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross. There are 238 pupils enrolled in the school. Staff consists of a principal, nine mainstream teachers and three special education teachers (SETs). Two of the SETs are fulltime, with one of these fulltime posts being shared with another school, while the third SET works on a part-time basis in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is very good; pupils present as highly engaged and motivated learners.
- Teaching is of a very high quality; teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and they communicate these expectations effectively to pupils.
- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is very good; a strong ethos of inclusion permeates the work of the school.
- The overall quality of assessment is good; there is potential to make more use of assessment information to guide teaching and learning and to plan for improvement.
- The quality of leadership and management is good; there is scope to develop the role of the in-school leadership team in leading learning.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is satisfactory; while the school has engaged in the process, there is scope to progress this work in a more structured manner and to ensure that the implementation and impact of agreed initiatives is regularly monitored and evaluated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The range of assessment strategies should be broadened and the analysis of assessment data should be used on a school wide basis to plan for improvement.
- The duties and responsibilities of the in-school leadership team should be more closely aligned to identified whole-school priorities, and an emphasis should be placed on leading teaching and learning.
- The school should ensure that school improvement plans outline specific roles for teachers in the attainment of targets that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound (SMART); and that the implementation of these plans is systematically monitored and evaluated.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is very good. Pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum and their abilities and interests are carefully nurtured. They present as highly engaged and motivated learners and participate enthusiastically in lessons. *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is implemented at infant level. Integrated play-based learning activities are carefully planned to support pupils' learning. It is advised that the school evaluates the current approach to *Aistear* so as to maximise the potential for language development in all infant classes.
- Pupils with special educational needs are making very good progress overall. They engage confidently in high-interest learning experiences which address their learning needs.
- Tá caighdeán na foghlama sa Ghaeilge an-mhaith. Labhraíonn, léann agus scríobhann na daltaí go muiníneach. Tacaítear leis an bhfoghlaim teanga trí raon gníomhaíochtaí cultúrtha a chur chun cinn lena n-áirítear damhsa agus seinm ceoil traidisiúnta. *The quality of learning in Irish is very good. Pupils speak, read and write with confidence. Language learning is supported through the promotion of a range of cultural activities, including Irish dance and playing traditional music.*
- Learning in English is of a very high standard. Pupils communicate competently using a rich and wide vocabulary and demonstrate a keen awareness of their audiences. They read fluently and their comprehension skills are well developed. The prioritisation of early intervention initiatives in infant classes impacts positively on pupil learning outcomes. While pupils write with confidence in a range of genres, it is advised that writing genres be explored systematically on a whole-school basis.
- The overall quality of learner outcomes in Mathematics is very good. Pupils demonstrate confidence and enthusiasm in their mathematical learning and accuracy in their use of mathematical language. They have access to a range of concrete materials and these are used effectively to develop solid conceptual understanding.
- Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of their learning in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) and some use is made of the local environment to enhance their experiences. They demonstrate an enquiring attitude towards Science and participate enthusiastically in scientific discussion.
- The quality of pupil attainment in arts education is very high. Their skills in Drama are developed consistently and they enjoy frequent opportunities for expression through Visual Arts. Pupils' achievement in Music is of a commendably high standard and is a key strength of the school. They gain particular benefit from their participation in musical and choral performances where they achieve to a very high level.
- Good quality lessons were observed in Physical Education (PE) where the pupils' skills in dance and in fundamental movement were developed. In order to further improve the provision for PE, it is advised that reliance on external tutors be reduced and that lessons in PE be consistently provided.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching is very good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and they communicate these expectations in an effective manner. Lesson content is connected clearly with and built on previous learning. Teachers ask appropriately challenging questions and skilfully facilitate interesting discussions. While individual practice

is strong, there is scope to develop collective practices among teachers through the implementation of whole-school approaches to teaching and learning.

- All teachers prepare long and short-term plans where proposed content is clearly delineated. In the further development of teacher planning, it is advised that learning outcomes and teaching approaches be more clearly outlined and that a greater connection is made to the school plan.
- Teaching, planning and the use of assessment in special educational settings is of a very high standard. SETs collaborate effectively with parents, mainstream class teachers and with external professionals and the *Continuum of Support* is implemented consistently.
- The overall quality of assessment is good. All teachers use a range of assessment approaches and pupil attainment in English and Mathematics is monitored closely. Commendably, in some instances, attainment in PE is also recorded. Pupils' written work is monitored closely and formative feedback is consistently provided. It is recommended that pupil progress across the curriculum is systematically recorded. Assessment data should be used to inform teaching and learning to a greater degree and analysis of this data should be used on a whole-school basis to plan for improvement. Increased use of digital technologies should assist in this regard.

3. THE QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELLBEING

- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is very good. A strong ethos of inclusion permeates the work of the school. Pupils and teachers identify strongly with the school and with its traditions and demonstrate pride in being associated with Our Lady of Lourdes. The curriculum for Social, Personal and Health Education is implemented fully and this contributes to the development of pupils' confidence, self-esteem and emerging values. School leaders foster a commitment to the holistic development of the pupils and the school strives to support positive mental health and emotional well-being through the provision of a wide range of programmes. There is evidence of very good communication with feeder schools. In response to questionnaires issued to parents, almost all reported that their child feels safe and well looked after and that there is a good atmosphere in the school.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The board of management meets frequently, records detailed minutes of meetings and shares relevant information with parent representatives and teaching staff. The board demonstrates a strong commitment to the school and ensures that it is well resourced. Members are aware of the standards in learning and are supportive of the school's engagement in extra and co-curricular activities.
- The principal is highly skilled in managing the school. She has built and maintained an inclusive school community and she ensures that the school is very well run. Members of the in-school leadership team carry out their assigned duties in a most conscientious manner. It is, however, recommended that the work of the team is aligned to the identified needs and priorities of the school. Particular focus should be directed towards distributed leadership and the assigning of responsibility for the implementation of curriculum and SSE initiatives. The team should regularly evaluate the impact made by these initiatives on pupil

learning outcomes. Greater use should be made of Croke Park hours to identify and progress whole-school approaches across key curricular areas.

- The management of resources is good and plans for the acquisition and use of more information and communications technology (ICT) is welcomed. Teachers are encouraged and facilitated to engage in continued professional development and this investment in teacher professionalism is praised.
- The quality of communication within the school and between the school and home is very good. Newsletters and the school website are used effectively to promote positive communication and to keep parents informed about the work of the school.
- 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 the teacher education institutions.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of school self-evaluation is satisfactory. To date, improvement plans have identified aspects of literacy, numeracy and Science in need of development. Questionnaires were issued to parents and analysis of attainment in standardised tests was undertaken. However, the targets set for improvement were not sufficiently specific nor was the implementation of agreed initiatives sufficiently monitored or evaluated. In further engagement in SSE, the school should ensure that all targets for improvement are specific and linked with strong baseline data. Systems for the regular monitoring of the implementation and effectiveness of new initiatives should be developed to ensure that agreed actions become embedded in classroom and whole-school practice. Those leading SSE should engage with it as a structured process with a focus on improving teaching, learning and assessment.

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 of quality the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	Very good applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is outstanding and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	Good applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a very good standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	Satisfactory applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	Fair applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	Weak applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;

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 is very pleased to receive such a positive Whole School Evaluation Report.

The report endorses the very high standards of teaching and learning achieved in the school while also recognising its longstanding traditions and commitment to the local community. We consider that the report presents an accurate evaluation of our school and reflects extremely well upon the commitment, dedication and endeavor of the whole school community including pupils, teaching staff, principal teacher and the parent body, all of whom have contributed to this outcome.

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 welcome the recommendations contained in this report which will help us to continue to improve learning outcomes and overall experiences for our students. The Board is pleased to accept the advice contained in this report which we plan to fully implement as follows:

Recommendation 1: Assessment

In June 2019, we commenced the analysis of the assessment data using a software package. Results from Second and Fourth Classes have been inputted and the analysis will be used to plan strategic intervention for the school year 2019/2020.

Further to our recent Primary Language Curriculum Day, we will undertake to track the progress of a representative sample number of children from different class levels in various writing genres over a four year period.

Recommendation 2: Distributed Leadership

During the first term of the 2019/2020 school year, the recommendations of Circular 70/2018 *Leadership and Management in Primary Schools* will be implemented and the posts of responsibility will be aligned to ensure full compliance with said circular.

Recommendation 3: School Self-Evaluation

When allocating Croke Park hours from the school year 2019/2020 onwards, priority will be given to the school improvement plan. The increase in allocation of hours will be used to ensure its full implementation with systematic monitoring and evaluation.

The Board of Management will be provided with feedback on the implementation of all of the above at regular intervals.