



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Whole School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	St Kilian's National School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Mullagh County Cavan
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	19608V
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	23-11-2023
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	23/02/2024

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

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:	
<i>Child Protection</i>	<i>Anti-bullying</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)</i> and this policy is reviewed annually. 2. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides a report to the board at least once a term on the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template provided in the <i>Procedures</i>) since the previous report to the board. 3. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils. 4. The school has appropriate initiatives in place to promote a positive and inclusive school culture and environment. 5. All teachers visited report that they have read the school's policy on anti-bullying and that they are aware of their roles and

<p>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, (revised 2023).</p> <p>7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE).</p> <p>8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.</p>	<p>responsibilities in preventing and tackling bullying.</p>
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Whole-school evaluation – management, leadership and learning

Date of inspection	23-11-2023
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• Pupil focus group	<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

Saint Kilian's National School, Mullagh is a co-educational vertical primary school under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Kilmore. At the time of this evaluation the school had fourteen mainstream class teachers, five special education teaching posts for pupils who had special educational needs (SEN), and three special classes for autistic pupils, one of which was an early intervention class. There were 342 pupils enrolled at the time of the evaluation. Enrolment had grown notably within the past few years. During the evaluation, inspectors observed teaching and learning in eight mainstream classes, two special classes and three support-teaching settings.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning was very good.
- The quality of teaching was very good. Teachers' collective practice was very effective.
- The quality of the support for pupils' wellbeing was highly commendable; mutual respect, care and concern for the rights of pupils characterised engagements observed during the evaluation.
- The quality of school leadership and management was very good; the school was led and organised very well.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) was very good.
- The quality of inclusion was very good.

Recommendations

- As some special education teaching (SET) posts were deployed so that the SET was delivering aspects of mainstream lessons to pupils in support settings, school leaders, in collaboration with the special education teachers, should review and ensure the provision of appropriate support for pupils with special educational needs.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

- The quality of pupils' learning was very good. Pupils demonstrated very high interest in lessons and participated enthusiastically. Their enjoyment in learning was evident and clearly arose from their progress and sense of achievement in their learning. Pupils' engagement with learning contributed to their sense of wellbeing.
- Pupils were making very commendable progress in literacy and numeracy with many pupils achieving very high standards in English reading and Mathematics across the school. Pupils read fluently and many reading tasks and activities took place through the use of a graded-reading scheme. Pupils wrote for a wide range of purposes; they demonstrated good understanding of writing conventions, use of grammar and punctuation. Their individualised creativity and use of expressive language were commendable. In a few instances, handwriting skills were less well developed. Going forward, teachers should consider using a shared rubric for correction and for feedback to pupils, to enable more pupils develop penmanship and presentation skills with greater consistency.
- Léirigh na daltaí dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge agus bhí se le moladh go raibh deiseanna ag na daltaí an Ghaeilge a úsáid go laethúil timpeall na scoile. Ba le fonn a chuir siad réimse dánta agus amhrán i láthair. Cé gur mhúnlaigh na múinteoirí an sprioctheanga agus an foclóir nua go héifeachtach, ní i gcónaí a tugadh deis do na daltaí an teanga nua a chleachtadh agus a leathnú i gcomhthéacsanna éagsúla. Moltar do na múinteoirí deiseanna rialta a thabhairt do na daltaí an teanga nuafhoghlamtha a chleachtadh i gcomhthéacsanna a chothaíonn comhrá anamúil. *The pupils exhibited a positive disposition towards Irish and the opportunities provided for them to use Irish daily throughout the school day were praiseworthy. Pupils recited poems and songs eagerly. While the teachers modelled the target language and new vocabulary in Irish effectively, pupils were not always afforded the opportunity to practice and extend the new language learned in different contexts. Teachers are advised to furnish pupils with regular opportunities to practise the new language learned in contexts that foster animated conversation.*
- The pupils demonstrated a positive image of themselves as confident and capable learners. Teachers provided them with regular, meaningful opportunities to reflect upon and discuss their learning with one another.
- In questionnaire responses, most pupils indicated that they believed they were doing well at reading and Mathematics. Almost all indicated that their teacher taught them in ways that helped them to learn.
- The teachers ensured pupils attending the special classes were included actively in lessons with their peers in mainstream classes. The development of the language and communication skills of pupils in the special classes, across the subjects of the curriculum, was highly commendable. The teamwork inherent in the work of all staff in the special classes was effective in facilitating this development.
- Pupils demonstrated positive dispositions towards their learning in History, Geography and Science. Teachers provided them with learning experiences relevant to their lives and interests. The pupils had a very good knowledge of local history. In class discussions with the inspectors, pupils displayed a commendable understanding of more complex historical and social themes.
- Pupils experienced a broad and valuable programme in Arts education. Their experiences in Music were worthy of particular commendation. Teachers demonstrated a deep commitment to the provision of physical education lessons, and to coaching in a range of sports. Pupils spoke of the enjoyment and satisfaction they derived from their participation in gymnastics. They also spoke of their participation in a broad and valuable range of co-curricular activities, which were of benefit to them.

2. The quality of teaching

- The quality of teaching was very good. Teachers taught well-prepared and well-structured lessons that maintained pupils' attention admirably. A broad range of motivating methodologies that maximised engagement was evident. Teachers very frequently modelled enthusiasm and enjoyment to inspire pupils' learning. Learning environments were well established whereby pupils were self-motivated to engage in, extend and enjoy learning. They were stimulating, with highly supportive print-rich displays. All classrooms visited were very well resourced.
- Teachers' collective practice was highly commendable. Teachers demonstrated a commitment to building whole-school expertise in the use of skills and methodologies that facilitated pupils' development as self-directed learners. The questionnaire surveys completed by teachers indicated that most were of the opinion that teachers collaborated well with one another.
- At infant class level, play-based methodologies were used effectively to support the development of pupils' language and social skills.
- A range of formative and summative assessment practices were in evidence. Where best practice was observed, teachers included specific observations and judgements that facilitated effective shared communication about pupils' learning. The use of more assessment for learning (AFL) and the implementation of an online assessment approach more widely, as considered by some currently, was advocated.
- High quality teaching was observed during support teaching lessons. Station teaching with pre- and post-intervention testing was implemented with careful monitoring and was used very effectively. Teachers in the special classes demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the principles of TEACCH, an evidence-based structured teaching approach that supports the needs of autistic children through the use of pre-prepared visual information to enable pupils predict next steps. Very good teaching strategies using TEACCH were observed. There was highly commendable emphasis on the promotion of language and communication through approaches personalised to the needs of individual pupils. Kinaesthetic learning experiences and visual resources were used frequently and effectively. Individualised plans for pupils with SEN were developed collaboratively. However, targets set in some support plans were too broad. Going forward, all targets should seek to be specific, measurable, timed and include outcomes so that they may be used to effectively monitor and track pupils' progress.
- In questionnaire responses, all parents who completed the online survey agreed that their child was enjoying school.
- The school community had developed and organised a range of valuable annual musical and dramatic experiences for pupils. Provision in this area was exceptional. The pupils were enabled to participate in experiences and performances that had contributed to their own personal satisfaction and helped build their confidence.

3. The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing

- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing was of a very high standard. School leadership, all staff and board of management have succeeded in creating a strongly inclusive learning environment. Teachers demonstrated a very good knowledge of the pupils in their care. The development of dispositions towards a healthy lifestyle was promoted across the school. The school placed an appropriate emphasis on developing life skills and self-confidence in a range of ways. During the evaluation, interactions among pupils and between pupils and teachers, special needs assistants and ancillary staff members were observed as respectful and positive, and conducive to wellbeing.
- In their responses, almost all parents who completed a questionnaire indicated that their child felt safe and cared for in school and that the school was helping their child's social

and personal development. A majority indicated they were confident if their child experienced bullying that the school would act promptly and effectively.

- Pupil questionnaire responses indicated that most pupils who completed a questionnaire felt safe in class and in the playground and almost all stated they had learned about different kinds of bullying and knew there were school rules against hurting others. A majority indicated that if worried, sad or afraid they would feel comfortable talking about it with a teacher or another adult in the school, either all or most of the time.
- The Pupils' Council provided a means whereby the pupils' voice had fuller expression in the life of the school. In their focus group with the inspectors, pupils expressed appreciation for the work of the council.

4. The quality of leadership and management

- The quality of leadership and management was very good.
- The board of management operated very effectively. It met at correct intervals and its records were maintained diligently. Board members displayed a thorough understanding of the role of the board and how they contributed to the ongoing strategic development of the school.
- The principal demonstrated the skills of very strong leadership including very well developed self-awareness and commitment to drawing out authentic innovative thinking from staff. He distributed leadership responsibility purposefully and reflectively to support strong and sustained outcomes that have benefitted the pupils. He successfully encouraged and maintained a spirit of staff collaboration and commitment by staff to the ongoing realisation of the school's mission statement. In their questionnaire responses, almost all teachers indicated that they felt the core values of the school were being implemented well in the day-to-day life of the school.
- The principal and in-school management team have fostered a culture in which learning has flourished. Pupils have received a deep and broad holistic learning experience. The principal, deputy principal and staff in the school have actively promoted creativity and innovation from pupils and adults, building teachers' leadership capacity. They welcomed and celebrated individual and collective contributions and achievements.
- A positive code of behaviour was implemented very successfully. An environment of positivity was prevalent during the evaluation. Mutual respect, care and concern for the rights of pupils characterised engagements between the adults of the school community and the children. Pupils' understanding of the importance of having respect for themselves and respect towards one another was very evident.
- During the evaluation, some special education teaching posts were deployed in part so that the SET had sole responsibility for the delivery of a reduced mainstream lesson in Mathematics and in English to pupils in support settings. School leaders, in collaboration with the SETs, should review and ensure the provision of appropriate support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Discussions with the parent representatives indicated that parents were well-informed about the operation and work of the school. Parent questionnaire responses indicated that almost all parents who completed a survey agreed that the school was run well. Parent questionnaire responses also indicated scope for the parents' association to inform the parent body further about its work.
- The school reported that it regularly provided placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and is included among the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers, as it can provide valuable professional benefits for teachers, pupils and the teacher education institute.

5. The quality of school self-evaluation

- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) was very good. The school engaged purposefully and systematically in the school self-evaluation process. School leaders adopted a collaborative approach, consulting with pupils, parents and teachers to elicit their opinions in devising targets for improvement. SSE activity led to pupil involvement in a wide range of appropriate initiatives and in particular in the school-wide project *Where I'm from is Everything* designed to enhance the quality of pupils' overall health and positivity; this promoted a very strong sense of place in their community among the pupils.
- The school focused on promoting local history and geography through wellbeing and creativity and developed a comprehensive plan to guide and monitor the implementation of agreed actions. It was commendable that such actions were impacting positively on pupils' learning experiences.

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	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	<i>Very good</i> 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 <i>outstanding</i> 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	<i>Good</i> 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 <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	<i>Satisfactory</i> 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	<i>Fair</i> 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	<i>Weak</i> 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;