

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil Naomh Eltin
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Kinsale Co Cork
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	20435A

Date of inspection: 13-02-2020



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).
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	13-02-2020
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

Scoil Naomh Eltin is a co-educational primary school with a current enrolment of 326 pupils. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross. It has an administrative principal, thirteen mainstream class teachers, seven fulltime special education teachers (SETs) and one part-time SET. The school has two special classes for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD).

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is very good and a wide range of stimulating learning experiences is provided for pupils; there is scope to extend the range of reading material in Irish for pupils and to encourage their engagement with these texts.
- The quality of teaching is very good overall; lesson content is clearly connected with previous learning.
- The overall quality of assessment is good; there is scope to extend practice to the areas of pupils' oral language capacity in both English and Irish and to monitor pupils' skills attainment in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) and in the Visual Arts.
- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is very good; school leaders value pupils' views and ensure their involvement in the operation of the school.
- The quality of leadership and management is very good; the principal is proactive in promoting the school's guiding vision and manages the school with a solution-focussed approach.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is good; clarity is required as to the impact of improvement initiatives on pupil learning outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school should productively use a greater range of reading material in Irish.
- Strategies to assess pupil attainment in oral language, both in English and in Irish and skills attainment in SESE and Visual Arts should be developed and implemented.
- The school should monitor and assess the impact on improvement initiatives on pupil learning outcomes as part of the SSE process.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is very good. Pupils are motivated to learn and expect to succeed as learners. Their enjoyment in learning is evident and arises from a sense of achievement. They work cooperatively with their peers and demonstrate high levels of engagement in assigned learning tasks.
- The quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics is generally very good. Pupils' skills in estimation are well developed, in particular in relation to the strand of measures and they capably relate their learning to real life. Most show very good ability to use computational procedures and to discuss concepts proficiently using appropriate mathematical language.
- Scientific investigation and experimentation are features of practice in a number of classes and pupils demonstrate enthusiasm for active exploration of materials and concepts. Increased focus on the development of scientific language and class discussion to link the activity to the scientific concept is advised. Creativity is fostered through engagement with a broad programme for Visual Arts and pupils produce high quality work in fabric and fibre, in clay and in drawing. Increased focus on artistic skills development would be of further benefit to pupils.
- Pupils communicate competently using a rich and wide vocabulary in English and demonstrate a keen awareness of their audiences. Junior pupils ably verbalise their curiosity and excitement in learning. They read with fluency and expression and their enjoyment of novels and personal reading is evident throughout the school.
- The promotion of spoken Irish by pupils through an Coiste Gaelbhrtach is having a positive impact on pupils' willingness to communicate through Irish. In senior classes, pupils' learning in Irish is supported through the use of digital technologies where pupils collaborate to complete multiple-choice challenges on tablets. High interest reading material in Irish, both in print and digital formats should be provided to middle and senior classes. Greater exploration of writing genres in Irish is also advised.
- A wide range of stimulating learning experiences is provided for pupils. They participate successfully in national initiatives to promote environmental awareness, physical activity, the use of technology in learning and the creative arts. Pupils' critical and strategic thinking skills are developed through the school's vibrant chess club and through participation in public speaking and debating competitions. Their skills in co-operation and collaboration are fostered and developed through participation in musicals. The school presents as a vibrant community of learning.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The quality of teaching is very good overall. A bespoke template guides planning for teaching in mainstream classes.
- Stimulating and well-resourced learning environments are created in classrooms and very effective classroom management strategies are employed to secure and sustain pupil attention in lessons. Pupils' achievements in writing and in project work are celebrated in attractive classroom displays.
- Effective whole-class teaching, along with appropriate use of collaborative group work, station teaching, pair work and play-based approaches are features of teachers' practice. Lesson content is connected clearly with previous learning and linked to current affairs and topical news, most notably in senior classes. Judicious use is made of textbooks to ensure that lessons are not overly prescriptive.

- Teachers' collaborative practice in developing pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are commended. SETs target junior classes with a range of early intervention and prevention strategies in literacy. Commendably, where intensive reading programmes are implemented, careful attention is directed to pupil attainment both at the outset and at the end of the intervention programme.
- Teaching of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good. SETs and class teachers collaborate to ensure that learning is appropriately differentiated to enable progression. The *Continuum of Support* is successfully implemented. Excellent practices were noted in planning, preparation and implementation of lessons for pupils with ASD. Very effective evidence-informed approaches to support pupils' learning, the development of their language and communication skills and the management of behaviours are employed consistently in these special classes. The school actively promotes inclusion and operates a policy of integration and reverse integration for pupils who attend the special classes.
- The overall quality of assessment is good. Teachers use a wide variety of strategies to assess pupils' work and to plan for future learning. Assessment records include information about pupils' attitudes and achievements. To build on current good practice, it is recommended that modes of assessment be extended to include a record of pupils' skills development, in particular in relation to subjects in SESE and the Visual Arts. The development and implementation of a school-based strategy to assess attainment in oral language, both in English and in Irish is also recommended.

3. THE QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELL-BEING

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is very good. The board of management has ratified a number of policies to support pupil wellbeing including policies on health and safety, bullying and school attendance. The monitoring of implementation of policies and practices pertaining to wellbeing is effectively managed by the in-school leadership team. A significant number of programmes are implemented to promote respect, empathy, health and happiness. The quality of interactions among pupils and between teachers and pupils were observed to be kind, respectful and inclusive.
- School leaders foster a commitment to the holistic development of each pupil and every effort is made to support pupils in recognising and developing their talents. Those in leadership and management roles see pupils as stakeholders, value their views, and ensure their involvement in the operation of the school. Representatives from six pupil committees met with inspectors. They described their roles in the students' council, in promotion of health and wellbeing, in supporting active school lifestyles and in the promotion of the use of Irish among pupils.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management is very good. The recently formed board of management demonstrates an acute awareness of its central governance role. Members show particular interest in both maintaining and further developing the high standards of teaching and learning and in supporting the progression of school improvement initiatives. To this end, the board is highly supportive of teachers' continuing professional development.
- The principal provides excellent, purposeful leadership for the school. She maintains a highly visible role in leading teaching and learning. She is proactive in establishing and promoting the school's guiding vision and manages problems with a solution-focussed approach. She

values partnerships with parents as a means of supporting pupils' learning and wellbeing. She is ably supported by a large in-school leadership (ISL) team who successfully fulfil a broad range of duties and responsibilities. Almost all parents who participated in a questionnaire as part of the evaluation, expressed the view that the school is well run.

- The parents' association provides valuable support to the school. Association members contribute to policy formulation, assist in the organisation and management of significant school events and provide practical assistance at extra-curricular activities.
- The school reported that it regularly provides placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and is included among the standards in the Teaching Council's *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers* as it can provide valuable professional benefits for teachers, pupils and the teacher education institution.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of school self-evaluation is good. The school has engaged with the SSE process and undertook an evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning of spoken Irish, at the start of the 2018/19 school year. Evidence was sourced through teacher and pupil questionnaires and a three-year plan was formulated as part of the improvement process. A broad range of whole-school actions including; teacher CPD, formulation of song and poetry lists and the use of Irish language games, were agreed and documented in the plan. As the improvement initiative progresses, it is recommended that specific targets be set and associated actions identified. The implementation of this initiative should be monitored closely by the ISL team and the impact on pupil learning outcomes systematically evaluated.

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 of Scoil Naomh Eltin welcomes the very positive and affirming Whole School Evaluation-Management, Leadership and Learning Report which was conducted in February 2020.

We believe it to be an accurate appraisal of our school which reflects positively the hard work, dedication and talent of our school community.

The report acknowledges the many strengths of our school and in particular the emphasis placed on student wellbeing, which is central to the school's vision of our school as a happy, caring and safe learning environment for all.

The report reaffirms our view of the very high standard of management, leadership and learning in Scoil Naomh Eltin.

It gives recognition to the quality of teaching and to the excellent practices within special education teaching.

The Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Eltin would like to express its gratitude to the principal, school leadership team, teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff, parents and the wider school community for their ongoing commitment and their enthusiasm in creating a positive learning environment for all our pupils.

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

The Board of Management is happy to implement the three recommendations made by the Inspectorate, as it believes in and encourages best practice in all areas of school life in order to provide the optimum learning experiences for the pupils of Scoil Naomh Eltin.

In response, the Board of Management has taken the following actions:

- The school is extending its range of reading material in Irish.
- The school is developing and implementing strategies to assess pupil attainment in oral language, both in English and in Irish and skills attainment in SESE and Visual Arts.
- The school is developing improvement initiatives on pupil learning outcomes. These will be monitored and assessed as part of the SSE process.

The school staff is positively and professionally engaging with the recommendations outlined and the Board of Management is confident that this will lead to further enhancement to the quality of educational provision.