

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole-School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

Ainm na scoile / School name	Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Laytown, County Meath
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	20017F

Date of Evaluation: 22 September 2016



WHAT IS A WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION: MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING?

Whole-School Evaluations – Management, Leadership and Learning report on the quality of teaching and learning and on the quality of management and leadership in a school. They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of educational provision in the school.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector(s) evaluated and reported under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

1. Teaching and learning
2. Support for pupils' wellbeing
3. School leadership and management

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 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.

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	22-09-2016
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with principal and deputy principal• 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 senior management team, teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil an Spioraid Naomh is a senior co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Meath. The school caters for pupils from third to sixth classes and provides a special class for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). Currently, there are 383 pupils enrolled and overall attendance levels are very good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of teaching is very good, with very positive outcomes in Mathematics.
- Teachers collaboratively plan effective learning experiences that are contextualised to pupils' learning needs.
- The principal and the in-school management (ISM) team promote a culture of reflective practice successfully among staff which focuses on continuous improvement.
- The overall learning achievements of pupils are very good; they demonstrate very high levels of interest and participation in learning.
- The board of management and staff foster pupils' holistic development effectively by providing a broad range of curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular learning opportunities.
- The parents' association fulfils its partnership role effectively and provides valuable support to the school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pupils' reading skills should be enhanced through the provision of differentiated reading material in English.
- The whole-school policy for assessment should be developed and pupils' attainment in literacy and numeracy analysed to guide school improvement strategically.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS OF PUPILS

- The overall learning achievements of pupils are very good. They demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and their work is presented to a very high standard. During the evaluation, pupils displayed good knowledge and skill development particularly in History and Physical Education.

- The overall quality of learning outcomes in Mathematics is very good. Observed lessons were very well structured, with suitable provision for collaborative learning, discussion and the use of concrete resources. Effective pupil self-evaluation practices are being developed which are interconnected appropriately with learning-support interventions. Specific action plans have been established to develop the pupils' problem-solving and number- operation skills.
- The quality of learning outcomes in literacy is good. Pupils' listening skills are very well developed and most have good expressive language. They demonstrate positive attitudes towards reading and have a good knowledge of novels and authors. Reading comprehension skills are effectively developed; there is scope to enhance their reading skills through the provision of additional differentiated reading material. A structured approach to the development of writing skills is in place and pupils write capably in a wide variety of genres.
- Tá cailíocht na foghlama sa Ghaeilge go han-mhaith. Léann na daltaí go hábailta agus tá scileanna labhartha maith acu. Léiríonn siad suim sna ceachtanna agus baineann siad taitneamh as filíocht agus dramaíocht. I ranganna áirithe, is gá níos mó deiseanna a thabhairt do na daltaí chun an foclóir nua a chleachtadh. *The quality of pupils' learning in Irish is very good. Pupils read ably and they have good oral skills. They show interest in lessons and enjoy poetry and drama. In some classrooms pupils should be given additional opportunities to practice new vocabulary.*

2. QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching is very good. A broad range of active and collaborative methodologies was observed during the evaluation. Teachers' planning is of a very high quality with specific and sequential development of content outlined. Teachers plan collaboratively and take the opportunity to discuss teaching methodologies with a view to improving learning. In questionnaires administered as part of the evaluation, all teachers agreed that there is a good atmosphere in the school.
- Assessment practices are well developed. Pupils' work is corrected carefully and they are provided with regular constructive written and oral feedback. Many teachers make effective use of *assessment for learning* strategies. There is scope to extend this good practice and to use assessment data to plan future learning opportunities. The whole-school policy for assessment should be developed to include a wider range of assessment approaches. This policy should make specific provision for the tracking and analysing of pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy. This analysis should provide evidence to better inform school self-evaluation.
- The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs is of a very high standard. The school is successful in assessing pupils' needs and in developing individual education plans (IEPs) that involve all the relevant stakeholders. There is a good balance between in-class and withdrawal approaches for learning support. Lessons in these settings are very well prepared, with suitable use of resources and practical activities. In-class support is provided in an organised and effective manner; praiseworthy use of pupil self-assessment was observed.
- A positive commitment to inclusion underpins the learning experiences in the class for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). Clear instructional language, along with visual cues, individual work stations and work schedules are employed effectively to promote on-task engagement. IEPs include detail of the specific development of individual pupils' social, communication and life skills.

3. SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELL-BEING

- The support for pupils' well-being is a significant strength in this school. Pupils are cared for and supported very effectively. The special-needs assistants provide highly commendable care and support for pupils. The voice of pupils is promoted effectively through *Green Schools* and Active School committees; current efforts underway to develop a pupil council will progress this work.
- Strategies to promote positive behaviour among pupils are implemented very successfully. In responses to questionnaires, almost all pupils agreed that they have learned about different kinds of bullying.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The work of the board of management is very effective. It meets regularly, minutes are maintained and accounts are being certified currently. Members of the board have clear roles and make a very significant contribution to the efficient functioning of the school. The board maintains a well-resourced and safe school environment while also seeking to establish a new school building. Communication between the board and the parents' association is very good.
- The principal and the ISM team provide very effective leadership, successfully promoting a vibrant learning environment. The principal fosters a strong culture of respect and has high expectations for pupils and teachers. She distributes leadership responsibilities effectively and supports staff in their professional development. The ISM team carries out a suitable balance of curricular, pastoral and administrative duties in a collaborative, reflective and purposeful manner.
- Home-school communication is very good. Parents are afforded many opportunities to meet with school staff. Regular newsletters keep parents well informed about school life. The parents association actively supports the school. In responses to questionnaires, almost all parents agreed that they think their child is well looked after and doing well in school. The management of pupil transition to and from feeder schools is highly commendable.
- Confirmation was provided that the board of management has formally adopted the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* without modification and that the school is compliant with the requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

5. SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is good. The school improvement plan (SIP) for literacy focuses on the effective implementation of agreed actions and the monitoring of their impact. In the further development of SIPs, there would be value in deeper analysis of assessment data with a view to informing and refining SSE targets. Current action plans for numeracy might be incorporated beneficially into the SSE process. The board is advised to communicate its SIP and share it with the wider school community.

CONCLUSION

The school's capacity to develop further is very good. Current routines of reflection, professional development and collaborative planning structures indicate openness to change and to continuous improvement.

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 an Spioraid Naoimh welcomes this very positive and insightful WSE-MLL report. The report acknowledges and affirms the commendable learning achievements, the quality of teaching in our school and the very high standard of support for pupils' well-being. The Board is very pleased that the report acknowledges the positive, inclusive commitment by the school community underpinning the learning experiences for all pupils including our ASD class.

The Board is particularly pleased the report recognises our school's philosophy of evaluation through reflection, professional development and collaborative planning structures. This significant process allows us achieve very high standards, enabling us to guide our school in the provision of the very best, most innovative and progressive educational experience for our whole school community.

Tá Bord Bainistíochta na scoile lán-sásta gur cuireadh béim sa thuairisc ar ard-caighdeán na foghlama sa Ghaeilge chomh maith.

The Board believes this report is a tribute to the commitment, dedication and vision of the staff, pupils, parents, and the wider school community.

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 pleased to acknowledge the report commends the quality of literacy in our school. Through self-reflection and evaluation we have identified a strategy to further develop the reading skills in our school through the provision of additional differentiated reading material. The SEN team has been and continues to work with a variety of differentiated reading programmes which we are now in the process of extending into the mainstream setting. The literacy team has already begun to track and analyse pupils' progress in literacy. This analysis of standardised test results in literacy will provide the evidence to better inform the implementation of differentiated reading programmes throughout the school.

The Board acknowledges the need to further develop a whole school policy for assessment. This policy will incorporate *assessment of learning* and *assessment for learning* in order to plan future learning opportunities in both Literacy and Numeracy. The school is developing a wider range of assessment approaches with particular focus on tracking and analysing pupils' progress in educational attainments. With the expansion of ICT, the correlation of assessment data will provide evidence to inform school self-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 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. Overall, learners have access to a basic level of provision. 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;