

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 Bríd
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Muff Lifford County Donegal
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	19280N

Date of inspection: 08-10-2018



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agus Scileanna**
Department of
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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 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, Well-being).
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	08-10-2018
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 and pupil 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 Bríd, Muff is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Derry. The staff comprises an administrative principal, eight mainstream class teachers and three special education teachers (SETs), one of whom is shared with another school. There are 204 pupils enrolled and their attendance levels are good overall.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall learning achievements of pupils including pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good; pupils are highly engaged during lessons and demonstrate a positive attitude towards their learning.
- The overall quality of teaching is good; there is scope for improvement in the pupils' communicative skills during learning in Irish.
- Teachers use a range of purposeful questioning techniques; currently, teachers' individual short-term planning does not outline skills development in a progressive manner.
- The overall quality of support for pupils' well-being is good, interactions among pupils and between pupils and teachers were observed to be very respectful and positive; there is scope to review policies in a timely manner.
- The quality of leadership and management is good overall; there is need to outline specific responsibilities for each post holder in line with the school's current identified needs.
- The school has engaged appropriately in the school self-evaluation process (SSE) and pupils' outcomes and learning experiences are improving as a result.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Is gá do mhúinteoirí cumas teanga ó bhéal na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge a fhorbairt go córasach chun eispéiris shóisialta agus muintín in úsáid na teanga a leathnú do dhaltaí. *Teachers should systematically develop the pupils' oral language competency in Irish to expand both their social experiences and confidence in using the language.*
- Teachers should include pupil skill development in the curricular short-term planning to ensure progression from class to class.
- The board should adopt a cyclical approach to the review of whole-school curricular and organisational policies and ensure that they are more contextualised to the needs of the pupils.

- The assigned responsibilities to post holders should be reviewed annually so as to accord more appropriately to the school's identified priorities, and detailed in the school plan.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupils' learning including pupils with SEN is good. Pupils were highly engaged during the lessons observed and demonstrated a positive attitude towards their learning. In inspectorate questionnaires the majority of pupils agreed that they enjoyed their lessons and learning and almost all parents agreed that their child is making good progress in the school. Learning outcomes as evident from assessment data for numeracy and literacy are of a very good standard.
- Pupils' learning achievement in Music is good. They engage very positively during lessons and demonstrate confidence during song-singing and they play percussion instruments, tin whistle, keyboard and other instruments competently and with enthusiasm.
- In the junior classes, pupils have access to a wide range of purposeful learning experiences. Teachers are adopting the principles and approaches of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. This has enhanced pupils' learning in literacy very effectively at a cross-curricular level.
- The pupils are motivated to learn, linked to having a sense of clearly attainable outcomes overall. They are provided with a broad range of reading experiences in English and have developed comprehension skills to a high standard.
- Pupils are enabled to articulate their previous learning very well in Social Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) subjects. The application of this learning was evident in the production of some very good project work in senior classes which outlined their cross-curricular knowledge and creativity skills. The use of information and communications technology (ICT) would further enhance pupils' research skills. Pupils are working towards achieving their seventh flag in the Green Schools Programme.
- Athrisíonn na daltaí dánta agus rímeanna le díograis i roinnt ranganna agus léiríonn siad tuiscint shásúil ar na eochair fhocail le linn na foghlama i gceachtanna comhrá. *Pupils recite poems and rhymes with enthusiasm in some classes and demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of key words during learning in conversation lessons.*

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers have appropriately high expectations of pupils' work. Teachers use a purposeful range of questioning techniques which elicit effective pupil responses. In questionnaires administered to parents, most parents agreed that teaching is good in the school. In pupil questionnaires almost all pupils agreed that their teacher explains things clearly.
- Support for pupils with SEN is of a high standard. Teachers provide very well for differentiated learning experiences for pupils requiring support. There is scope however, to provide more appropriate challenge for pupils of higher ability during teaching. Teachers enabled pupils to make meaningful links between lesson material and their learning in other subjects. Effective support plans are prepared by SEN teachers to implement the *Continuum of Support*. Provision includes a balance between in-class and withdrawal models of support to cater for pupils' varying needs. Teachers' level of engagement in continuous professional

development is highly commendable. The new learning acquired is shared at whole staff level.

- Sa Ghaeilge, b'fhiú deiseanna níos éifeachtaigh a thabhairt do na daltaí chun foghlaim nua a dhaingniú trí eispéiris chumarsáideach a sholáthar ar bhonn comhsheasmhach le linn na gceachtanna. *In Irish, pupils should be afforded more effective communicative opportunities to consolidate new learning in a consistent manner during lessons.*
- In the majority of lessons observed there was a good balance between teacher-led input and the facilitation of co-operative and active learning. In the minority of lessons observed there was scope to provide for more purposeful collaborative learning experiences for pupils.
- All teachers support the development of pupils' mathematical language successfully during lessons and they made very effective links between mathematical learning and real life experiences. Pupils in junior classes were given opportunities to agree more challenging learning objectives for subsequent lessons. This very good practice should be extended to all classes. Teachers of infant classes collaboratively plan for the provision of meaningful and appropriate activity based opportunities for pupils during the teaching of Mathematics.
- The overall quality of assessment is good. Diagnostic and summative tests are used to ascertain the quality of learning. The teachers monitor pupils' progress in the majority of areas of learning including a sustained focus on the implementation of assessment for learning strategies. While teachers have some very good evidence of assessment, the resulting data should now be used more effectively to inform teachers' individual planning ~~for multi-grade classes.~~
- The quality of whole-school planning is good overall. Whole-school and curricular planning is available for all subject areas. The effectiveness of organisational planning is evident in the smooth day-to-day running of the school. There are aspects of a few plans which require review and development. While the quality of whole school curriculum planning is good, some plans require review and development to ensure that they are contextualised to meet the needs of the pupils and to provide appropriate guidance to support individual teachers planning and practice.
- There is scope for improvement in the quality of individual teachers' planning. Currently, there is significant variance in the quality of individual teachers' short term plans. There is a need to clarify the content objectives and skills to be achieved by pupils at each class level in order to ensure appropriate continuity, progression and development in pupils' learning. Teachers of junior classes plan collaboratively to develop a unified approach to facilitate the implementation of the *Primary Languages Curriculum*. The existing good planning observed should now be agreed and implemented more consistently. There should be an agreed whole school approach to teachers' individual short-term planning across the curriculum.

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

- The overall quality of support for pupils' well-being is good; there are aspects that require improvement. During the evaluation, pupils presented as very co-operative and courteous. Interactions in all classes among pupils and between pupils and teachers were observed to be very respectful and positive. In questionnaire responses, the majority of parents agreed that there was a good atmosphere in the school and that their children are well looked after.
- At whole-school level, many aspects of provision make an important contribution to the well-being of pupils. These include the promotion of sports and games, links with external agencies and participation in the Friends for Life programme. Approaches such as circle time during Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), along with various team building exercises are used effectively to support pupil voice. Plans are in place to establish a pupils'

council to further promote and facilitate pupil voice. Whilst these efforts are acknowledged, there would be value in extending such work. The code of behaviour should be reviewed so as to include agreed whole-school approaches and interventions to support pupils with additional needs.

- There is a good emphasis on physical fitness through a variety of sporting activities including co-curricular and extra-curricular initiatives, which is highly commendable. The school has received many sporting awards and have recently been awarded its first Active Flag.
- Teachers develop and maintain strong links with external agencies to support pupils' social and emotional needs. There are commendable initiatives in place to support pupils in making transitions to post-primary schools and support for pre-school children in advance of starting school.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Leadership and management are effective in most areas.
- The principal promotes professional development opportunities for teachers and encourages participation as a means of improving teaching and learning. She is successful in promoting high standards in teaching and learning.
- The board of management fulfils its roles and responsibilities effectively and diligently and is very committed to the development of the school. The board regularly communicates aspects of its work to the parents through the school news bulletin. The board should also issue an annual report on its work to parents.
- It is commendable that the teaching staff undertake various roles and responsibilities in developing the work of the school. In the further development of in-school leadership roles, the assigned responsibilities to post holders should be reviewed to accord more appropriately with the school's identified priorities.
- The school 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, student teachers, pupils and the teacher education institution.
- In the inspectorate questionnaire, a significant minority of parents agreed that the school regularly seeks their views on school matters; further parental participation in policy development including the development of the code of behaviour should be facilitated.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The school engages successfully in the SSE process. School improvement plans have been developed for literacy and numeracy. The agreed initiatives have resulted in improvements in pupils' learning experiences and in teachers' individual practice. The school is currently finalising the priority focus for the next cycle of SSE. As a next step, teachers should consider using the SSE process in supporting their curricular short-term planning and assessment approaches. Going forward, further participation by board and parents in the SSE process should be promoted.
- The teachers have worked together to review provision for Physical Education. Evidence was provided that the engagement of all pupils with sport has improved significantly and this process was carried out using the SSE framework.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The manager welcomes this report and regards the following findings as particularly commendable

- That pupils, having a sense of clearly attainable outcomes, are motivated and highly engaged in their learning.
- Learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy are of a very good standard.
- There is a broad range of reading experiences; pupils' comprehension skills are of a high standard.
- Pupil confidence in song singing, their enthusiasm and competency in playing musical instruments.
- Support for pupils with SEN is of a high standard.
- Teachers' level of engagement in CPD is highly commended.
- Use of co-operative, active learning, purposeful range of questioning, very good project work, opportunities for pupils to agree challenging learning objectives.
- The very effective links between mathematical learning and real life experiences and the successful development of mathematical language.
- Sustained focus on assessment for learning strategies.
- The respectful and courteous interactions between pupils and between pupils and teachers.
- The important contribution that sports, links with external agencies and participation in wellness programmes makes to pupils' wellbeing.
- Teaching staff taking roles in developing the work of the school.
- The principal's success in promoting high standards in teaching and learning.
- The BOM's commitment to the development of the school and that the BOM is fulfilling its roles and responsibilities effectively and diligently.
- Successful engagement in the SSE process and the resulting improvement in pupils' learning experiences and teachers' individual practice.

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

- *Teachers should systematically develop the pupils' oral language competency in Irish to expand both their social experiences and confidence in using the language.*

The principal and a member of staff will attend a course on Content and Language Integrated Learning for English Medium Schools, Jan 2019, the principal had already requested support from the PDST in Gaeilge, a course for parents in helping their children to enjoy learning and using the Irish language begins in school at the end of January 2019, a graded Irish reading scheme, Cléite has been purchased, to be used for guided reading which will be preceded by a focus on targeted language; Primary Language Curriculum Planning day will be on oral Irish, applied for Gaelbhratach

- *Teachers should include pupil skill development in curricular short term planning to ensure progression from class to class.*

We welcome the suggestion of using the SSE process to facilitate curricular planning this will now form part of the Self Evaluation Report and School Improvement Plan.

- *Cyclical approach to the review of whole school curricular and organisational policies.*

The BOM already has a calendar for review of policies and will assign more policy review roles to post holders.

- *Assigned responsibilities to post holders should be reviewed annually*

The process of reviewing the responsibilities of post holders has already begun using circular 70/2018.

- *Scope to provide more appropriate challenge for pupils of higher ability*

Profiling began in May 2018, advice from NEPS and PDST sought, SET led withdrawal and in-class differentiation takes place.

- *The COB should be reviewed to include agreed whole school approaches and interventions to support pupils with additional needs*

Principal has applied for support in this from the NBSS

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;