



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

# Whole School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning Report

## REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Ballintemple N S
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Ballintemple N S Crab Lane Cork
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	15781P
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	02/10/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	18/12/2024

# 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 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.

## 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"><li>1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.</li><li>2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.</li><li>3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.</li><li>4. The Child Safeguarding Statement meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023).</li><li>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).</li><li>6. The board of management has ensured that arrangements are in place to provide information to all school personnel on the</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>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> or <i>Bí Cineálta (2024)</i> and this policy is reviewed annually.</li><li>2. The school's current anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils.</li><li>3. The school has appropriate initiatives in place to promote a positive and inclusive school culture and environment in line with their current policy.</li><li>4. All teachers visited report that they have read the school's current policy on anti-bullying and that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities in preventing and tackling bullying.</li></ol>

<p>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>	
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

# Whole-school evaluation – management, leadership and learning

Dates of inspection	30/09/2024 – 02/10/2024
Inspection activities undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meetings with principal and in-school leadership team</li><li>• Meeting with representatives of the board of management</li><li>• Meeting with parent representatives</li><li>• Meetings with teachers</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Pupil focus group</li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives</li></ul>

## School context

Ballintemple NS is located in Cork city and operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross. At the time of this evaluation, the school had an enrolment of 254 pupils. The staff comprised ten mainstream teachers, four special education teachers and an administrative principal. One of the mainstream class teaching posts was used to complement the school's special education support team, in an interim capacity, pending the delivery of an upcoming school building project.

## Summary of main findings and recommendations:

### Findings

- The overall quality of learning was very good; as confident learners with a positive self-image, pupils demonstrated an enquiring attitude towards themselves and those around them.
- The quality of teaching was of a very high standard; it was evident that teachers collaborated meaningfully to agree and implement a range of whole-school teaching approaches.
- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing was highly commendable; pupils experienced caring, safe and social settings and reported feeling included and supported in all aspects of school-life.
- The quality of leadership and management was very effective.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) was good.

### Recommendations

- Ba chóir do na múinteoirí an plean sa Ghaeilge a athbhreithniú chun a bheith cinnte go bhfuil sé ag stiúradh teagasc, foghlaim agus measúnú sa Ghaeilge agus chun a gcleachtas ranga a chur chun cinn. *The whole-school plan for Irish should be revised to ensure that it provides clear guidance on teaching, learning and assessment and informs practice at each class level.*
- The school had engaged in an extensive process of policy review as part of their school self-evaluation work. School management and staff should now implement the six-step planning process as outlined in Circular 56/2022.
- The clarity of improvement targets in school support plans was varied. Teachers were advised to ensure that all learning targets were clear and specific; weekly planning in special education settings should be closely linked to these improvement targets.

## Detailed findings and recommendations

### 1. The quality of pupils' learning

- The overall quality of pupils' learning was very good. Pupils presented as very engaged learners who were interested and motivated to complete all tasks. They confidently demonstrated an enquiring attitude towards themselves and those around them.
- Pupils displayed high levels of oral language skills in all classes. They discussed topics enthusiastically and displayed a well-developed ability to ask questions and share opinions. Pupils' exposure to poetry had extended their vocabulary. Junior classes developed receptive, expressive and pragmatic language skills through play and the use of story, rhyme and song.
- Pupils' awareness of literature was enhanced by innovative and diverse displays of books, in all settings. A positive reading culture, for pleasure and other purposes, had been developed throughout the school. All classes used a range of comprehension strategies when exploring different genres of reading. These helped to improve their understanding of various texts and boost reading confidence and fluency.
- Pupils experienced an incremental approach to the development of writing genres. Their written work in copybooks was well presented using cursive script. Some pupils had used digital technologies to enhance their learning in literacy.
- Bhí eispéireas foghlama na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge an-rathúil i ranganna áirithe. Sna ranganna seo, labhair na múinteoirí Gaeilge le linn an cheachta agus sholáthraigh siad deiseanna do na daltaí an teanga a úsáid go neamhfhoirmiúil i rith an lae scoile. Spreag siad na daltaí chun idirghníomhaíochtaí bríocha trí Ghaeilge a bheith acu. B'fhiú an cleachtas seo a roinnt trasna na scoile. Ba chóir do na múinteoirí an plean sa Ghaeilge a athbheithniú chun a bheith cinnte go bhfuil sé ag stiúradh teagasc, foghlaim agus measúnú sa Ghaeilge agus chun a gcleachtas ranga a chur chun cinn. *Pupils had very positive learning experiences in Irish, in some classes. In these settings, teachers spoke Irish during lessons and provided opportunities for pupils to use the language in meaningful contexts, and informally, throughout the school day. This good practice should be extended across the school. Teachers should also review the whole-school plan to ensure that it clearly informs teaching, learning and assessment in all classrooms.*
- In Mathematics, pupils used concrete manipulatives meaningfully, to explore number, progress their reasoning and support their thinking processes. They used mathematical language effectively in pair and group work. In the middle and senior classes, pupils engaged confidently in coding activities displaying a good understanding of relationships across Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). In online surveys, pupils indicated that they would like more opportunities to use digital technologies.
- Pupils enjoyed a range of learning experiences across Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE), including project work on a range of topics. They also learned thematically through History and Visual Arts, deepening their learning experience of both areas. Pupils were provided with a very broad programme of learning in Physical Education.
- The learning environments were attractive and included displays of pupils' creations in Visual Arts, project work and samples of writing across a range of genres. During a focus group meeting, pupils reported having a broad range of learning experiences. These included 'cross-age buddy-systems' for reading and engaging with visitors from a variety of professional and sporting backgrounds.

## **2. The quality of teaching**

- The overall quality of teaching was highly commendable. Teachers used open-ended questioning and thematic teaching approaches to further pupils' understanding. It was evident that teachers collaborated to implement whole-school approaches to the teaching of writing genres and the development of problem-solving skills. Where practice was of an exceptionally high standard, teachers held high expectations for their pupils. They personalised learning opportunities, drawing on their interests and strengths and encouraging them to make choices in their learning. Teachers shared learning intentions purposefully with pupils during lessons.
- Team teaching had commenced in all classes. In some settings, pupils received comprehensive and differentiated support during station teaching. In other settings, the models of support were not sufficiently flexible to meet the range of learning needs in the classrooms. Data from pre and post testing of the range of approaches in use should be analysed to inform the design and delivery of team teaching.
- The special education team provided student support plans and files for all pupils in receipt of support. While improvement targets were evident in all support plans, some targets lacked the specificity required to make them effective in directing pupils' learning. Teachers were advised to ensure that all learning targets were clear and specific. Special education teachers should use weekly planning, directly linked to each pupil's improvement targets.
- The quality of assessment was good overall. A range of testing and assessment strategies was used across all settings. Teachers were advised to further analyse the available data to inform teaching and learning at class level and to support the provision of in-class support. Some very effective use of peer and self-assessment was observed. Teachers were advised to extend these approaches across all settings to progress pupils' ownership of their learning.

## **3. The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing**

- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing was very successful. The staff members were nurturing in their approach. Pupils experienced caring, safe and social settings and they described how they felt included and supported in all aspects of school-life.
- The school promoted physical activity for pupils, using local amenities to counter space restrictions within the school. Staff, parents and those in management roles prioritised pupils' sense of belonging and connectedness, ensuring strong links with sporting organisations in the community. Pupils enjoyed a range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- In the focus group discussion, pupils had a well-developed sense of their progress as learners. They understood the importance of positive, inclusive relationships and had a clear understanding of the different types of bullying.
- The school promoted pupils' voice through its students' council. This provided opportunities for them to develop leadership skills and contribute positively to decision making. While pupil questionnaires were generally positive, the school should explore some minority perspectives shared on aspects of teaching and learning.

## **4. The quality of leadership and management**

- The quality of leadership and management was very effective. The board of management worked diligently to ensure an orderly, secure and healthy school environment. The board supported the school in the provision of learning resources. Members were also very proactive in addressing the infrastructural needs of the schools. They had demonstrated significant commitment to the current building project, in particular.

- The principal ensured the school's vision and ethos were evident throughout all aspects of school life. He collaborated with pupils and staff to ensure the school maintained its identity, culture and sense of community while operating on a dual campus. The in-school leadership team met regularly and attended to a broad range of duties in an effective manner.
- The parents' association very capably assisted the school in a variety of activities. Parental responses to a questionnaire indicated high overall levels of satisfaction with the school. Some scope was noted to strengthen the role of parents in policy formulation and review.
- The school regularly provided placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and is included among the standards of the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers. It can provide valuable professional benefits for teachers, student teachers, pupils and teacher education institutions.

## **5. The quality of school self-evaluation**

- The quality of school self-evaluation was effective. The school had engaged in an extensive process of policy review. There was a comprehensive plan guiding organisational and administrative areas of work. School management and staff should now implement the six-step planning process as outlined in Circular 56/2022. This should include consultation with parents and pupils in the process of identifying key areas for development in teaching and learning.

## 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	Examples of descriptive terms
<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Provision that is excellent</b> is exemplary in meeting the needs of learners. This provision provides an example for other schools and settings of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Excellent; exemplary; outstanding; exceptionally high standard; with very significant strengths
<b>Very good</b>	<b>Provision that is very good</b> is very effective in meeting the needs of learners and is of a very high standard. There is potential to build on existing strengths to achieve an excellent standard.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful
<b>Good</b>	<b>Provision that is good</b> is effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to build on existing strengths in order to address the aspects to be developed and achieve a very good standard.	Good; of good quality; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; strengths outweigh the shortcomings; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist
<b>Requires improvement to achieve a good standard</b>	<b>Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard</b> is not sufficiently effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is good or better.	Fair; less than effective; less than sufficient; evident weaknesses that are impacting on learning; experiencing difficulty; shortcomings outweigh strengths; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
<b>Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard</b>	<b>Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard</b> is not meeting the needs of learners. There is immediate need for significant action to address the areas of concern.	Weak; poor; ineffective; insufficient; unacceptable; experiencing significant difficulties; serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated; requiring significant change, development and improvement to be effective



# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

## **Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The staff and Board of Management of Scoil Íosaf Naofa, Ballintemple N.S. are very pleased with the findings of the Inspectorate outlined in this report. The recognition of the very high standard of teaching, the very good quality of learning, the very effective quality of leadership and management, and the highly commendable support for pupils' wellbeing is greatly appreciated. The report affirms many of the successful practices that are in place in the school and provides recommendations for improvement.

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

- (1) As part of the school's yearly review of the whole-school plan for Irish, the plan will be revised to inform practice at each class level.
- (2) The school will continue to strive for improvement through the six-step school self-evaluation process and will review its data-gathering process.
- (3) The school will endeavour to ensure clarity and specificity of its S.M.A.R.T. learning targets in the A.E.N. setting and that AEN planning is refined to shorter-term goals.