



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Whole School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Bunscoil na mBráithre Críostaí
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Summerhill Nenagh County Tipperary
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	167270
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	22-11-2023
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	23/01/2024

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"> 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). 6. The board of management has ensured that arrangements are in place to provide information to all school personnel on the 	<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 responsibilities in preventing and tackling bullying.

<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>	
--	--

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

Whole-school evaluation – management, leadership and learning

Dates of inspection	20-11-2023 to 22-11-2023
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 and the Trustees• 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

Bunscoil na mBráithre Críostaí operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Killaloe and the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST). It is a co-educational primary school for pupils from junior infants to sixth class, having changed its profile recently from having been a senior boys' primary school. There were 264 pupils enrolled at the time of the evaluation. A significant number were learning English as an additional language (EAL). The school had an administrative principal, ten mainstream class teachers, one special class teacher for pupils with mild general learning disabilities (MGLD) and nine special education teachers (SETs). One of these SETs was based in another school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of learning was good; a significant minority of pupils achieved very good outcomes in Mathematics.
- Overall, the quality of teaching was good.
- Support for pupils' wellbeing was of a very high quality.
- The overall quality of leadership and management was good; the principal managed the organisation very effectively and developed school infrastructure to an exceptionally high standard.
- School self-evaluation was of a very high quality.
- The board of management and the trustees communicated a very clear guiding vision; school leadership and the school community supported the transition to a co-educational school from junior infants to sixth class very effectively.

Recommendations

- Teachers should develop pupils' oral language skills in English and Irish systematically to improve pupils' competence and confidence in sharing their learning.
- All teachers should prepare appropriately challenging learning activities to support the purposeful engagement and inclusion of all pupils during lessons.
- The school leadership team should monitor the learner outcomes and the development of the pupils' skills in Social Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) more effectively.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

- The overall quality of pupils' learning was good. Most pupils engaged positively in their learning and were motivated to learn. They had opportunities to work collaboratively during most lessons. Assessment data indicated that most pupils were making good progress in literacy and numeracy, with a significant minority of pupils achieving very good outcomes in Mathematics.
- Pupils' early literacy skills were developed very effectively. Pupils were supported in reading texts at their instructional level. A minority of pupils could apply some comprehension strategies appropriately. Teachers should improve pupils' ability to use the full range of these strategies more effectively to develop their critical thinking skills.
- Pupils' ability to engage in high-quality discussion required improvement. To support this, teachers should implement agreed whole-school approaches to the systematic teaching of the oral genres. *Le linn na meastóireachta, bhí easpa cumais agus muiníne ag formhór na ndaltaí i labhairt na Gaeilge. Ba chóir do mhúinteoirí an cur chuige cumarsáideach a chur i bhfeidhm le linn na gceachtanna chun torthaí foghlama na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge labhartha a fheabhsú. During the evaluation, most of the pupils lacked ability and confidence in speaking Irish. Teachers should implement the communicative approach during lessons to improve pupils' learning outcomes in spoken Irish.*
- Pupils demonstrated an appropriate understanding of a range of writing genres. Good quality samples of pupils' writing were displayed in some classrooms. Pupils' digital skills were developed effectively through the production of a range of digital artefacts including presentations and creative projects. The development of pupils' coding skills in senior classes was highly commendable.
- In some classes, pupils could discuss aspects of their local environment and could apply the skills of time and chronology effectively. Pupils' knowledge and skills of the breadth of Social Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) required improvement. All teachers should ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills in SESE are developed systematically.
- Pupils' learning in the Visual Arts was celebrated in classrooms and corridors. They were provided with opportunities to learn and perform in the school choir and to play musical instruments including the ukulele and the keyboard.
- Pupils in the focus group reported that they enjoyed working in groups during lessons and sharing their learning with their class. They said that they would welcome more opportunities to learn using the wider school environment and to engage in more playful learning activities during lessons.

2. The quality of teaching

- Overall, the quality of the teaching, including teaching in support and special class settings, was good. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching ranged from very good to fair. In surveys conducted with parents, almost all parents who responded agreed that teaching was good in the school.
- There was a clear focus and structure to most of the lessons observed. Most teachers had prepared effectively for lessons. Commendably, language support teachers pre-taught the language of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* to pupils with EAL to support them in accessing the curriculum. During the lessons observed, teachers used a range of strategies, including pair work, use of concrete materials and active learning to support good engagement for most pupils.

- Where teaching was of a very high quality, teachers had high expectations of learning for all pupils. Lessons were prepared, structured and paced very effectively to provide a balance of teacher-led and pupil-led discussion. Teachers used higher-order questioning very effectively to promote the development of pupils' critical thinking skills. There was a balance between content and skill development during lessons. These approaches should be used by all teachers.
- There was evidence that the preparation for lessons by some mainstream class teachers was overly guided by textbooks. All teachers should prepare appropriately challenging learning activities, based on the learning outcomes of the curriculum, to support the purposeful engagement and inclusion of all pupils.
- The majority of teachers provided pupils with print-rich environments for literacy and numeracy. Pupils' learning, including project work, across a range of subject areas was displayed attractively in some classrooms and in school corridors. The cultural and linguistic diversity of pupils was celebrated effectively through wall displays in school reception areas and in language support classrooms. This practice should be extended to all classrooms.
- Mainstream and SETs worked collaboratively to implement small-group instruction. Commendably, teachers engaged in relevant continuing professional development (CPD) to support improvement in teaching and learning, special education and wellbeing, including nurture. Teachers shared this expertise at whole-school level.
- School leadership developed a very high-quality whole-school plan to support pupils with special educational needs (SEN). The *Continuum of Support* was embedded effectively. Pupils and parents were involved in the development of student support plans. Additional features of good practice included a balance between in-class and withdrawal support for pupils and the ongoing monitoring of pupils' progress. To build on this, teachers should ensure that all targets outlined in student support plans are specific and measurable. The formal review of these plans by SETs should include a record of pupils' progress towards the achievement of these targets.
- The overall quality of assessment was good. A wide range of assessment was used to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy. There was scope to further develop pupil-led assessment strategies, including formative feedback, to support pupils more effectively in reflecting on and improving their learning.

3. The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing

- Overall, the quality of support for pupils' wellbeing was very good. A very positive and welcoming school culture was established in the school. In parent surveys, almost all respondents agreed that they felt welcome in the school.
- Respectful interactions were observed in all settings. There was a whole-school commitment to the creation of a culture that safeguarded children and prevented bullying. In parent, pupil and teacher surveys, almost all respondents agreed that the pupils were treated fairly and respectfully. Pupils in the special class were integrated into mainstream classes.
- Teachers implemented a wide range of initiatives to support the holistic development of pupils. Some of these included the school's engagement in the Active and Amber Flags, and the Green Schools programme. School staff engaged with a wide range of community groups to support pupils' participation in extra-curricular activities including Gaelic games, chess and yoga.
- The school established effective systems for pupils transitioning into the school from pre-school and supports to facilitate transitions to post-primary school. Pupils had opportunities to develop their leadership skills through their involvement in a range of committees including the wellbeing committee and the student council.

4. The quality of leadership and management

- Overall, the quality of leadership and management was good; the principal managed the organisation very effectively and developed school infrastructure to an exceptionally high standard. In survey responses, all teachers and almost all parents agreed that the school was well run.
- The board of management and the trustees communicated a very clear vision to the school community. The board demonstrated good oversight of all aspects of teaching and learning, wellbeing and school development. The board, school leadership and the school community had managed the transition to a co-educational school for pupils from junior infants to sixth class in a highly commendable manner.
- The school principal demonstrated highly effective organisational skills. He implemented a very high-quality strategic plan to support the development of the school building and resources, curriculum planning and communication with parents, including parents of pupils with EAL. The principal fostered the development of leadership capacity successfully through the in-school management team and at whole-school level. In survey responses, all teachers agreed that the views of teachers were valued in decision-making processes in the school. At the meeting with parent representatives, they reported that their opinions were listened to by school leadership.
- The principal and all members of the in-school management team demonstrated very high levels of commitment to implementing the school vision and to developing very high standards in teaching, learning and wellbeing. To support this process, the school leadership team should further develop their leadership of teaching and learning. In particular school leadership should monitor the learner outcomes and the development of the pupils' skills in Social Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) more effectively.
- The school reported that it regularly provided placements for student teachers.

5. The quality of school self-evaluation

- The overall quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) was very good. The school identified areas of strength and areas for further development in relation to literacy and pupils' wellbeing. Pupils, teachers and parents were involved effectively in the SSE process.
- Targets were identified for improving pupils' reading. During the evaluation, agreed actions for improvement were implemented in all classrooms.
- The school conducted a recent review of the implementation of the school improvement plan. It was evident from the review that the SSE process for literacy was impacting positively on pupils' learning.

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 C.B.S Primary School welcomes the findings of this report. The Board welcomes its commendations and recommendations and is particularly pleased with the recognition of our highly effective transition to a co-educational school and the acknowledgment of our school infrastructure being developed to an exceptionally high standard.

As a school that prides itself on its welcoming and caring atmosphere, it is extremely pleasing that we have been acknowledged for having a very positive and welcoming school culture. We thank our school community for affirming this view.

The recognition of very high-quality support and planning for pupils with additional needs, very high-quality support for pupils' wellbeing, very high-quality School Self-Evaluation, and the commendation of our Aistear Programme for Infants is also welcome.

Our staff and In-school Management team were commended for their commitment to implementing the school vision, and for engaging in professional development to support improvements in teaching and learning, as well for implementing a range of initiatives to support the holistic development of pupils. The Board is delighted that the hard work of our staff to continuously develop and improve our school has been recognised.

The Board wishes to thank the school community for their ongoing support of our school.

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

C.B.S Primary School will use the findings in the report to inform ongoing school improvements and school self-evaluation.

Since the WSE-MLL, we have reflected upon the experience of the evaluation and the recommendations of the Inspectorate.

- We have conducted a teachers' survey on what we learned from the evaluation and we have held a Staff Meeting to discuss issues raised and the recommendations from the report.
- Teachers' use of Assessment of Learning was commended in this report. To further develop our assessment practices, we have now adopted a whole school approach to implementing pupil-led assessment and formative feedback.
- The systematic development of pupils' oral language skills in English and Irish will be the focus of School Self Evaluation going forward, and the use of 'an cur chuige cumarsáideach' in the teaching of Irish will be enhanced at a whole school level.
- The In-school Leadership team will review the S.E.S.E provision in our school with a view to enhancing learner outcomes. The use of local environs will feature strongly in revised provision.
- A discussion has been held with a view to providing more challenging and engaging learning activities for all pupils. Greater attention to targeted differentiation, more engaging learner experiences and the plurilingualism approach have been agreed upon by staff as measures to enhance learning.

As a school, we remain wholly committed to maintaining and improving our high standards of teaching and learning, in all curricular areas.

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;