An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Scoil Maria Assumpta</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Ballyphehane Cork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>20389T</td>
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Date of inspection: 24-05-2018
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; a response was not received from the board.

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.
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, and Wellbeing).
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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates of inspection</th>
<th>24-05-2018</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inspection activities undertaken</strong></td>
<td><strong>2018</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Meetings with principal and in-school leadership team</td>
<td>• Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meeting with representatives of the board of management, including a parent representative</td>
<td>• Observation of teaching and learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Meeting with teachers</td>
<td>• Examination of pupils’ work</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Review of relevant documents</td>
<td>• Interaction with pupils</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives</td>
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SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Maria Assumpta is a vertical primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross. The school participates in the Department’s Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) programme and receives support through the School Completion Programme. The current school enrolment is 189 pupils. There are currently 177 girls enrolled across ten mainstream classes and 12 pupils enrolled in two mixed classes for pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Attendance for the majority of pupils is good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

• The quality of pupils’ learning achievements is of a high standard and the pupils display positive levels of motivation and interest in their learning.
• The pupils’ literacy and numeracy skills are commendable and a range of effective initiatives have successfully led to improvements in these areas of learning; there is now scope to further develop literacy comprehension skills.
• The overall quality of teaching, including the teaching of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good.
• The quality of support for pupils’ well-being is very good; interactions between pupils and school staff are respectful and fair, and pupils grow as learners during a diverse range of experiences that are challenging and supportive.
• The overall quality of leadership and management is very good.
• The quality of school self-evaluation is good; there is potential to broaden the evidence base prior to setting targets and to monitor the impact of initiative on pupil learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• A structured approach to the development of comprehension skills should be implemented to further enhance pupil achievement in literacy.
• A broader evidence base should be utilised in the setting of clearer and more measurable targets for school self-evaluation (SSE) and strategies for the ongoing monitoring of the implementation of initiatives should be developed to ensure that they are impacting on pupil learning.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS’ LEARNING

- The quality of pupils’ learning achievements is of a high standard. The pupils display positive levels of motivation and interest in their learning. They are making progress in line with their abilities across a range of curricular areas. They demonstrated an ability to work both independently and collaboratively in a purposeful way. According to the parent questionnaires administered during the evaluation, the majority of parents agreed that their child is doing well in the school.

- The pupils’ overall achievement in literacy and numeracy is good. A range of initiatives including Mata sa Rang is being used effectively to consolidate a variety of mathematical skills. Pupils have ample opportunities to engage in activity-based learning and their ability to engage in problem solving is highly commendable.

- A number of effective initiatives have successfully led to improvements in literacy. Most pupils read a variety of reading materials with appropriate fluency and accuracy. A structured approach to the development of comprehension skills would further enhance pupil achievement in this area. Pupils produce good quality written work in a range of genres.

- Cothaíonn na múinteoirí atmaisféar dearfach i leith na Gaeilge sa scoil agus tá Gaeilge in úsáid go forleathan taobh amuigh den rang Gaeilge. Léiríonn formhór na ndaltaí leibhéal oirúnahach tuisceana sa Ghaeilge agus tá foclóir maith ag cuid diobh. Ní mór anois deiseanna níos rialta a chleachtadh i dtascanna fiorchumarsáideachacha chun a bhféinmhuinín a neartú a thuilleadh. Léann tromlach na ndaltaí le cruinneas agus liofacht réasúnta ach ba chóir a bhfeictear fás i dteagmháil, a lorg i dtaispeánaithe. The teachers cultivate a positive atmosphere in relation to Irish in the school and Irish is used widely outside of Irish classes. Pupils display an appropriate understanding in Irish and some of them have a good vocabulary. More regular opportunities should now be provided for pupils to practise Irish in authentic communicative tasks to further strengthen their self-confidence. The majority of pupils can read with reasonable accuracy and fluency but extra reading materials should be provided for them.

- Noteworthy learning achievements are in evidence in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education and the school has participated successfully in the Green Schools Programme for a number of years. A cross-curricular, thematic approach to language development is used successfully in infant classes and is supported effectively through Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. The quality of pupils’ project work is praiseworthy. Very good quality displays of pupils’ work are a feature throughout the school.

- The quality of provision for pupils with SEN is very good. Individual learning programmes for pupils with SEN are based on their priority learning needs and the learning targets are generally specific and measurable. A wide variety of successful individual and in-class interventions is implemented in the school to good effect, and there are high levels of collaboration between teachers. There is effective provision in the special classes for pupils with ASD with good use of available resources. The National Educational Psychological Service, Continuum of Support is implemented effectively throughout the school.
2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching, including the teaching of pupils with SEN, is very good. The teachers are highly committed to their work. They demonstrate a keen awareness of pupils’ learning needs and styles, and adapt their teaching appropriately. The teachers ensure that the pupils engage in a variety of collaborative and active learning activities. A wide range of resources, including effective use of Information and Communications Technology, is used very successfully to enrich teaching and to support and motivate the pupils in their learning.

- In responses to questionnaires administered during the evaluation, almost all parents agreed that the quality of teaching in the school is good.

- The quality of teacher planning is good and many teachers engage successfully in collaborative planning and the sharing of good practice. Some teachers’ planning has a clear focus on learning outcomes and objectives, and provides details on how the curriculum is differentiated for pupils with additional learning needs. This good practice should be extended.

- The quality of assessment is good. Some very good practice was noted, including the use of checklists to monitor attainment of knowledge and skills in mainstream classes and very effective use of diagnostic testing in support settings. This very good practice should be extended across the school to further support learning, along with increased use of pupil self-assessment approaches.

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

- The quality of support for pupils’ well-being is very good. Interactions between pupils and school staff are respectful, and pupils grow as learners during a diverse range of experiences. All teachers are committed to the well-being of their pupils and a strong ethos of care permeates the life of the school. A weekly assembly celebrates important moments in the life of the school and provides an opportunity to acknowledge the achievements of pupils. The strong links that have been formed with parents, the local community and an array of outside agencies is a notable feature of the school. A wide range of initiatives ensure that parents and members of the community play an active part in many aspects of school life. The home school liaison teacher works diligently to support the ongoing development of these relationships.

- Pupil voice is nurtured and promoted, and an active Students’ Council, facilitated by the principal, works effectively in the school and enables effective development of pupil leadership skills.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The overall quality of leadership and management is very good.

- The board of management meets regularly and is highly effective in supporting the ongoing work of the school. A parents’ association has been established recently and the board is commended in its efforts to develop this.
• The recently appointed principal demonstrates high levels of commitment to the school and creates a positive sense of team-work and collaboration amongst the staff, and across the whole school community. She promotes a culture of improvement and collaboration in teaching and learning.

• She is ably supported by a diligent in-school leadership team, whose range of duties contributes very effectively to the management of the school. Other teachers who are not appointed members of the in-school management team, take on a variety of responsibilities and contribute in a significant way to the life of the school.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

• The quality of school self-evaluation is good. The school has engaged well in the SSE process in the development of their DEIS plan. Key areas have been identified for improvement and a range of action plans has been developed to address these areas. The use of a broader evidence base would assist in the setting of clearer and more measurable targets for all areas. Strategies for the ongoing monitoring of the implementation of initiatives should be developed to ensure that they are impacting on pupil learning.

• The quality of whole-school planning is very good and policies and plans are reviewed on a regular basis.

The school capacity to develop further is very good and a strong commitment to the ongoing review and development of practices has been demonstrated.
**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Very Good</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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</td>
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<td><strong>Good</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas</td>
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<td><strong>Fair</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils’ learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve</td>
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<td><strong>Weak</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;</td>
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