

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation**  
**Management, Leadership and Learning**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Scoil Bhríde
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Cannistown Navan County Meath
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	15104T

**Date of inspection: 08-02-2018**



## **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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

## Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	08-02-2018
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <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>• Meeting with teachers</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</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

Scoil Bhríde is a vertical, co-educational primary school, under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Meath. The staff consists of the sixteen mainstream classes, six special education teachers and an administrative principal. The attendance levels of the 426 pupils currently enrolled are very good.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The overall learning achievements of pupils are very good and they present as extremely confident and motivated learners.
- Teaching is of a very high quality overall with scope for teachers to share highly effective practices.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very successful.
- Support for pupils' well-being is very effective.
- The quality of leadership and management is very good; there is potential to strengthen the roles of the in-school management (ISM) team in leading learning.
- The capacity for school improvement is very strong.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Whole school structures should be established to facilitate the sharing and implementation of the highly effective pedagogical practices observed during the evaluation.
- In reviewing the leadership roles of the ISM team, priority should be given to the leading of learning and to whole-school planning and improvement.

### DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall learning achievements of pupils are very good. They are confident, motivated and interested learners who take great pride in their learning accomplishments. The overall quality of work on display and in copybooks is highly commendable. Pupils' achievements in summative assessments are at a very good standard.
- Pupils' oral language competencies are very well developed, enabling them to articulate opinions, debate and justify their thinking with ease. To extend these competencies further, pupils should be encouraged to record and categorise new vocabulary as it arises incidentally during lessons. Pupils write to a very high standard across a range of genres in

both English and Irish. They recite a broad selection of poems and rhymes with expression. Pupils read confidently and employ comprehension strategies effectively. *Is inmholta mar atá ard chaighdeán bainte amach ag na daltaí i labhairt agus i gceart-úsáid na mbriathra sa Ghaeilge. (The very high standard achieved in speaking and in the correct use of verbs in Irish, is commendable.)*

- Pupils' learning in Mathematics is very good. They discuss concepts and processes competently and display a very good ability to engage in higher-order mathematical thinking and reasoning. Overall, pupils have very good problem-solving skills; they would benefit from more regular opportunities to engage in open-ended mathematical tasks. Pupils' practical and investigative work in Science is very good. Their scientific skills are developed to a very high level enabling them to initiate interesting investigations and engage in worthwhile independent learning.
- Pupils have a very good knowledge of a broad range of topics in History and Geography. Nevertheless, aspects of their learning about the history of their own locality should be developed more consistently. Pupils' enjoyment of their learning in Music is readily apparent and performances in Music observed during the evaluation were of a very high quality. There is scope to ensure that pupils' knowledge of the elements and concepts of music is developed consistently as they progress up through the school. During the evaluation, exceptionally high-quality learning was observed in Visual Arts and pupils displayed a very good knowledge of artists.

## **2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING**

- The overall quality of teaching is very good. Teachers employ a wide range of methodologies to facilitate pupils' active involvement in lessons. Many examples of exemplary teaching were observed during the evaluation; these practices were characterised by highly effective teacher questioning, challenging and interesting learning activities and optimal pupil participation and engagement. In a few instances, teaching approaches did not facilitate pupils' deep engagement and lesson content was insufficiently challenging for the more able pupils. In these settings, a greater emphasis should be placed on open-ended questions to stimulate and challenge pupils more consistently. Given the exemplary teaching observed in a significant minority of classes, there is also potential to develop whole-school structures which would enable teachers to share pedagogical practices that have proven particularly successful at improving learning.
- Support for pupils with SEN is of a very high standard. Intervention strategies, including in-class and withdrawal models, are employed successfully to progress pupils' literacy, numeracy and social skills. Detailed individual education plans (IEPs) are prepared and reviewed regularly; there is scope, in a few instances, to ensure that learning targets are sufficiently measurable. Team teaching is employed effectively to support differentiated learning for pupils, with examples of exemplary practice noted. Teachers should collaboratively reflect on these interventions and consider how best to deploy team teaching methodologies to build on the very effective pedagogical styles and skills of individual teachers.
- The overall quality of assessment is very good and assessment practices are well established. Pupils' work is corrected carefully with many examples of very good formative feedback evident. It is noteworthy that, in many instances, pupil self-assessment and peer-assessment strategies are used to very good effect, enabling pupils to reflect on and improve their work. In a few instances, teachers made very effective use of digital technologies to assess pupils'

learning during lessons. This good practice should be extended and pupils afforded greater opportunities to use digital technologies as learning tools. To this end, the board of management might usefully consider improving the range of digital technologies in the school.

- Teachers' individual planning identifies clear and relevant learning objectives that are contextualised to the pupils' learning needs. However, in questionnaires administered as part of the evaluation, a significant minority of teachers reported that whole-school curricular policies do not adequately inform teaching and learning. The intended review of whole-school curricular plans should clarify content and learning outcomes for each class level and provide more comprehensive guidance to teachers to support their planning and practice.

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

- The support for pupils' well-being is very effective. In responses to Inspectorate questionnaires, all pupils agreed that they feel safe in their class and most agreed that they like school. Teachers are very successful in cultivating an affirming learning environment within which pupils' varying interests and abilities are encouraged and developed. In questionnaires, almost all parents agreed that their child enjoys school.
- Pupils are provided with a broad range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Pupil leadership is promoted through their involvement in the *Green Schools Programme*. Consideration should be given to establishing a pupil council to further promote the voice of the pupil in the decision-making processes of the school.

### **4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

- The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The board of management ensures that effective structures are in place to guide the management of the school. The core values and ethos of the school clearly underpin its day-to-day work. While agreed reports are prepared following each board meeting, responses in Inspectorate questionnaires indicate that parents and teachers would welcome additional information on the work of the board of management.
- The principal demonstrates very good leadership. She sets high expectations for the school community and works purposefully and effectively with the deputy principal to ensure that the very high standards in teaching and learning are maintained. The ISM team carries out a suitable balance of curricular, pastoral and administrative duties very effectively. Currently, staff are identifying how the management roles can have a better impact on the improvement priorities of the school. In reviewing leadership roles and responsibilities, priority should be given to leading curriculum planning and implementation to ensure that the whole-school plan guides classroom practice usefully.
- Systems are in place to facilitate home-school communication and parents are afforded opportunities to meet with teachers to discuss their child's progress. The school website facilitates the sharing of policies and information about school events and activities. Some responses to parent and teacher questionnaires demonstrate a need for the board to continue to monitor the effectiveness of the school's protocols in relation to communication. The parents' association has provided valuable assistance to the school and organised worthwhile information evenings for parents.

## **5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION**

- Although the school is not currently engaging in the school self-evaluation (SSE) process due to national industrial action, previous action planning is impacting positively on teaching and learning. The school's capacity to develop further is very good. The staff, principal and board demonstrate a strong commitment to ongoing school improvement.

## **6. CHILD PROTECTION**

During the evaluation, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The school principal is aware that revised child protection procedures for primary and post-primary schools came into effect on 11 December 2017 and arrangements are in place to begin the process of implementing these procedures.
2. The name of the designated liaison person for child protection matters was prominently displayed near the main door of the school / in the school's reception area.
3. The school has a child protection policy in place.
4. All teachers are aware that they are mandated persons and of their responsibilities in that regard.

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

# **Appendix**

School response to the report

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

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

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**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 welcomes affirmation provided by the report of the high standards in the school.

It is heartening to note that the report findings reflect very good results in areas where the school has invested significant time and resources in implementing new programmes such as reading, writing, maths and the Aistear Programme. It is the board's intention to incorporate the report's recommendations into Scoil Bhríde's school plan. Every effort will be made to implement these recommendations, as we believe in and encourage best practice in all areas to provide optimum learning experiences for the children in our care.



## 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
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;