

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Annagh Hill National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Ballyglunin Tuam County Galway
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	20448J

Date of inspection: 07-11-2019



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

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 inspector 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 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.

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, 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

Dates of inspection	05-11-2019 — 07-11-2019
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 teachers and to board of management representatives

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Anagh Hill National School is a co-educational primary school in the parish of Kilmoylan and Cumber, approximately 13 kilometres from Tuam, Co Galway. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam, with four mainstream teachers, one of whom is the principal, and two special education teachers (SETs), one of whom also works in a nearby school. At the time of the evaluation, there were 101 pupils enrolled. School attendance is very good overall.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of learning across the curriculum is good overall, with scope to improve the whole-school approach to developing handwriting.
- The overall quality of teaching is good, with teachers demonstrating commitment to implementing effective teaching methods; *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* has been not been implemented yet.
- Support for pupils’ well-being is highly commendable, with a caring, inclusive and welcoming atmosphere evident.
- The targets in support plans for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) need to be reviewed.
- School leadership and management is very effective, and the principal demonstrates very good leadership skills.
- Work undertaken in school self-evaluation (SSE) is very good overall, with the board of management, pupils and parents having an active role in the process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A whole-school approach to handwriting should be implemented to ensure greater consistency in penmanship and presentation at each class level.
- Specific, measurable and time-bound targets should be identified and resulting progress monitored in all support plans for pupils with SEN.
- *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* should be implemented.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of pupils' learning is good overall. Most pupils demonstrated good knowledge of the work covered across a range of curricular areas and were articulate in describing what they had learned. They were actively engaged in their learning during the various lessons and activities observed throughout the school.
- Most pupils achieve a good standard in English, with some achieving very good outcomes. Whole-school approaches to comprehension strategies help to develop reading skills in English. It is commendable that *Literacy Lift-Off* and paired reading have been introduced. There is scope to further develop the range of differentiated reading experiences provided for all pupils.
- Whole-school approaches to writing ensure that pupils in all classes experience a variety of genres. While the majority of pupils' handwriting is generally clear and the presentation of their work is neat, a whole-school approach to handwriting should be implemented to ensure greater consistency in penmanship and presentation at each class level.
- Tá cumas na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge ag beagnach gach rang-leibhéal go maith. Is féidir leis an gcuide is mó de na daltaí iad féin a chur in iúl agus tá siad ábalta ceisteanna a chur agus a fhreagairt go muiníneach. *The pupils' ability in Irish at almost all class levels is good. Most of the pupils are able to introduce themselves and are able to pose and answer questions confidently.*
- Pupils' achievement in Mathematics is good overall with a significant minority achieving very good outcomes. There is a maths-rich environment in each classroom and learning setting. During the evaluation, good use was made of educational resources to enhance learning in the subject. To further develop concepts in Mathematics, the real life use and practical application of the skills to be learned should be a focus in each lesson.
- Work done in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) is praiseworthy, with skills development and guided discovery learning receiving due attention. The school garden and polytunnel enhance learning in this area. Classroom and corridor displays demonstrate the breadth and quality of pupils' work across various curricular areas.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The quality of teaching is good overall, with aspects of the teaching observed ranging from very good to satisfactory. Each teacher demonstrates commitment to adapting his or her own teaching practice to enhance learning experiences. Team teaching and in-class support have been introduced. It is recommended that the use of such teaching methods be increased. Group teaching was observed in most classrooms during the evaluation; there is a need to differentiate activities and lessons more effectively in a few classes.
- Teachers' planning and preparation are good overall. Engagement with the *Primary Language Curriculum* (PLC) is evident in teachers' written plans and good-quality monthly records are maintained. To enhance this good practice, specific learning outcomes and key vocabulary to be taught should be identified in teachers' fortnightly plans.
- The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) *Continuum of Support* is implemented and overall good-quality student support plans are provided for each pupil receiving extra support. The learning targets in support plans for pupils with special educational needs should be revised, however, to ensure that they are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timed (SMART).

- Commendable work has been done on maintaining detailed assessment files for each pupil. Each teacher also maintains a useful assessment folder containing information on the progress of each pupil in their class. Digital portfolios of pupils' work are also being developed and maintained.
- The school uses some diagnostic tests to identify pupils' individual learning needs. The range of diagnostic testing should be expanded, particularly in Mathematics, to ensure supplementary support is focused on the areas of learning of greatest priority.
- *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* has been not yet been implemented in the school. It is recommended that *Aistear* be implemented.

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

- Support for pupils' well-being is highly commendable. There is a caring, inclusive and welcoming atmosphere throughout the school. Respectful and supportive relationships were evident between teachers and pupils and between the pupils themselves.
- In their questionnaire responses, pupils' responses indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the school. They agreed that their teachers pay attention to what they say, explain things clearly and that it is a good school in their view.
- Pupils' holistic development is nurtured very successfully. They engage in a variety of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, including Green Schools, the Pieta House Amber Flag initiative and a wide range of sporting activities.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The overall quality of leadership and management is very good.
- The board of management has overseen the maintenance and development of the school building and grounds to a high standard. The school is very well equipped with educational teaching resources and Digital Learning Technologies. The board meets regularly, as required, and demonstrates very good commitment to enhancing and improving the quality of education provided. School accounts are certified annually.
- The principal demonstrates very good leadership skills. He leads the implementation of whole-school approaches to teaching and learning in a very effective manner. Each member of the in-school management (ISM) team demonstrates effective collaboration with the principal in the day-to-day management of the school and has a clearly identified set of duties. It is recommended that each post-holder submit an annual report on their work to the board of management.
- There is very good communication between the school and parents. Parents are kept informed of the work of the school through termly newsletters, regular emails and a very well-maintained website. The school has established a parents' association recently, which will continue to organise the various school events previously run by informal parent committees. In their questionnaires, parents expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the school. All respondents agreed that the school is well run, that teaching is good in the school, and that they feel welcome in the school.
- The school reported that it provides placements for student teachers regularly. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and is included among the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers, as it can provide valuable benefits for teachers, pupils and the teacher education institute.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of SSE is very good. There is evidence that the focus placed on writing genres and comprehension strategies in English has been very effective in improving pupils' outcomes in this area. The school has shared its SSE report and school improvement plan with the parents and published them on their website.
- The board of management, parents and pupils are given an active and meaningful role in the SSE process. The school has identified numeracy as its next area of focus and work has begun in gathering and analysing data and setting targets for improvement.
- The board has completed the policy and legislative checklist of their ongoing process of policy review. Commendably, it has a long term plan in place for the cyclical review and development of both administrative and curricular policies.

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 Annagh Hill National School is very encouraged by the affirmations offered in various areas of this WSE-MLL report. The board is pleased to acknowledge the positive findings regarding teaching and learning. The board is delighted that the support for pupils' well-being in the school is rated as highly commendable. The Board of Management acknowledges that leadership and management is very effective and that the school's engagement with School Self-Evaluation is very good.

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 of Management accepts the recommendations of the report. The following are ways the school has addressed or will address the recommendations made.

Handwriting

The school will address this as part of ongoing School Self-Evaluation in Literacy. Cursive handwriting is to be introduced in the junior classes. Upon introduction it is the style that will be used throughout their schooling at each class level. This should ensure greater consistency in penmanship and presentation throughout the school.

Target setting in SEN

The SEN team and classroom teachers have met regarding targets for students in their support plans. Targets are being amended to ensure that they are specific, measurable, and time-bound. Support from the NCSE regarding target setting and assessment strategies has been requested.

Aistear

Training in Aistear has been sought and will be undertaken in order to implement the framework in the classroom.

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;