

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

**Whole School Evaluation**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School Name</b>	Scoil Náisiúnta Cluain na nGall
<b>Seoladh na scoile/ School Address</b>	Main Street Clonegal Co Carlow Y21 XK73
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	17514C

**Date of inspection: 10-12-2019**



## **WHAT IS WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION?**

The Whole-School Evaluation model is used to provide whole-school evaluative information, advice and support to the school. These inspections affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of educational provision in the school. In addition to evaluating leadership and management, school planning and self-evaluation, and support for pupils, the inspectors typically examine the quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English, Gaeilge, Mathematics and one other subject.

## **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 leadership and management
2. The quality of school planning and school self-evaluation
3. The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement
4. The quality of support for pupils

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

<b>Date of inspection</b>	10-12-2019
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting with principal and deputy principal</li><li>• Meeting with the board of management</li><li>• Meeting with parent representatives</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analysis of parent and pupil questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Feedback to senior management team and teachers</li><li>• Feedback to parent representatives</li><li>• Feedback to board of management</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Náisiúnta Cluain na nGall is a co-educational primary school catering for boys and girls from junior infants to sixth class. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. School staffing includes an administrative principal, five mainstream class teachers and three support teachers, two of whom are based in special classes for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). The school also has part-time access to an additional support teacher who is based in another school in the locality. There are 129 pupils enrolled currently and pupil attendance levels are very good.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The quality of leadership and management is very good; the principal fosters a positive school climate very effectively and promotes very high standards in teaching and learning.
- Approaches to school planning and school self-evaluation (SSE) are very effective; a strong, collaborative whole-school culture of improvement planning is well embedded.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is very good overall.
- Cé go bhfuil na daltaí in ann roinnt ceisteanna simplí a chur agus a fhreagairt i nGaeilge, téann sé dian ar chuid acu comhráite nádúrtha a dhéanamh. *Although pupils are able to ask and answer a selection of simple questions in Irish, some find it difficult to make natural conversation.*
- Whole-school approaches to promoting pupils' skills in mental mathematics and problem-solving are highly commendable; there is potential to refine approaches to differentiation for more able pupils during whole-class teaching of mathematics lessons.
- The quality of support for pupils is very good with very effective provision in place for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ó thaobh múineadh na Gaeilge de, ba chóir do na hoidí diriú ar chomhdhluthú rialta na foghlama chun scileanna labhartha na ndaltaí a shíneadh. *With regard to the teaching of Irish, teachers should focus on regular revision of learning to extend pupils' oral language skills.*
- Teachers should place an additional focus on the use of open-ended questions during mathematics lessons to stimulate pupils' mathematical thinking further.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management is very good. In questionnaires administered during the evaluation, almost all parents stated that the school is well run and that they feel welcome in the school.
- The board of management provides very effective and committed management to the school, overseeing the maintenance and resourcing of the building to a very high standard. Regular meetings are held and agreed reports disseminated; the board should also consider issuing an annual report on the operation of the school. The board plays an active role in policy formation and review. Commendably, the school's enrolment policy has been recently reviewed, although an additional revision is required to ensure that the policy fully reflects the very positive inclusive practice evident throughout the school.
- The principal's work in leading teaching and learning and in creating a shared vision for the school community is highly commendable. She fosters a very effective and positive school climate in which very high standards in teaching and learning are promoted. Structures which support teachers' collaborative practice are well established and very good practice in respect of developing teachers' leadership capacity is evident.
- The principal is capably supported by a very effective in-school leadership team. Commendably, their roles and responsibilities have been reviewed to reflect the school's priorities and the board has also been provided with a report on the specific roles and responsibilities of each post holder. While very effective communication practices among the leadership team are evident, more regular formal meetings of the team should be introduced to strengthen the leadership structures of the school further.
- A culture of reflective practice is well established in the school; notably, a very high quality self-review of the school's priorities has been undertaken using the Department's *Looking at Our School 2016: A Quality Framework for Primary Schools (2016)*.
- Very good relations exist between the school and parents with worthwhile systems of communication in place to update parents on their child's progress.
- The school facilitates the placement of student teachers from initial teacher education (ITE) school placement programmes; this engagement in ITE programmes is welcome.

### 2. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL PLANNING AND SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- Approaches to school planning and SSE are very effective. Curricular policies are clear and provide comprehensive guidance to teachers. A wide range of organisational policies contributes to the smooth functioning of the school. Whole-school approaches to policy development and review are particularly effective; the review process is collaborative and appropriately focused on improving pupils' learning outcomes.
- The quality of teachers' individual planning is very good; planning is comprehensive and reflects the range of pupils' learning needs. Detailed monthly reports provide an overview of curriculum implementation throughout the school.
- The school has engaged very effectively with the SSE process and improvement plans in literacy and numeracy are implemented consistently. A strong, collaborative culture of school improvement planning is well embedded and the SSE process is used very successfully to manage change and plan for improvement.

### 3. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is very good.
- Observed lessons consolidated pupils' prior learning, were appropriately paced and structured, and included a broad range of engaging methodologies. Teachers explicitly teach subject-specific language, and encourage pupils to use this language independently. Lessons are integrated across subject areas which reinforces pupils' knowledge and develops their ability to transfer their learning across the curriculum.
- Teaching and learning in English is very effective; a review of assessment data indicates that pupils are attaining very well. A highly effective early intervention programme supports the development of pupils' early literacy skills. While pupils' written work is monitored, some variation in the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work was noted. The clear expectations for the presentation of written work outlined in the whole-school plan for English should be implemented consistently. Pupils' progress in reading is carefully monitored and pupils were observed to read fluently and confidently. Their contributions to whole-class discussions about their novels were carefully considered and thought-provoking. In their responses to questionnaires however, a significant minority of pupils reported that they either did not know or did not think they were doing well at reading. The school should consider introducing a guided reading approach in middle and senior classes, with a view to enriching pupils' reading experiences further. Whole-school approaches to the development of pupils' oral language skills are very effective and pupils receive regular opportunities to work collaboratively. In a few instances during the evaluation, class discussions would have been richer if pupils had received more opportunities to engage in extended dialogue with their peers on a whole-class basis. An increased emphasis on the promotion of peer-to-peer dialogue during whole-class discussions will optimise provision for oral language development.
- Tá cáilíocht an teagaisc agus na foghlama sa Ghaeilge go maith ar an iomlán, agus tá forbairt ar an nGaeilge aitheanta go cuí ag an scoil mar réimse feabhsúcháin scoile uile. Cothaítear cultúr Gaelach go h-éifeachtach trí fhilíocht, amhránaíocht agus trí húsáid na Gaeilge go neamhfhoirmiúil. Léiríonn na daltaí spéis sa Ghaeilge agus tá siad spreagtha chun foghlama. Cé go bhfuil siad in ann roinnt ceisteanna simplí a chur agus a fhreagairt, téann sé dian ar chuid acu comhráite nádúrtha a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge. Ba chóir do na hoidí díriú ar chomhdhluthú rialta na foghlama chun scileanna labhartha na ndaltaí a shíneadh. Tugtar deiseanna rialta do dhaltá scríbhneoireacht fheidhmiúil sa Ghaeilge a chleachtadh ach b'fhiú béim níos rialta a chur ar scríbhneoireacht neamhspleách. *The quality of teaching and learning in Irish is good overall and the school has rightly identified the development of pupils' Irish as a whole-school improvement priority. An Irish culture is effectively created through poetry, song-singing and through informal use of Irish. Pupils display an interest in Irish and they are motivated to learn. Although they are able to ask and answer a selection of simple questions, some find it difficult to make natural conversation in Irish. Teachers should focus on regular revision of learning to extend pupils' oral language skills further. Regular opportunities are given to pupils to practise functional writing in Irish but an additional emphasis on independent writing is advised.*
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil attainment in Mathematics is very good. Whole-school approaches to promoting pupils' skills in mental mathematics and problem-solving are implemented consistently. The teaching of new mathematical concepts is clearly grounded in pupils' real-life experiences. Very effective differentiation for pupils' learning needs was observed, with additional extension tasks provided for more able pupils as they worked independently. There is potential to develop differentiation practices for more able pupils during

lesson delivery. An additional focus on the use of open-ended questions is advised to stimulate pupils' mathematical thinking further.

- Teaching and learning in Drama is very effective with evidence of incremental progression and development in pupils' learning. Teachers provide discrete lessons; Drama is also used very well as a methodology and integrated effectively with other subjects. Pupils show a very good ability to explore, reflect upon and articulate their learning through and from Drama. While a clear emphasis is placed on educational drama, performance drama is also promoted on a whole-school level; during these performances, pupils entered into role and character very effectively.
- Assessment practices are very effective. Teachers use a wide range of assessments to ascertain pupils' progress. Pupils' attainment in standardised tests is carefully analysed and used to inform whole-school approaches to teaching. Particularly noteworthy practices include carefully-maintained pupil assessment folders which demonstrate progression in pupils' learning across the curriculum and provide an overview of the breadth and balance of pupils' learning experiences.

#### **4. QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS**

- The quality of support for pupils is very good. An inclusive school environment is established which emphasises pupils' social and emotional well-being and promotes very high standards of pupil behaviour. The school provides a range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities which enriches pupils' educational experiences. In questionnaires administered during the evaluation, most pupils reported that they like this school and that they feel safe in their class.
- Very effective structures are in place to promote the development of pupil voice. Pupils are involved in the student council, the production of an annual school magazine, the Green Schools Committee and the Active Schools Committee.
- Digital technologies are used to very good effect in supporting pupils' learning. The school is recognised as a *Digital School of Distinction*.
- Provision for pupils with SEN is very good. The overall system of support is well organised and worthwhile structures are in place to facilitate ongoing communication between support teachers and class teachers. Very effective teaching was observed in all support settings. Useful support plans are in place to guide provision. Overall, targets in these plans are very clear and closely linked to pupils' priority needs. In a few instances, targets in support plans would benefit from being more specific and measurable, and informed more explicitly by the results of available diagnostic assessments.
- Teaching and learning in special classes for pupils with ASD is very effective. A broad range of ASD-specific teaching methodologies allows pupils to work individually and collaboratively. Very effective strategies are in place to support integration of pupils in mainstream classes.

## 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
<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. 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;

# **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 Scoil Náisiúnta Cluain na nGall are pleased to acknowledge the whole school evaluation report and accept and approve the positive findings. The evaluation affirms the dedication and commitment of the staff and acknowledges the collegiate approach by all partners of education in the school. Scoil Náisiúnta Cluain na nGall will continue to strive for excellence in every domain to maximise the outcome for all stakeholders.

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

We note the recommendations and wish to acknowledge that they are being addressed on a continual basis in the context of our ongoing work on school self evaluation. With reference to the school's Enrolment policy the additional revision has been completed and ratified to reflect the positive inclusive practice which is evident throughout the school.