

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

**Whole School Evaluation**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School Name</b>	Scoil Ghráinne Community National School
<b>Seoladh na scoile/ School Address</b>	Phibblestown Clonee Dublin 15
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	20247W

**Date of inspection: 05-12-2018**



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Department of  
Education and Skills

## **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, in this inspection, Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE).

## **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 did not meet the requirements in relation to 5 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, the school has subsequently furnished evidence of compliance with these requirements.

## Whole-School Evaluation

<b>Date of inspection</b>	05-12-2018
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting with principal</li><li>• Meeting with the board of management</li><li>• Meeting with parent representatives</li><li>• Meeting with SEN team</li><li>• Meeting with in-school leadership and management team</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</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 Ghráinne Community NS, established in 2008, is a co-educational primary school in Phibblestown, Dublin 15, under the patronage of the Dublin Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board. The teaching staff comprises an administrative principal and deputy principal, twenty-six mainstream teachers and an allocation of 15.5 special education teachers, four of whom are assigned as language teachers. The school hosts two classes for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). For the majority of pupils, English is their second language. The attendance levels of the 687 pupils enrolled are very good.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- Teaching, learning and achievement in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) are very good; the quality of care and support for the pupils' wellbeing is a significant strength of the school.
- The quality of teaching is commendable, though there is scope to further develop teachers' practice in relation to the teaching of English as an additional language (EAL).
- There is good leadership provided by the principal, board of management and the in-school leadership and management team and they enable all staff members to work collaboratively for the benefit of the school.
- The school effectively uses the school self-evaluation (SSE) process for the purpose of school improvement.
- The overall quality of support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good, nevertheless, there are gaps in how these supports are organised and planned.
- Overall, there are good assessment practices in the school, though insufficient use is made of diagnostic assessment to inform additional support programmes of learning and to track pupils' progress.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school should incorporate best practice in EAL assessment and pedagogy to support and enrich the pupils' language proficiency in all settings.
- In providing additional support for pupils, the special education teachers should implement the Continuum of Support framework as fully as possible so that those with the greatest need get the most support.
- A school-wide approach to the effective use of assessment for the ongoing tracking of pupils' progress should be put in place.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- The quality of school leadership and management is good. The board of management ensures the school is well-run, secure and inclusive, and attends to school policy matters with competence. The principal provides good leadership. He enables all staff to work collaboratively for the holistic development of pupils and he fosters very good relations with parents, staff members and the community. The in-school leadership and management team members carry out their responsibilities effectively and ably lead committees to support improvements in teaching and learning.
- The management of resources is very good. The school hosts additional facilities including a library, sensory rooms and a garden area. All teachers capably use a wide variety of teaching resources and prepare stimulating classroom environments. There is scope for teachers to promote context-based language across all curriculum areas to a greater extent.
- Mentoring, induction and professional development practices are well established. Teachers engage in shared planning, collaboration and reflection. The school reported that it regularly provides placements for student teachers. 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 professional benefits for teachers, pupils and the teacher education institute.
- This welcoming school fosters very good relations with the community. It has established strong links with the post-primary school which shares its campus, and with the local community. Effective communication strategies are in place to inform and support parents regarding their children's education. The parents' association provides very good support. In the Inspectorate survey conducted during the evaluation, almost all parents agree that there is a good atmosphere, the school is well run and their child feels safe and well looked after.
- The management of pupils is highly commendable. All staff members are praised for their skilful implementation of the whole-school approach to positive discipline. This centres on mutual respect, dialogue and acceptance. The pupils are exemplary in their behaviour and attitudes towards one another. In the Inspectorate survey, most pupils agree they feel safe and have learned about bullying, and agree that this is a good school.

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

- The overall quality of school planning and school self-evaluation (SSE) is good. The school engages very competently in the SSE process for school improvement. The process is underpinned by collaboration and consultation. It would be beneficial for the school to review the previous SSE plan to ascertain the impact that stated targets have had on learning.
- Appropriate organisational policies are in place which have been collaboratively devised. Where curriculum plans have most impact, for example, the English plan, they give clear guidance to teachers on all relevant aspects of curricular provision. The board should make arrangements for the review of curriculum plans over time, and set out dates accordingly.
- The quality of planning by mainstream teachers is good, with appropriate focus on new vocabulary and on the Primary Language Curriculum, where relevant. Teachers should ensure that the learning objectives in their short-term planning are more closely focused on the needs and abilities of pupils in their particular class.

- With the exception of some excellent SEN planning observed, there is insufficient ongoing programme planning to meet the priority learning needs of pupils at all levels of the Continuum of Support. It is recommended that all special education teachers prepare progressive weekly plans of support for individual pupils and groups who have been assessed with additional learning needs. This should be supplementary to mainstream classroom planning.
- The overall quality of assessment is good. A wide range of standardised and formative assessment approaches is used. Teachers monitor pupils' written work closely and provide feedback. Where assessment records were most effective, they were aligned to curriculum objectives or success criteria, and impacted on planning. It is now timely to bring greater cohesion to how assessment data is collated and used to track improvements in pupils' learning over time, most particularly for pupils with additional learning needs. To this end, it is recommended that a whole-school approach to tracking pupil progress be agreed and implemented.

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

- The overall quality of teaching and learning is commendable, with some exemplary teaching observed. Teachers use varied methods of delivery, including team teaching, and implement a range of interventions. Teaching is characterised by good lesson structure and transitions, the sharing of learning intentions and recap of prior learning. The pre-teaching of target language should be a feature of every lesson. All pupils have learned a wide range of songs and poems. There is effective play-based learning in junior infants. Pupils are highly engaged, have excellent cooperative skills and recall their learning with confidence. In their questionnaire responses, the majority of pupils stated they did not use digital technologies to support their learning. This is an area for development.
- Teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English are of a good standard overall. The pupils' early-reading skills are well taught and pupils achieve appropriate reading standards. They are enabled to write frequently and learn about a range of writing genres. It is advised that teachers ensure that the pupils' writing experiences are more closely linked to current topics of learning.
- There is scope to extend teachers' collective practices with regard to supporting the pupils' oral language skills. Teacher-led discussion and collaborative learning, are praiseworthy features of language teaching. Nevertheless, many pupils have yet to demonstrate sufficient levels of proficiency in communicating. It is recommended that robust language assessment be undertaken for pupils with language learning needs in order to determine their proficiency levels. Thereafter, appropriate support programmes should be implemented, which are regularly reviewed. In addition, the following features of EAL pedagogy should be implemented in all settings, namely, recasting, small group guided-talk sessions, drama techniques, use of visual and graphic organisers, and also language prompts.
- Baineann caighdeán cuí le teagasc agus le foghlaim na Gaeilge. Cothaíonn na hoidí dearcadh dearfach i leith na teanga tríd úsáid mhaith a bhaint as áiseanna spreagúla agus as dánta, cluichí agus rainn i rith na gceachtanna. Cruthaítear timpeallacht saibhir i bprionta. Cé go gcuireann na hoidí béim chuí ar obair bheirte, ba chóir achar níos faide a chaitheamh ar mhúineadh na n-eiseamláirí nua agus níos mó deiseanna cainte a thabhairt do na daltaí chun fíor chumarsáid a chothú. Chun cur le sealbhú scileanna teanga na ndaltaí, moltar tuilleadh nascanna a chruthú idir an obair ó bhéal agus tascanna léitheoireachta agus scríbhneoireachta.

- *There is appropriate provision for the teaching and learning of Irish. The teachers promote positive attitudes towards the language. They use stimulating resources and employ poems, games and rhymes during lessons. A print-rich environment for Irish is established. While teachers place suitable emphasis on pair work, more time should be spent on the explicit teaching of new language exemplars and further opportunities should be provided for pupils to communicate more naturally. It is advised that further links be made between oral work and both reading and writing tasks to support language acquisition for pupils.*
- The quality of teaching and learning in Mathematics is commendable. Teachers' practice incorporates clear explanation of concepts, language focus, teacher-modelling and use of concrete resources. Pupils engage in stimulating learning activities, both individually and in groups, and attain good standards. In the most effective practice, teachers related Mathematics to the pupils' everyday lives, thereby providing a context for learning and ensuring that pupils compute for a purpose. This approach, as with the solving of problems using a range of methods, should be a stronger element of all practice. Teachers should also provide extended time and opportunities for pupils to justify their answers.
- The quality of teaching and learning in SPHE is highly commendable. This is achieved through the positive school climate which nurtures the pupils' self-confidence and respect for one another. Teachers provide a balanced curriculum, incorporating mandated programmes. The quality of the pupils' learning is very good. They are encouraged to talk about their feelings and reflect on their relationships. The promotion of the 'pupil voice' and the pupils' leadership capacity is successfully achieved through their committee work, engagement in the SSE process and organisation of assemblies.

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

- The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs is good, with scope to improve how support is organised and planned. In many settings skilful, focused teaching was observed. Exemplary practice was observed in a minority of settings where diagnostic assessments were used effectively to inform comprehensive individual plans and progressive programmes of learning. It is recommended that the outcomes of diagnostic assessment be used consistently to identify the pupils' priority learning needs and targets more closely. There are varied practices with regard to aspects of provision such as identification, intervention and review. Greater cohesion is required to ensure that pupils' needs are addressed in a consistent and progressive manner. It is recommended that the school implement the Continuum of Support framework as fully as possible.
- The school provides many additional supports to ensure that all pupils participate fully in school life. A very wide range of in-school and after-school supports, activities and sports is provided. All staff members, including the special needs assistants, work cohesively to support and to enhance pupils' well-being. The school celebrates pupils' achievements and efforts. Equality and diversity are promoted in many ways, most notably through curriculum delivery, school gatherings and the celebration of different languages and festivals.

## 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**



## **Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board of Management of Scoil Ghráinne Community National School welcomes the very positive findings in our school's Whole School Evaluation- Modified Report (WSE-MOD).

The Board is particularly pleased that the findings acknowledge and affirm the quality of teaching and learning in our school as commendable and the findings that dedicated staff provide high quality education for the pupils is particularly welcomed.

The Board welcomes the finding that the good leadership provided by the principal, Board of Management and In-School Management team enable staff members to work collaboratively for the benefit of the school.

The Board of Management is extremely pleased that the quality of care and support for pupils' wellbeing and teaching and learning in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) was recognised as a significant strength of the school.

Scoil Ghráinne is a Community National School which opened in 2008. The first Board of Management was established in 2017. As a relatively new and rapidly developing school, the Board is delighted that the findings acknowledge that the school is a welcoming school which fosters very good relations with the community and has effective communication strategies to support parents in their child's education. The Board is very pleased that the report acknowledges that equality and diversity are promoted in many different ways within the school, most notably through curriculum delivery, school gatherings and the celebrations of different languages and festivals.

The Board is delighted to see that the report acknowledged that mentoring, induction and professional developmental practices are well established in the school and also welcome the finding that teachers engage in shared planning, collaboration and reflective practice. This is a tribute to the management team and to the professionalism of staff in meeting and addressing the challenges of a rapidly developing school.

The Board of Management would like to commend the principal, management team, teachers, SNAs, ancillary staff, pupils, parents and community for their ongoing commitment to Scoil Ghráinne CNS, to improve learner experiences and outcomes for pupils in our school.

## **Area 2 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 acknowledges and accepts the findings and recommendations of the report. Plans to implement the recommendations in the report are currently being addressed by the board of management, principal, In-school management team in conjunction with the staff.

In relation to the area of EAL: the school will continue to use the PSAK assessment tool to identify the needs of pupils entering the school with English as an Additional Language.

In relation to the area of providing additional supports for pupils, the SEN and mainstream classroom teachers will implement the Continuum of Support framework as fully as possible. There are many established and worthwhile practices already in place but we will ensure that all of our efforts meet the parameters as identified within the Continuum of Support.

In relation to a school-wide approach to the effective use of Assessment for the ongoing tracking of pupils' progress. The school has identified an approach that will meet this requirement and we will be rolling this out over the coming months.