An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige
Department of Education and Youth

Whole School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Scoil Mhuire
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Convent Road Clondalkin Dublin 22
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	18602E
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	21/05/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	13/10/2025

What is a 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' wellbeing
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.

Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and tackle bullying

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Child Protection</td><td>Anti-bullying</td></tr>
<tr><td>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 (revised 2023).
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 (revised 2023).
6. The board of management has ensured that arrangements are in place to provide</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013) or Bí Cineálta (2024) and this policy is reviewed annually.
2. The school's current anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils.
3. The school has appropriate initiatives in place to promote a positive and inclusive school culture and environment in line with their current policy.
4. All teachers visited report that they have read the school's current policy on anti-bullying and that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities in preventing and tackling bullying.</td></tr>
</table>

information to all school personnel on the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, (revised 2023). 7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE). 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	19/05/2025 – 21/05/2025
Inspection activities undertaken • Meetings with principal and in-school leadership team • Meeting with representatives of the board of management • Meeting with parent representatives • Meetings with teachers • Review of relevant documents • Pupil focus group	• Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires • Observation of teaching and learning • Examination of pupils' work • Interaction with pupils • Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives

School context

Scoil Mhuire is an urban primary school located in Clondalkin. It caters for pupils from junior infants to sixth class and operates under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The staff comprises an administrative principal, a deputy principal, twelve mainstream class teachers, one teacher of pupils in a special class, five special education teachers and three teachers of pupils with English as an additional language. At the time of the evaluation, there were 291 pupils enrolled in the school. During the evaluation, inspectors observed teaching and learning in a sample of settings.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning was very good; pupils presented as interested and confident learners and achieved well across curriculum areas.
- The quality of teaching was very good; teachers consistently demonstrated the capacity to manage a range of very effective teaching and learning methodologies.
- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing was very good.
- The quality of assessment was good.
- The quality of leadership and management was highly commendable.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) was very good. The school had made effective progress on its improvement actions, and there was potential to share this further with stakeholders and the wider school community.

Recommendations

- To further enhance pupils' capacity to articulate and reflect on their learning, teachers should explicitly teach subject-specific vocabulary and provide consistent opportunities for pupils to apply this language across all areas of the curriculum.
- School leaders and teachers should enhance assessment practices and embed pupils' self-assessment strategies and teachers' routine use of success criteria to enable pupils to take greater ownership of their learning.
- The board of management should revise its admission policy for the special class for autistic pupils to reflect guidance provided by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and to ensure that pupils with the greatest level of need are not prevented from accessing a place in a special class.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

- The quality of pupils' learning was very good. Pupils were motivated and engaged learners who showed confidence across a broad curriculum. They responded positively to active learning approaches and participated with enthusiasm in collaborative tasks.
- Sa Ghaeilge, ghlac daltaí páirt go dearfach agus léirigh siad leibhéal maith líofachta ó bhéal. Chuidigh múinteoirí leo an teanga a fhoghlaim trí obair bheirte, drámaíocht agus cluichí, ag cruthú ceachtanna spraíúla agus idirghníomhacha. D'úsáid múinteoirí pictiúir agus áiseanna amhairc eile chun cabhrú le daltaí. Chun líofacht a fheabhsú tuilleadh, ba cheart níos mó béime a chur ar athbhreithniú ó bhéal agus ar dheiseanna struchtúrtha a thabhairt do dhaltaí an teanga nua a chleachtadh i gcomhthéacsanna comhráite fíorúla. In Irish, pupils participated positively and demonstrated a good level of oral fluency. Teachers supported their language learning through paired work, drama, and games, creating fun and interactive lessons. Teachers used pictures and other visual aids to support pupils. To further improve fluency, greater emphasis should be placed on oral revision and providing structured opportunities for pupils to practise the new language in authentic conversational contexts.
- In English, pupils attained well in reading and comprehension. Pupils participated confidently in oral language activities, including presentations and project work. They recited a range of poems with clarity and expression. In writing, pupils engaged with a variety of genres, and copybook samples reflected the systematic development of writing skills. Written work was displayed throughout classrooms, supporting literacy development and fostering pride in learning. Teachers should now prioritise the development of pupils' understanding of genre specific features and associated vocabulary.
- In Mathematics, pupils showed a very good understanding of number operations and applied mathematical language to explain their strategies. Teachers explicitly taught mathematical vocabulary and reinforced it through modelling, classroom displays, and guided pupil discussion. Teachers should provide more structured opportunities for pupils to use subject-specific vocabulary collaboratively during problem-solving tasks and mathematical discussions to promote fluency and precision.
- In Science, pupils engaged in experiential learning through seasonal projects and school-wide initiatives. Pupils shared their ideas confidently, and they demonstrated an emerging ability to record findings. Teachers should provide more frequent opportunities for pupils to conduct hands-on experiments that allow them to predict, observe, and use scientific language meaningfully. This would help build their confidence and competence in working scientifically.

2. The quality of teaching

- The quality of teaching was very good. Lessons were clearly structured, with learning intentions shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons. Teachers displayed very strong subject knowledge and used a broad range of active learning strategies to foster very high levels of engagement. Classrooms were well organised and visually rich.
- Teachers used very effective questioning techniques to consolidate understanding and promote deeper thinking. In many lessons, pupils engaged in songs, drama, and games that supported concept exploration in accessible, enjoyable ways.
- Digital technologies were used very effectively to enhance learning, particularly through project work, presentations, and collaborative tasks. Pupils created and shared digital content, and they demonstrated a growing understanding of online safety and responsible behaviour. Teachers placed very good emphasis on media education and

supported pupils in developing digital literacy. To extend this very good practice, teachers should broaden the range of digital tools used, including those that support computational thinking and facilitate self-assessment.

- Special education teachers provided very effective support through a combination of in-class and withdrawal teaching. They collaborated well with class teachers to maintain the Continuum of Support and tailored interventions to meet pupils' needs. A review of support plans indicated that some targets were too broad. Teachers should ensure that learning targets are clearly differentiated, measurable, and aligned with pupils' specific learning profiles.
- The quality of assessment was good. Teachers in all classes maintained assessment folders containing samples of pupils' work, checklists, and teacher-designed tasks and tests. They frequently provided oral feedback to guide learning. However, assessment practices varied across the school. Teachers should now adopt a more consistent, whole-school approach that actively involves pupils in assessment. This should include embedding self-assessment strategies, introducing further peer feedback opportunities, and routinely using clear success criteria. These practices would help pupils reflect on their progress, identify their next steps in learning, and take greater ownership of their development.

3. The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing

- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing was very good. Wellbeing was promoted through visible features such as themed displays, a dedicated wellbeing noticeboard, and pupil-led initiatives.
- In the Inspectorate surveys, almost all pupils reported that they felt safe and cared for at school. During the evaluation, pupils spoke confidently about their responsibilities and described their involvement in initiatives such as the Student Council and the Green Schools' Committee. Every pupil had recently planted a native Irish tree as part of a school-wide wellbeing and sustainability initiative. This was an experience pupils described with pride.
- Wellbeing had been identified as the school's current self-evaluation focus. The emphasis on developing pupils' personal responsibility was reflected in their engagement with leadership roles, including playground leaders and committee members.
- Transitions from preschool, between class levels, and from primary to post-primary were well supported. Staff shared relevant information across settings, and systems were in place to ensure continuity for pupils. These included liaison with preschools and local post-primary schools, as well as the use of transfer documentation to ease transitions.

4. The quality of leadership and management

- The quality of leadership and management was very good. School leaders fostered a warm, collegial atmosphere underpinned by strong pastoral leadership.
- The in-school leadership team fulfilled its responsibilities effectively and adopted a collaborative, supportive approach. They also led targeted initiatives to improve attendance, with evidence of success in strengthening attendance patterns.
- The board of management demonstrated strong commitment to the effective running of the school and to supporting pupils' wellbeing and development. It actively reviewed and developed policies and helped to maintain a caring, safe school environment. Board members meaningfully contributed to school life and helped to strengthen engagement with the broader parent community. As part of the evaluation, the school's admission policy for its special class for autistic pupils was reviewed. The policy contained clauses that did not fully align with guidance from the NCSE. The board should revise this policy to reflect NCSE guidance and ensure that pupils with the greatest level of need are not prevented from accessing a place in the special class.
- Communication within the school was well established. The school maintained open and supportive lines of communication with parents, regularly updating them on their children's academic progress and social-emotional wellbeing. In parental surveys, most parents reported feeling well informed about their child's progress and they expressed confidence in how the school was managed. This partnership approach contributed positively to the school's culture of care. While the school website contained relevant information, there was scope for leaders to update it more frequently to share school improvement priorities with parents.
- The school engaged positively with initial teacher education by providing placements for student teachers.

5. The quality of school self-evaluation

- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) was very good. The school engaged meaningfully with the SSE process and identified pupil wellbeing as the current priority area. Staff, pupils, and parents completed surveys, and the resulting data informed clear, actionable targets. School leaders adopted a collaborative and reflective approach to planning, using the *Wellbeing Framework for Practice* to guide their review across the four domains.
- While parents completed surveys, they were not fully aware of the school's current SSE focus. This highlighted the need to strengthen communication and ensure that parents are more consistently informed and involved in the SSE process. School leaders should expand the use of focus groups and provide regular updates to parents to promote stronger partnerships and shared ownership of school development priorities.
- The school's previous SSE focus was on digital learning. Staff successfully implemented a whole-school online platform and introduced teacher-led digital portfolios for pupils. School leaders should now provide opportunities for pupils to take a more active role in curating and reflecting on their learning through these portfolios. This would enhance pupil ownership of learning and support further progression.

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	Examples of descriptive terms
Excellent	**Provision that is excellent** is exemplary in meeting the needs of learners. This provision provides an example for other schools and settings of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Excellent; exemplary; outstanding; exceptionally high standard; with very significant strengths
Very good	**Provision that is very good** is very effective in meeting the needs of learners and is of a very high standard. There is potential to build on existing strengths to achieve an excellent standard.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful
Good	**Provision that is good** is effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to build on existing strengths in order to address the aspects to be developed and achieve a very good standard.	Good; of good quality; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; strengths outweigh the shortcomings; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist
Requires improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard** is not sufficiently effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is good or better.	Fair; less than effective; less than sufficient; evident weaknesses that are impacting on learning; experiencing difficulty; shortcomings outweigh strengths; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard** is not meeting the needs of learners. There is immediate need for significant action to address the areas of concern.	Weak; poor; ineffective; insufficient; unacceptable; experiencing significant difficulties; serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated; requiring significant change, development and improvement to be effective

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 Mhuire, Clondalkin, welcomes this Whole-school evaluation-management, leadership and learning which highlights the strength of our school.

We acknowledge the affirmation of leadership and management and the strong sense of collegiality, the strong sense of relationships and communication evident at all levels in Scoil Mhuire.

We are pleased that the very good quality of teaching, very good quality of children's learning, digital technologies, collaborative tasks and assessment have been highlighted and the very effective support provided by our Special Education team has been acknowledged.

The Board is satisfied that the successful targeted initiatives to improve attendance have been positively noted.

The Board acknowledges and appreciates the support of the parents and the parents' association.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

As reflective practitioners, we will continue to review our teacher planning and are placing a concerted emphasis on subject specific vocabulary and genre specific features with associated vocabulary – mentioning it specifically in our planning – to ensure the pupils are given opportunities to use it across all areas of the curriculum.

Our SSE process will have a particular focus on assessment for 2025/2026 with the aim of improving pupil self-assessment encouraging the children to have ownership and take pride in their learning.

The Board of Management has reviewed the schools admission policy.