



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Whole School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning

Report

Ainm na scoile/School name	Dundar Mhuighe N S
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Dunderrow Kinsale Co. Cork
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	169400
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	28/05/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	25/09/2025

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

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:	
<i>Child Protection</i>	<i>Anti-bullying</i>
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 information to all school personnel on the	1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)</i> or <i>Bí Cineálta (2024)</i> 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.

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

Whole-school evaluation – management, leadership and learning

Dates of inspection	26/05/2025 – 28/05/2025
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

Dunderrow NS is a co-educational primary school in Dunderrow, Co. Cork. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross. At the time of this evaluation the school had 180 pupils enrolled. The staff of fourteen teachers comprised an administrative principal, eight mainstream teachers, two special-class teachers and three special education teachers.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of pupils' learning was very good; their understanding of the skills and concepts of the curriculum was evident in the very high standard of learning outcomes they achieved.
- The quality of teaching was highly commendable overall; teachers' individual and collaborative practice were very effective.
- Support for pupils' wellbeing was very successful; teachers agreed and implemented initiatives and interventions to support pupils' social and emotional development.
- Very effective practice in leadership and management was evident throughout the school.
- The quality of school self-evaluation was very good.

Recommendations

- 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 children and young people with the greatest level of need are not prevented from accessing a place in a special class.
- Teachers were advised to revise the organisation of in-class support and examine the impact of these interventions on prioritised pupils.
- In some instances, pupils were effectively provided with opportunities to reflect on their learning; there was scope to develop pupils' voice through a more focused approach to peer and self-reflection.
- At classroom level, pupils' cultural and linguistic awareness would be further progressed through the exploration of pupils' home languages, to identify similarities and differences with English and Irish.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

- The overall quality of pupils' learning was very good. They presented as very confident and capable learners, participating and engaging fully in lessons. Their motivation to learn was supported by their clear sense of attainable and challenging outcomes. Pupils demonstrated proficiency in their learning as they made meaningful connections between subjects. In doing so, pupils expressed and justified their opinions using appropriate subject-specific language. Pupils displayed the knowledge, skills and understanding for the specific curriculum areas which supported the very high standard of learning they achieved.
- Pupils' literacy skills were of a very high standard. They expressed themselves clearly and actively listened and displayed an ability to initiate and maintain discussions. In the junior classes, pupils developed expressive, receptive and pragmatic language skills through play. Pupils experienced storytelling, song-singing and rhymes in many settings, enhancing pupils' awareness of rhythm and enriching their vocabulary.
- They accessed a range of texts, including graded readers, novels and core readers. Classroom libraries were attractively displayed. Pupils were encouraged to read for pleasure and other purposes, such as research where they used digital technologies effectively. They presented their work coherently, to their peers and school partners. Pupils read fluently and with confidence, at appropriate levels. Their fluency in reading would be further progressed through use of choral and echo reading. These activities would further develop reading confidence in pupils who may feel vulnerable when asked to read individually.
- Pupils wrote with understanding across a range of genres, using their personal experiences and prior knowledge to support the writing process. Handwriting throughout the school was a very high standard. Pupils used cursive script effectively and took pride in their work.
- Cothaíodh meon an-dearfach i leith na Gaeilge tríd an scoil. Bhí daltaí in ann ceist a chur agus a fhreagairt agus cómhraí a chur ar siúl lena bpiaraí. Léiríodh cáilíochtaí foghlamtha na ndaltaí go raibh dul chun cinn céimseach á ndéanamh acu i nGaeilge. Bhain said caighdeán an-ard amach i ngramadach, i bhfoghraíocht agus ó thaobh saibhreas teanga. *A very positive attitude towards Irish was fostered throughout the school. Pupils were able to ask and answer questions and hold conversations with their peers. The quality of pupils' learning across the school demonstrated that they made incremental progress in Irish. The standards of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary were very good.*
- Pupils engaged in active learning experiences in Mathematics. Their mathematical understanding was effectively advanced through play, discussion and reasoning, and the use of concrete manipulatives to support their thinking. Pupils worked in pairs and groups, using real-life examples skilfully to support comprehension of mathematical concepts. They developed *Place value and base ten* well through games. Using digital technologies, pupils improved their procedural fluency in solving complex problems. Some pupils commendably connected percentages, fractions, and decimal fractions. In Algebra, pupils explored *Expressions and quotations*, using x and y axis. In the majority of settings, they effectively discussed features of *Shape and Space*. Senior pupils explained *Time*, clearly describing international time-zones, and the use of schedules.
- Pupils demonstrated a very good understanding of subject-specific language and skills, in the areas of History, Geography and Science. They undertook projects guided by personal interests. Their learning was scaffolded by their knowledge of local History and

Geography. Effective use of investigative approaches to Science ensured pupils developed skills of observing, questioning, and analysing. Pupils achieved very commendably in Visual Arts, Music and Drama. Through a broad range of arts-based activities, pupils developed relevant language skills and exercised their creativity meaningfully. Pupils used indoor and outdoor environments in an effective manner to support active learning during Physical Education lessons and regular movement breaks.

- A broad range of learning experiences was provided for pupils. This included opportunities to work both collaboratively and independently. During the focus group, pupils spoke very positively about their learning. They described tours to local areas of both historical and geographical interest and a range of visits from authors and members of the community. These speakers gave insights into their professional lives and addressed issues relating to farm, road and water safety, and cyberbullying. Pupils reported that their opinions were considered and respected by their teachers. They were keenly aware of the progress they had made in school and how they had improved over time.

2. The quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching was highly commendable. Teachers' individual and collaborative practice was very effective. They implemented and monitored a praiseworthy range of whole school approaches, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy. They delivered bespoke and positive feedback to pupils, in oral and written formats. Respectful interactions among pupils, and between pupils and adults were evident in all settings, contributing to a positive atmosphere.
- Teachers held high expectations for their pupils' learning. They provided personalised learning opportunities for pupils across the curriculum, based on the pupils' strengths, needs and interests. Teachers differentiated lesson content to support and challenge pupils meaningfully and they consistently worked to be responsive to the emerging learning needs of pupils. The provision of group and pair work for pupils was very effective. Teachers used open-ended questioning to progress pupils' active listening, comprehension and critical thinking skills.
- Using thematic teaching approaches, teachers connected pupils' learning across the curriculum. The school's visual environment complemented this integrated approach to learning. Displays were print-rich and contained samples of pupils' Visual Art, genre-writing and project work.
- The provision for pupils in the classes for autism was commendable. Teachers fostered a positive, inclusive culture for pupils, actively progressing their language, communication, and social skills. Visual and physical learning environments in these classes were reflective of pupils' strengths, needs, and interests. Pupils were provided with learning opportunities across the curriculum. Opportunities for integration into mainstream classes and for reverse integration into special classes were provided for pupils. There was scope for further collaborative planning between classroom teachers and teachers in special classes to ensure that all pupils are benefitting to the maximum extent from these practices.
- The provision for pupils with identified needs was effective. Support for pupils was provided in their classrooms and in withdrawal settings both individually and in small groups. Early intervention strategies in literacy and numeracy were a feature of junior classes. School support plans were implemented and monitored successfully. Pupils' learning targets informed special education teachers' weekly planning and good practice. Teachers were advised to review the organisation of in-class support and to examine the impact of these interventions on prioritised pupils. This should include agreeing pre and post assessment of initiatives, recording pupils' progress and the development of target language.

- Pupils with English as an additional language accessed relevant support, informed by effective language assessment. The school participated in the 'Say yes to languages' initiative which provides opportunities for pupils to be introduced to modern foreign language or sign language. At classroom level, pupils' cultural and linguistic awareness would be further progressed through the exploration of pupils' home languages to identify similarities and differences with English and Irish.
- The overall quality of assessment was good. Practice included the recording of teacher observation, use of data from teacher-designed tasks and the results of screening tests to inform teaching and learning. Samples of pupils' work were compiled in portfolios. In some instances, pupils were effectively provided with opportunities to reflect on their learning. There was scope to develop pupils' voice through a more focused approach to peer and self-reflection.

3. The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing

- Support for pupils' wellbeing was very successful. School leaders and teachers were committed to the holistic development of all pupils. Teachers agreed and implemented initiatives and interventions to support pupils' social and emotional development. This included the promotion of empathy, resilience, and friendship skills. Pupils were encouraged to voice their opinions in the classroom. An active and democratically elected student council was in place.
- The school provided a wide range of in-school and extra-curricular activities to support pupils' interests and to develop their sense of belonging. These activities included gymnastics, swimming, rowing and a range of team sports. Chess and Lego clubs were also included. Commendably, participation in these activities supported the pupils' sense of wellbeing, readiness for learning and ability to achieve in school. Pupils' online surveys indicated how much they enjoyed school. These surveys were very positive in general. A minority of pupils expressed differing views leaving scope for discussion and exploration of all opinions.

4. The quality of leadership and management

- Very effective practice in leadership and management was evident throughout the school. The board of management was committed to overseeing the provision of high-quality teaching and learning. The board was focused on developing a sense of community and ensuring the ethos of the school was reflected in the lived experience of the pupils. They worked to make a range of relevant resources available to staff. The principal provided proactive leadership for the school and communicated a coherent vision for the future. She was committed to maintaining and developing the high standards of teaching and learning.
- The in-school leadership team fulfilled their duties diligently, supporting the principal and ensuring effective learning experiences for pupils. The team implemented a wide range of initiatives to support teaching, learning and wellbeing. The in-school leadership team reported to the board annually, on work completed.
- The parents' association was committed to promoting partnership between home and school, and to developing an authentic sense of community for all. They communicated regularly with all parents and organised key social events for families throughout the year. The parents' association met with the students' council to offer pupils a meaningful audience and listen to their perspective on school life.
- The board reported that it provides placement for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and is included among the standards in the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers.

5. The quality of school self-evaluation

- The quality of school self-evaluation was very good. The school had engaged in the SSE process very effectively, over several cycles. School leaders had adopted a collaborative approach, consulting with pupils, parents, and teachers. The school improvement plan was shared with all school partners. This plan was used to guide and monitor the implementation of new practices. As observed in teachers' preparation and practice, the impact of the SSE process was very evident through the range of strategies used in classrooms. Both current and previous cycles of SSE were impacting meaningfully on teaching and learning in all settings.

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

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of Dunderrow NS welcomes the Whole School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning report and is very pleased to receive such a positive report. This report reflects the very good standards of Teaching & Learning achieved in our school, the very good quality of School Self-Evaluation, the very successful supports for pupils' wellbeing and the very effective quality of Leadership & Management which was evident throughout the school. We accept that this report is an accurate evaluation of our school and reflects positively on the dedication, hard-work, commitment and talents of our whole community. It shows Dunderrow NS as a very happy, inclusive, caring, welcoming and friendly school community, where pupils, staff and parents work collaboratively and cooperatively to provide all pupils with the best opportunities to succeed, grow and fulfill their potential in a safe, encouraging and caring environment.

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 of St. Dunderrow NS will implement the recommendations made by the inspectorate in this report. As reflective practitioners, these will assist us in continuing the great work in our school to further develop learning outcomes and pupil learner experiences.

The Board of Management has revised its admission policy (published in May 2025) for the for autistic pupils to reflect guidance provided by the National Council for Special Education and ensures that children and young people with the greatest level of need are not prevented from accessing a place in our special classes.

1. We recognise the importance of ensuring that in-class support is deployed effectively to maximise impact for prioritised pupils. In response to the recommendation, teachers are reviewing the organisation of additional support within lessons to ensure it is targeted appropriately and matched to identified needs. Teachers will engage with sustained support from Oide. Teachers will monitor the progress of prioritised pupils closely, using assessment information and pupil voice to inform adjustments. Teachers will review the impact of interventions regularly, ensuring that support is both purposeful and demonstrably improving outcomes for the pupils who need it most.
2. We recognise the importance of strengthening pupil voice through peer and self-reflection. To achieve this, we are embedding structured reflection activities across lessons, with regular opportunities for pupils to review progress against clear success criteria. Teachers are using strategies such as peer feedback to build confidence in articulating understanding and next steps. Staff training will focus on effective reflective practice, while the ISL team monitors impact to ensure consistency. By embedding purposeful reflection, we aim to empower pupils to take ownership of their learning and develop skills to evaluate and improve their work.
3. Dunderrow NS has a low incidence of pupils whose home language is not English. We will maintain a visual display of other languages in our school hall and we will continue to promote and identify similarities and differences with culture and language of pupils from other countries.