



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Whole School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Cloonacool National School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Cloonacool Tubbercurry Co. Sligo
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	04802J
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	05/02/2026
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	18/05/2026

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 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' wellbeing
4. The quality of leadership and management
5. The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE)

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>Bí Cineálta</i>
1. The name of the DLP and the child safeguarding statement (CSS) are prominently displayed near the main door of the school / in the reception area. Following the school's adoption of the updated procedures 2025, it is also required to display a student-friendly version incorporating the name of the DLP beside the CSS. 2. The school's child safeguarding statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment. 3. All teachers visited were aware of who to go to if they had a child protection concern. 4. The school's child safeguarding statement meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2023 or the updated procedures 2025. 5. The minutes of the last three board of management meetings contain a child	1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy using Appendix A of Bí Cineálta, it is reviewed annually (or earlier if required) and includes a student/pupil friendly version that is displayed where students/pupils and the school community can see it. 2. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, staff, parents and pupils/students. 3. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides an update to the board at each ordinary board meeting that meets the requirements of Bí Cineálta. 4. The school has appropriate initiatives in place to promote a positive and inclusive school culture and environment. 5. All staff visited report that they have read the school's Bí Cineálta policy and that they are aware of their roles and

protection oversight report in line with the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2023 or the updated procedures 2025. 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 2023 or the updated procedures 2025. 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.	responsibilities in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
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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	03/02/2026 – 05/02/2026
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

Cloonacool National School (St Michael's National School) is a co-educational primary school located in Cloonacool, County Sligo. The school has four mainstream class teachers, one of whom is the acting principal. There are two special education teachers and one teacher for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). There were 103 pupils enrolled at the time of the evaluation. The Catholic Bishop of Achonry and of Elphin is the patron of the school.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of the pupils' learning was very good.
- The overall quality of teaching was very good.
- The quality of the support for pupils' wellbeing was very good.
- The quality of school leadership and management was very good.
- The quality of SSE was very good.

Recommendations

- The teachers should implement a whole-school approach to oral presentations to enhance the pupils' oral language skills.
- The teachers should provide more opportunities for the pupils to engage in talk and discussion about their learning with their peers during every lesson.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

- The overall quality of the pupils' learning was very good.
- The learning outcomes were very good overall. The majority of the pupils displayed positive attitudes to learning and were well engaged during the lessons. They displayed very good knowledge across curricular areas, including English, Mathematics, Irish, Geography and Music.
- The pupils in the junior classes were developing pre-reading skills in a structured way. In the middle and senior classes, the pupils enjoyed engaging with novels. They created character profiles, composed acrostic poems, and wrote different endings to stories they

had read. Some of the pupils in the focus group stated that they enjoyed learning with pupils from other classes, particularly in shared reading.

- There was a wide range of books in the class libraries, including fiction and non-fiction titles, with some books in the Irish language. There was a range of very well-presented samples of the writing genres in English and Irish, in the pupils' copybooks and on display in the classrooms.
- The pupils recited a wide range of rhymes, poems and songs in English and Irish. Some of the pupils in the focus group spoke enthusiastically about projects they completed, for example on the River Moy and on the mountains of Ireland. There was a need, however, to support the pupils to speak more confidently about their learning. It is recommended, therefore, that the teachers implement a whole-school approach to oral presentations.
- Ar an iomlán, bhí dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge ag na daltaí. Ghlac siad páirt i gcluichí foghlama teanga. I roinnt ranganna, áfach, ba ghá tuilleadh deiseanna a thabhairt do na daltaí labhairt le chéile ina mbeirteanna.
- Overall, the pupils had a positive attitude to Irish. They took part in language learning games. In some classes, however, there was a need to provide more opportunities for the pupils to speak with each other in pairs.
- Overall, the pupils displayed very good knowledge of skills and concepts in Mathematics. In some of the classes, there had been an increased focus on the use of mathematical equipment and materials, which impacted very positively on the pupils' learning. It is recommended that teachers provide more opportunities for the pupils to engage in enjoyable learning activities, such as mathematical trails and games.
- The pupils in the focus group spoke enthusiastically about the people from the community who visited the school to talk about safety matters, their local heritage, and the environment.
- The pupils in the senior classes had started learning French and German, as part of the Say Yes to Languages programme. This had a positive impact on their learning.

2. The quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching was very good.
- Each of the teachers was very well prepared and demonstrated excellent classroom management skills. Concrete materials, visual aids, and digital technologies were used very effectively.
- The teachers used a variety of teaching methods effectively to support the pupils' learning. The teachers in some of the classrooms were implementing approaches from the *Primary Curriculum Framework*.
- The pupils worked individually, in pairs and in small groups. There was scope, however, to provide more regular opportunities for the pupils to engage in talk and discussion about their learning with their peers during each of the lessons.
- The classroom displays showcased a range of relevant curricular areas, including samples of the pupils' work. There were maps of Ireland and of the world on display. There was an excellent map of the locality, which included significant local landmarks.
- There was very good support provided for pupils with additional learning needs. Standardised test results, diagnostic tools, and early intervention supported the continuum of support. Student Support Files included logs of action, support checklists, and targets. It is recommended, however, that each of the targets be more specific and measurable.
- A withdrawal model of support was provided at the time of the evaluation. It was reported that the special education team intended to conduct a review of special education provision in the near future. This review should include the introduction of more in-class support.
- Very good assessment practices were evident. Written work was well monitored, and the teachers provided helpful written feedback, particularly in Mathematics and English. The teachers maintained assessment folders detailing individual pupils' progress.

- The pupils engaged in systematic self-assessment. They used self-assessment and learning folders (SALF) and recorded their reflections on their progress as learners.

3. The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing

- The quality of the support for pupils' wellbeing was very good.
- The school leaders promoted wellbeing by providing a range of activities for the pupils. Highly respectful interactions were observed. Pupils from a range of backgrounds and cultures were welcomed into the school community.
- The pupil surveys indicated that the pupils felt their teachers listened to them and helped them to do well in their subjects. Overall, the pupil surveys indicated that the pupils treated each other with respect, and that they had learned about different types of bullying. Almost all of the pupils indicated that they felt safe in the yard.
- The student council had an active role in decision-making in the school, including reporting to the board of management. The Green Schools committee had a very well-established role in building awareness about the school's local heritage. The school had received its tenth Green Flag.
- During the focus group discussion, the pupils spoke positively about movement breaks between their lessons. They said they would like to have some more equipment for playing games in the yard during break times.

4. The quality of leadership and management

- The quality of school leadership and management was very good.
- The board of management met regularly and was properly constituted. The board was very committed to improving the quality of education and displayed a keen interest in supporting the school as a focal point of the wider community. The classrooms were well resourced, and the teachers were well supported to engage in professional learning.
- The acting principal managed the running of the school very well. The acting principal displayed effective leadership skills, and encouraged positive relations among the teachers and pupils, and the whole school community. The work of the in-school management team in supporting the acting principal was commendable.
- The parents' association contributed actively to school life. The members met regularly and liaised with the acting principal about upcoming events. They welcomed new families to the school and provided additional supports to those for whom English was an additional language. For example, the parents' association provided new families with information about the school in their home language.
- Parent-teacher meetings were organised annually, and a written report was issued to parents at the end of each school year.
- Almost all of the parents who completed the survey indicated that they felt welcome in the school, and felt that the school was helping their child with reading and Mathematics.
- The school had engaged with initial teacher education and professional learning. This included support in EAL teaching and training in First Aid. Individual teachers engaged in professional learning applicable to their contexts.

5. The quality of school self-evaluation

- The quality of SSE was very good. The school was placing a greater emphasis on wellbeing at the time of the evaluation.
- Using the SSE process, the school leaders adopted a collaborative approach by consulting with the pupils, parents and teachers. Additional activities in Visual Arts and Physical Education were being implemented to support the pupils' wellbeing.

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 Cloonacool National School welcomes the very positive findings of the inspection, which affirm the high quality of learning, teaching, self-evaluation, leadership and wellbeing provision in the school.

The report recognises the commitment of the staff to fostering a supportive, inclusive, engaging and active learning environment.

We are happy to note the positive affirmation of the pupils' engagement with literacy and maths instruction, in particular, the mention of the pupils' enjoyment of novels and enjoyment of maths games.

The feedback has been greatly valued, and we look forward to engaging further with the recommendations provided in this report.

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 school has carefully considered the recommendations outlined in the report and is currently implementing the following actions:

Monthly assemblies involving each classroom sharing many areas of their new learning with the rest of the school. The pupils orally present projects, poems and songs to positively impact their confidence in presenting their work. Evidence of these endeavours are recorded on our active school blog.

- All teachers have provided more time for talk and discussion between pupils during the day especially in the area of maths talk, pair work during Gaeilge, and literacy lessons.
- We have purchased new maths equipment to support the Primary Mathematics Curriculum and also to allow for more fun learning experiences and opportunity for talk and discussion amongst the pupils. We have been afforded this opportunity with thanks to our supportive community who have given generously towards the purchasing of both PE and Maths equipment.
- The SET team have carefully planned and commenced station teaching and in-class support.
- Tá na múinteoirí ag cur béim ar an nGaeilge labhartha sna ranganna, go háirithe ar obair bheirte. Chun cumas labhartha Gaeilge a spreagadh agus a fhorbairt, táimid ag baint úsáid as cluichí agus gníomhaíochtaí mar shampla, cártaí cómhra, ceisteanna bunúsacha, sraith pictiúr, agus aimsigh na difríochtaí, bunaithe ar an bhfoclóir atá múinte.
- The teachers are placing an emphasis on spoken Irish in the classes, particularly pair work. To encourage and improve the pupils' oral capacity, we are using games and activities, for example, conversation cards, picture series, and identify the differences, based on the vocabulary taught.

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