



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Whole School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning Report

REPORT

School name	Scoil Padraig Naofa BNS
School address	Hollypark Blackrock Co. Dublin
Roll number	19258U
Date of evaluation	27/02/2025
Date of issue of report	19/05/2025

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>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">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).	<ol style="list-style-type: none">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.

<p>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, (revised 2023).</p> <p>7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE).</p> <p>8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.</p>	
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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	24/02/2025 – 27/03/2025
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 Pádraig Naofa BNS (Hollypark BNS) is an all-boys primary school situated in Hollypark, Blackrock, Co Dublin. The school caters for pupils from junior infants to sixth class and operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin. At the time of the evaluation, the staff comprised an administrative principal, twenty-three mainstream classroom teachers, one special class teacher for autistic pupils, eight support teachers and twelve special needs assistants. There were 512 pupils enrolled at the school and their attendance was excellent.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning was very good; pupils presented as highly motivated and engaged learners who were proud of their school.
- The quality of teaching was very good; teachers were enthusiastic, diligent practitioners who had high expectations of their professional practice and their pupils' learning.
- The school's physical environment was maintained to an exemplary standard; the thoughtful planning and dedication to both the indoor and outdoor areas greatly supported a very successful learning environment for the whole-school community.
- The quality of support for wellbeing was very good, the school had developed exemplary structures to access and use pupils' opinions on school matters.
- The quality of leadership and management was excellent; school leaders demonstrated a strong commitment to leading all aspects of provision for the benefit of pupils.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) was very good; school leaders and teachers had used the SSE process very effectively to embed very good practice and respond in a targeted manner to the emerging needs of the school.

Recommendations

- Where the most effective practice was noted, teachers achieved a very good balance between explicit teaching and pupil-led tasks; there was scope to extend this further. When designing tasks, teachers are advised to place an additional emphasis on pupil-led learning; they should provide opportunities during lessons for pupils to explore, communicate and apply their learning.
- Pupils displayed commendably high levels of subject knowledge. To optimise the impact of this very good learning, teachers should make greater use of subject-specific pedagogies to ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop specific skills across the range of curricular areas.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of pupils' learning

- The quality of pupils' learning was very good. Pupils engaged in a wide range of interesting learning experiences. They worked productively in pairs and groups and listened actively to each other and to their teachers. Pupils had access to high quality resources to support their learning across the curriculum. Very high quality displays of on corridors and classroom walls reflected and supported pupils' learning.
- Pupils presented as highly motivated and engaged learners who enjoyed their learning. Most pupils demonstrated a very good ability to communicate clearly and confidently. In a few commendable settings, pupils' ability to discuss and justify their opinions was well developed. During the focus group, pupils demonstrated pride in their school and were eager to share their learning experiences.
- *Bhí tuiscint mhaith ag na daltaí ar an nGaeilge agus bhí formhór na ndaltaí in ann ceisteanna a chumadh agus a fhreagairt le habairtí iomlána.* The pupils had a good understanding of Irish and the majority of pupils were able to compose questions and answer with full sentences.
- In English, most pupils read with fluency and a review of pupils' copybooks showed that pupils were confident in writing in a number of genres. Pupils' handwriting and presentation were exemplary.
- Pupils' learning in numeracy was overall very good. Where learning was most successful, pupils used subject-specific language to discuss their learning. During the focus group, pupils discussed how they preferred when their learning was linked to real life contexts and how this practice, along with the use of manipulatives, aided their recall and deepened their learning.
- The pupils were afforded the opportunity to participate in projects on a regular basis. Pupils' art work was celebrated and showcased throughout the school.
- Commendably, pupils were very confident at recalling and discussing their previous learning across all subject areas. In the best instances of learning, pupils demonstrated the knowledge and skills specific to the subject area. In other lessons, the focus was mainly on knowledge acquisition. To optimise the impact of this very good learning, teachers should make greater use of subject-specific pedagogies to ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop specific skills across the range of curricular areas.

2. The quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching, including teaching for pupils with additional needs was very good. The pupils in the focus group described their teachers as being friendly, fun and fair. In the pupil surveys, almost all pupils agreed that their teacher taught them in ways that helped them to learn.
- Teachers communicated very clearly and they used a range of methodologies to engage learners. In almost all settings, teachers were enthusiastic, diligent practitioners who had high expectations of their professional practice and their pupils' learning. Teachers used visual resources and skilful questioning to support pupils' understanding of new learning.
- Where the most effective lessons were observed, teachers achieved a very good balance between explicit teaching and inquiry based tasks. In these lessons, teachers responded to pupils' questions with clear guidance on the next steps in learning. They planned tasks that were playful and open-ended. In other cases, there was an over-reliance on teacher-directed tasks. When designing tasks, teachers are advised to place an additional emphasis on pupil-led learning; they should provide opportunities during lessons for pupils to explore, communicate and apply their learning.

- Support was delivered to pupils with additional needs through in-class, withdrawal and team-teaching initiatives. Teachers had developed very strong relationships with pupils. They displayed very good knowledge of pupils' needs and their next steps in learning. Lessons focused on supporting pupils' literacy, numeracy and motor skills, in line with their needs. Teachers were clear on the pupils' priority learning needs. It is advisable that the support team review targets to ensure that they are specific and measurable.
- The school used a wide range of highly effective assessments to monitor pupils' learning. Teachers had taken time to get to know pupils in their classes and their next steps in learning. There was a consistent approach to the checking of pupils' learning at each class level. Teachers should consider how to use this information to assess the impact of interventions and teaching approaches on pupils' learning.

3. The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing

- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing was very good. The school's physical environment was maintained to an exemplary standard; the thoughtful planning and dedication to both the indoor and outdoor areas greatly supported a very successful learning environment for the whole-school community.
- Whole-school initiatives were contributing significantly to pupils' wellbeing at the school. Interactions between teachers and pupils and among pupils were inclusive, warm and respectful. During interviews, parent and board of management representatives, reported their appreciation of teachers' proactive approach to the pupils' needs. In surveys administered as part of the evaluation, almost all pupils surveyed agreed that they felt safe and cared for in school.
- Pupils had opportunities to assume roles of responsibility in the school. During the focus group, pupils reported that a well-established buddy system between older and younger pupils contributed significantly to their wellbeing.
- The school had developed exemplary structures to access and use pupils' opinions on school matters. In the focus-group discussion, pupils described how they felt listened to by their principal and teachers and were comfortable sharing their opinions with their classmates and their teachers. Pupils' perspectives had been sought by school leaders to inform the organisation of the school yard and the choice of extra-curricular activities.

4. The quality of leadership and management

- The overall quality of leadership and management was excellent. The school was ably supported by a dedicated and knowledgeable board of management. The board played a key role in developing school policies and planning strategically for school accommodation. It was highly commendable that high quality leadership training had been provided to the teachers. The school was also supported by a very proactive and organised parents' association. In their survey responses, almost all parents agreed that the school was well run. Most teachers agreed that communication between the staff was good and that teachers collaborated.
- The principal fulfilled his role in an exemplary manner. He demonstrated a strong commitment to leading all aspects of provision with exceptional organisational and management skills. He, together with the deputy principal, had identified clear priorities for the development of the school and had adopted a strategic approach to school improvement. They had successfully nurtured positive relationships among school personnel, pupils, parents and the wider school community.
- The leadership team had a very good understanding of how to lead teaching and learning. They were highly capable and successful in guiding positive change across the school. They had organised a number of successful curricular and learning events to ensure teachers were supported to implement changes.

5. The quality of school self-evaluation

- The quality of SSE was very good. The school had used the SSE process very effectively to embed very good practice and respond in a targeted manner to the emerging needs of the school. At the time of the evaluation, school leaders and teachers had identified the promotion of Wellbeing and Irish as current priority areas for improvement. They had established clear targets. Criteria for success and agreed actions were in evidence in the classrooms and in pupils' learning experiences. To maximise the impact of the SSE process on teaching and learning, school leaders should ensure that the impact of any agreed action is monitored.

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 St. Patrick's BNS, Hollypark warmly welcomes the Whole-School Evaluation Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE-MLL) report. The Board is pleased with the affirmations, commendations, and recommendations outlined in the report and is encouraged by the many positive findings which reflect the commitment and collaborative spirit of our entire school community.

The Board notes with gratitude the following key strengths highlighted in the report:

- The positive, welcoming, and collaborative culture that defines daily life in our school.
- Full compliance with Child Protection and Anti-Bullying procedures.
- The enthusiastic, confident, and motivated disposition of our pupils.
- A broad and enriching range of co-curricular activities that support both academic growth and wellbeing.
- A school-wide culture that fosters expertise and the very effective practice in teaching and learning.
- Strong, collaborative relationships between our Special Education Team (SET), pupils, parents, and external agencies.
- The exceptional leadership of the principal and the highly commendable leadership and management demonstrated by the In-School Leadership and Management Team and the deputy principal.
- A strong commitment to student wellbeing, with pupils expressing a clear sense of belonging and pride in their school.
- Active promotion of the pupil voice and opportunities for leadership among our students.
- A highly effective and embedded approach to school self-evaluation (SSE).
- The invaluable support and dedication of our Board of Management and Parents' Association.

The Board particularly notes the consistently high standards found in:

- The quality of pupils' learning, characterised by motivation, engagement, and a strong sense of school belonging.
- The quality of teaching, marked by enthusiasm, diligence, and high professional expectations supported by stimulating classroom environments that celebrate pupil achievement and growth.
- The exemplary maintenance and thoughtful development of both the indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- The excellence of school leadership and management, evident in the clear focus on continuous improvement for the benefit of all pupils.

The Board is grateful for the comprehensive nature of the evaluation and remains committed to building on the strengths identified in the report while constructively engaging with its recommendations to ensure the continued growth and excellence in all areas of school life.

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 confirm that the Board and school leadership team will positively and proactively apply the recommendations made by the inspection team. The recommendations are viewed as valuable opportunities to further enrich the educational experience of our pupils.

We acknowledge the highly effective engagement of the school with the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) process to date. The staff will strive to further embed pupil-led tasks and enquiry-based learning, providing opportunities for pupils to explore, communicate and apply the appropriate learning. Pupils will be given opportunities to develop specific skills across a range of curricular areas.

The Board of Management wishes to thank the Department of Education for its constructive and affirming engagement with our school through the WSE-MLL process. We look forward to continuing our work in a spirit of reflection, collaboration, learning and improvement, always mindful of the best interests of our pupils.

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