



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Promotion of Wellbeing in Schools Evaluation (Pilot) Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	SN Muire is Gearard
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Enniskerry Co. Wicklow
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	172230
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	22 May 2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	01 October 2024

What is a Promoting Wellbeing in Schools evaluation?

Promoting of Wellbeing in Schools evaluations report on the quality a school's work to prevent and address bullying behaviour, and to promote children's wellbeing. They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of wellbeing promotion in the school.

How to read this report

During this inspection, the inspectors evaluated provision for wellbeing promotion under the following headings:

1. Preventing and addressing bullying behaviour
2. Culture and Environment
3. Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)
4. Policy and Planning
5. Relationships and partnerships

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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and address bullying behaviour

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	<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 children.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>Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools (revised 2023).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">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).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 did not meet the requirements in relation to Check 5 of the Child Safeguarding Requirements above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, the school subsequently furnished evidence of compliance with these requirements.

Promoting wellbeing in schools evaluation

Date of inspection	20/05/2024 - 22/05/2024
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wellbeing workshop with children, parents, school staff, and board members• Wellbeing learning walk• Surveys of children• Surveys of staff• Discussion with principal• Review of relevant documents• Children focus-group interview• Parent focus-group interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning for and of wellbeing in a sample of lessons• Review of children's learning• Interaction with children• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

SN Muire is Gearard is a co-educational primary school in Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The teaching staff included an administrative principal and eight mainstream class teachers. Three support teachers for children with additional needs were also based in the school. Two of these teachers were employed in a permanent capacity with the third teacher employed on a temporary, part-time basis. The ancillary staffing included a secretary, a caretaker, two special needs assistants (SNAs), who were employed in a job-sharing capacity, and one SNA who worked on a part-time basis. At the time of the evaluation, 205 children were enrolled in the school.

Findings and actions advised

1. Preventing and addressing bullying behaviour

The school's work to prevent and address bullying behaviour was highly effective. In the focus-group discussion, children reported that very good systems were in place for them to identify and share any concerns they had regarding bullying behaviour. Throughout the various inspection activities, children demonstrated a very good awareness of their own role in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour; they cited the school's focus on being an upstander as being of particular importance in this regard.

In their survey responses, almost all children indicated that their school worked hard to prevent and stop bullying. Most children indicated that what they learned in school about bullying was helpful. Teachers should ensure that all children understand how to apply their learning in a practical context. In this regard, the implementation of an evidence-based programme may be beneficial.

In the focus-group discussion, children described how supervising teachers and SNAs were vigilant and visible during yard time. They talked about how adults kept a watchful eye to ensure that children who wished to play with others were appropriately supported to do so. Building on these very good practices, school leaders should consider ascertaining children's views on the specific times during their school experience when bullying behaviour could potentially occur.

Actions Advised

- School leaders should consider implementing a research-based programme to support their ongoing work in the area of preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- School leaders should consider ascertaining children's views on specific times during their school experience when bullying behaviour could potentially occur.

2. Culture and environment

The school's work to promote a positive culture and environment was of an excellent standard. It was evident that children and parents experienced a sense of belonging to the school community. In interactions with the inspection team during the pilot evaluation, they highlighted the various ways in which they felt safe, connected and supported.

The leadership of wellbeing promotion in the school community was outstanding. The wellbeing of the whole-school community was central to the school's ethos. School leaders articulated a clear commitment to prioritising children's wellbeing within school life.

During the focus-group discussion, parents described how school leaders and teachers were approachable and supportive. They spoke very positively about how school leaders took the time to get to know the children, highlighting how children were warmly welcomed by name into the school each morning.

A positive approach to discipline was a defining feature of school life. Key messages of respect and inclusion were displayed throughout the school.

The indoor and outdoor space was used very successfully to facilitate social interaction, physical activity and quiet time. School staff were very mindful of the importance of ensuring that a choice of activities was available to children during yard time. In their survey responses, almost all children indicated that they enjoyed themselves during break time. Interactions with the children during the focus group suggested that there was potential to ensure consistent levels of understanding amongst children for initiatives such as Football Free Friday. It was notable that well-designed designated quiet spaces were set aside on the yard. In the workshop and focus group, participants suggested that the availability of such spaces be increased to facilitate children who wished to read during yard time. During the workshop, the children spoke very positively about how a buddy bench had been used previously to support social interaction on the yard. They suggested that additional benches would be welcomed by children.

The school building and grounds were maintained to a very high standard, with attractive displays of children's learning. Very good use was made of the indoor space to display children's accomplishments. During the wellbeing walk, children eagerly presented examples of their achievements across a broad range of areas, including Lego, Science Blast, Yes to Languages, the Junior Entrepreneur Project, Green Schools, gardening, digital learning, and music. Displays of children's home languages were featured in the common areas and were very effective in terms of promoting an inclusive culture; there was potential to extend this very good practice within children's classroom environments.

During lesson observations, it was evident that teachers were aware of children's sensory needs. Teachers facilitated physical activity and movement breaks. Designated calm spaces were provided throughout the school to facilitate children's sensory regulation.

During the focus group, parents confirmed that their ideas and opinions were welcomed and valued by school management. The student council provided opportunities for children to have a voice in decisions relating to school improvement.

Actions Advised

- Where feasible, school leaders should install additional buddy benches to strengthen opportunities for social connections during yard time.
- Teachers should place a more consistent emphasis on the display of words from children's home languages in classroom environments.

3. Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning was very good. Teachers had high expectations of children's learning; they motivated children to engage in and enjoy their learning. They presented well prepared and appropriately resourced lessons. Teachers placed a clear emphasis on active learning strategies, including pair work and group activities. Teachers provided clear instructions. They used high-quality visual resources to stimulate children's attention and to explain language and concepts. In general, teachers should place a more consistent emphasis on the use of visual supports when introducing new material in lessons. In a few instances, teachers should optimise children's participation and engagement through more targeted questioning approaches.

In their survey responses, most children indicated that if they needed help with something in school, they knew who they could ask. Self-assessment folders provided a very useful record of children's progress and attainment over time. Very good examples of child self-assessment were observed at the end of lessons; teachers should consider extending the use of these approaches during lessons to allow adequate time for adjustments during the learning process.

The quality of children's learning was very good; they were highly motivated and very positively disposed to learning. Very good examples of child-led learning in the Visual Arts were observed during the pilot evaluation, with children using higher order thinking skills to look at and respond to art samples. Overall, children presented as active, agentic learners who could learn independently and with others. They showed pride in their achievements and were eager to share and discuss their learning across a range of curricular areas. Several very interesting and thought-provoking questions were posed by children during the lessons observed. Teachers responded thoughtfully to these questions. To optimise the potential of these valuable learning opportunities, teachers were advised to develop a system for recording and investigating children's enquiry questions.

Actions advised:

- Teachers were advised to optimise children's participation and engagement through more targeted questioning approaches.
- Teachers should place a greater emphasis on the use of self-assessment strategies during lessons.
- Teachers were advised to develop a system for recording and investigating children's enquiry questions.

4. Policy and Planning

Approaches to policy and planning were highly effective in promoting wellbeing. During the various inspection activities, participants confirmed that the wellbeing of the whole-school community underpinned school policies and plans.

The school had appropriate wellbeing policies in place, including the Anti-Bullying Policy, Child Protection Policy, and Critical Incident Policy. During their focus-group discussion, parents highlighted how the Healthy Eating Policy was consistently implemented and very successful in promoting healthy eating choices.

Policies were made available to staff, children, parents and relevant community partners. Commendably, a children's version of the Code of Behaviour had been developed collaboratively and was displayed throughout the school. Workshop participants commented on the effectiveness of this approach, recommending that it be extended to other policies, so that relevant policies remained concise and accessible for all members of the school community.

Children's transitions into and from the school were successfully supported. During the focus group, parents emphasised how their children were very well prepared for the transition into the school. They attributed this success to the highly effective communication between home and

school. Similarly, workshop participants praised teachers for their proactive support during children's transition to post-primary school.

School leaders ensured that opportunities for continuing professional learning were provided to teachers. Commendably, a designated period was allocated during staff meetings for teachers to share learning from professional learning events. There was potential for a more structured approach to professional learning, particularly around areas such as restorative practice, to ensure that teachers continued to have the relevant knowledge and understanding to promote wellbeing and to create positive classroom environments.

Actions Advised

- There was potential for a more structured approach to professional learning, particularly around areas such as restorative practice, to ensure that teachers continued to have the relevant knowledge and understanding to promote wellbeing and to create positive classroom environments.
- As policies are reviewed and updated, school leaders should consider creating concise summary versions to enhance policy visibility and ensure accessibility for all members of the school community.

5. Relationships and Partnerships

The quality of the school's work in the area of relationships and partnerships was very good. Observed interactions among members of the school community were open and respectful. School staff demonstrated openness, respect and active listening in their interactions with one another, children and parents.

Relationships and partnerships were fostered through various formal and informal structures, including the student council, buddy systems, assemblies, newsletters, and teaching and learning activities. During the focus groups and workshops, participants highlighted the assemblies as a valuable way to celebrate children's achievements and keep everyone informed about school life.

School leaders and management collaborated closely with the parents' association, which played an active role in school life. Parents and other family members were involved in a wide range of valuable initiatives to support children's learning. The ongoing efforts of the parents' association to foster a welcoming and inclusive school community were highly commended. Representatives of the association worked diligently to organise events to promote parents' sense of feeling welcome, included and valued.

School leaders and staff worked very closely with community groups in the local area to ensure that children who had recently enrolled in the school were fully included in the school community. Children with English as an additional language used digital technologies to help them to access the curriculum and to adjust to school life in Ireland.

School leaders and management actively promoted staff wellbeing through various initiatives and recognised the value of staff contributions to school life. In their survey responses, almost all staff members indicated that the importance of staff wellbeing was acknowledged within the school.

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