Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Scoil Eoin Naofa
Roscrea, Co. Tipperary
Roll Number: 01594N

Date of inspection: 10 February 2011
1. Introduction

Scoil Eoin Naofa is a Catholic, co-educational, primary school situated in Roscrea town. There are 159 pupils enrolled and the attendance patterns of pupils are good.

This report presents the findings of a whole-school evaluation undertaken in the school in February 2011. The evaluation focused on the quality of teaching and learning in English, Irish, Mathematics and Drama.

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.

2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

The following are the main strengths of the work of the school:

- The teachers are hard working, dedicated and they work conscientiously to ensure that pupils engage fully in school life.
- There is a very positive climate in the school. Communication among staff members is open and decision making is collaborative.
- The principal and deputy principal demonstrate good leadership skills.
- Commendable standards are achieved in the curriculum areas evaluated, with some particular strengths noted in Mathematics.
- The teachers demonstrate significant capacity to innovate, to work collaboratively and to introduce whole-school initiatives focused on improving literacy and numeracy.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and indicate high levels of satisfaction with overall school performance.
- Pupils are friendly and courteous and, in most classrooms, very good behaviour and pupil management are in evidence. The school promotes an inclusive environment for pupils.

The following main recommendations are made:

- The board of management should liaise with the Planning and Building Unit of the Department of Education and Skills in relation to securing additional accommodation for the school and to upgrading the hard-surface playground areas.
- Additional material resources should be acquired by the school to support the teaching of literacy, numeracy and to enable pupils to develop ICT skills.
- It is recommended that whole-school approaches to literacy continue to focus on improving reading, oral language and the writing skills of pupils.
- Moltar breis béime a chur ar an Gaeilge mar thean ga labhartha. Ní mór inniúlacht na ndaltaí sa léitheoireacht agus sa scribhneoireacht a thhorbaí.
  
  *It is recommended that more emphasis is placed on Irish as a spoken language. Pupils’ achievement in reading and writing should be developed.*
Early intervention, further differentiation and the development of in-class approaches to supporting pupils with special educational needs should be prioritised.

3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management supports the school in an effective manner. Records are maintained accurately and accounts are certified annually. The board reviews policies and plans at its meetings. It also considers the learning outcomes of the pupils and discusses the educational programmes and initiatives implemented in the school.

- The principal and the deputy principal lead the school in an effective manner. They work well as a leadership team and are successful in leading the teaching and learning in the school. The principal, who is in his second year in this role, has a clear vision for the development of the school and this vision is shared by the staff and the board of management. The teachers are very supportive of the leadership and they contribute to leading different initiatives in the school.

- The school building is well-maintained. However, there is a significant lack of rooms to accommodate shared and part-time resource teachers. The school has received a devolved grant and is in the process of adding further teaching and learning areas to the school. It is recommended that the board of management liaise with the Planning and Building Unit in the Department of Education and Skills in relation to securing additional accommodation for the school and to upgrading the hard-surface playground areas. Resources for teaching and learning are provided and interactive whiteboards have been acquired. The provision of additional materials to support the teaching and learning of literacy, numeracy and ICT in the school is recommended.

- Analysis of parental questionnaires indicates very high levels of satisfaction with the school. The parents’ association supports the school in a range of activities. The home-school-community liaison coordinator works very effectively with parents to involve them in school life and a broad range of initiatives is undertaken.

- Pupils are friendly and courteous and in most classrooms, very good behaviour and pupil management are in evidence. The school promotes an inclusive, supportive environment for pupils. Questionnaire responses indicate that pupils like school and enjoy the range of learning activities provided.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- Whole-school planning is good. The policies and plans accurately reflect the context of the school. There is a commendable focus on literacy and numeracy and many whole-school initiatives have been introduced to improve pupils’ learning outcomes. Whole-school plans are implemented in the various class settings. A strategic plan has been developed which outlines the key curricular and organisational developmental priorities. School self-evaluation practices are developing appropriately and realistic targets are set for improvement. Assessment data are monitored.

- In general, teachers’ planning is good and some very good planning is in evidence. Teachers are advised to place greater emphasis on differentiating the teaching and learning to reflect the range of pupils’ abilities. Further collaborative planning between mainstream teachers and the support teachers is advised.
School authorities provided evidence that, in compliance with Primary Circular 0061/2006, the board of management has formally adopted the Department’s Child Protection Guidelines for Primary Schools. Evidence was provided to show that these child protection procedures have been brought to the attention of management, school staff and parents; that a copy of the procedures has been provided to all staff (including all new staff); and that management has ensured that all staff are familiar with the procedures to be followed. A designated liaison person (DLP) and a deputy DLP have been appointed in line with the requirements of the guidelines.

5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

- Múintear an Ghaeilge go sásúil. Bhí modheolaíochta éagsúla le sonrú i ranganna áirithe agus sna ranganna seo bhi foclóir cuit ar eolas ag na daltaí agus bhí siad ar a gcumas ceisteanna simplí a thuiscint, a fhreagairt agus a chur. B’fhiú breis béime a chur ar na tríúmhsí cumarsáide i ngach ceacht chu n inniúlacht na ndaltaí a theireis. D’aithris daltaí raon cuit dánta, amhráin agus rannta. Moltar aird níos mó a chur ar na gníomháiochta labhártha seo ar bhonn nóis rialta. Bhain formhór na múinteoirí úsáid as teácsleabhair agus as leabhair shaothair mar bhunús dá gcil leiththeoireachta agus scribhneoireachta. Bhi cumas leiththeoireachta agus scribhneoireachta na ndaltaí measartha ar an iomlán. B’fhiú deiseanna níos mó a thabhairt do dhaltaí agus idir The teaching of Irish is satisfactory. Different methodologies were used in some classrooms and in these classes the pupils knew an appropriate vocabulary and were able to understand, ask and answer simple questions. Additional emphasis should be placed on the stages of communication in each lesson to improve pupils’ outcomes. Oral language activities are taught appropriately at each class level. The further promotion of discrete oral language programmes which are clearly linked to the curriculum objectives is recommended. Reading skills are taught effectively and strategies such as Reading Recovery and station teaching are making a significant impact on the outcomes of the younger readers. The further promotion of differentiated reading programmes for pupils is recommended and the teaching of specific reading and comprehension strategies at each class level is advised. The First Steps Writing programme is implemented at each class level and some very effective writing lessons were observed during the evaluation.

- The quality of teaching and learning in English is good with some very good practice in evidence. Oral language activities are taught appropriately at each class level. The further promotion of discrete oral language programmes which are clearly linked to the curriculum objectives is recommended. Reading skills are taught effectively and strategies such as Reading Recovery and station teaching are making a significant impact on the outcomes of the younger readers. The further promotion of differentiated reading programmes for pupils is recommended and the teaching of specific reading and comprehension strategies at each class level is advised. The First Steps Writing programme is implemented at each class level and some very effective writing lessons were observed during the evaluation.

- The quality of teaching in Drama is good. A variety of very effective teaching approaches is employed. Methodologies include pair work, group work, the use of story, still imaging,
improvisation, hot-seating and teacher-in-role. Pupils display high levels of enthusiasm, enjoyment and engagement at each class level. The school provides opportunities for the pupils to engage in drama workshops and to attend performances by different theatre groups. This practice is commendable.

- Overall, pupils’ achievement is very good in the areas evaluated. Carefully compiled assessment data reflect the commendable progress made by pupils, particularly in English and Mathematics.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- Support for pupils with special educational needs is good with some very good practice in evidence. Three full-time teachers and four shared/part-time teachers are involved in the provision of literacy and numeracy supports for pupils. Reading Recovery and Mathematics Recovery are very successfully implemented and the good practice in evidence in these settings should be further shared within the staff. Pupils are supported within the classroom and also, through one-to-one support teaching and small group teaching. Support teachers have established good relationships with pupils. Lessons incorporate activities which are suitable to pupils’ learning needs and strengths. It is evident that the pupils are making progress and benefiting from the supports.

- Commendable individual education plans (IEPs) and individual profile and learning programmes (IPLPs) are provided. In most settings short-term plans are devised and it is recommended that all plans include specific, measurable targets. Appropriate progress records are maintained and teachers record the pupils’ outcomes. Increased emphasis should be placed on early intervention in the infant classes and the more systematic use of assessment information to identify pupils who present with learning difficulties during the early years.

- Through the School Completion Programme, supports are provided to enhance the socialisation skills of the pupils.

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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:

(i) welcomes the very positive tenor of the report
(ii) thanks the inspectors who carried out the W.S.E. for the very professional and courteous way in which they did so
(iii) thanks the staff of the school for their continued hard work and dedication.

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 Board of Management welcomes the recommendations outlined and is taking specific measures to address each one.