

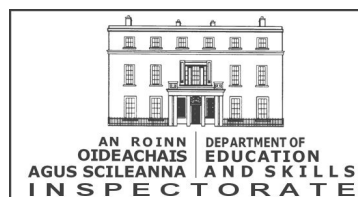
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning**

REPORT

**Scoil Molaise,
Old Leighlin, Co. Carlow
Uimhir rolla: 02124E**

Date of inspection: 01 October 2015



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Scoil Molaise, Old Leighlin in September/October 2015. This report is based on a selection of lessons observed in a range of learning settings in the school, interaction with pupils and review of their work, meetings with the principal, in-school management, the special educational needs team and with board and parent representatives, completed parent and pupil questionnaires, and a selection of school documents. The board of management 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.

Scoil Molaise is a rural, co-educational, vertical primary school under the patronage of the Catholic diocese of Kildare and Leighlin. There are 138 pupils enrolled and attendance is very good.

The evaluation has found:

- Overall, the quality of teaching is good, with very effective practice in evidence in a number of instances.
- The board of management, principal and deputy principal, are highly effective in leading and managing the work of the school.
- Overall, the learning achievements of pupils, including those with additional learning needs, are of a good standard across the curriculum.
- While some pupils express themselves well when speaking in Irish, others lack confidence when using the language.
- In some classes there is scope for pupils to be offered further opportunities to engage in more collaborative group learning tasks.
- The school's engagement in a comprehensive process of review and meaningful consultation as part of school self-evaluation is commended highly.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- To further improve pupil confidence when speaking in Irish, it is recommended that their language skills be developed incrementally on a school-wide basis.
- Increased opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively should be provided and assessment outcomes should be used further to fully address the range of differences in pupil learning styles within classes.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The pupils demonstrate a very positive attitude to learning and engage in the wide range of activities provided with a high level of interest and enthusiasm. Overall, the learning achievements of pupils, including of pupils with additional learning needs, are of a good standard across the curriculum.
- The quality of pupils' achievement in English literacy is good overall, with commendable incremental improvements in reading levels in recent years. In the questionnaires, most pupils stated that they think they are doing well at reading. While many pupils speak with appropriate confidence and competence, in order to progress their oral skills further, the teachers should ensure a consistent, school wide focus on developing the pupils' ability to express their opinions and critically engage with the views of others.

- The pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the mathematical concepts being taught and school-wide attainment in Mathematics is at a high level. In the questionnaires, most pupils indicated that they think they are doing well at Maths.
- Ar an iomlán, tá gnóthachtáil na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge ar chaighdeán sásúil. Cé go bhfuil cuid de na daltaí in ann iad féin a chur in iúl go cumasach, labhraíonn cuid eile acu le heaspa muiníne. Chun muinín na ndaltaí a threisiú a thuilleadh i labhairt na teanga, moltar scileanna teanga na ndaltaí a fhorbairt go céimniúil, ar bhonn uile scoile.
Overall pupil achievement in Irish is of a satisfactory standard. While some pupils express themselves well, others lack confidence when using the language. To further improve pupil confidence when speaking, it is recommended that their language skills be developed incrementally on a school-wide basis.
- The pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum. Particularly commendable standards of pupil achievement are in evidence in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education, with the achievement of School of Excellence awards and engagement in the Junior Entrepreneur and Discovery Science programmes. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to engage in learning in their local and wider environments through Green Flag activities, Fairtrade initiatives and the cultivation of the school gardens. Opportunities to progress pupil learning through the purposeful use of ICT, are highly praised. Pupils experience a school environment that actively encourages physical activity through structured skills development and team games.

2. Quality of teaching

- Overall, the quality of teaching is good, with very effective practice in evidence in a number of instances. The teachers successfully communicate high expectations regarding pupil participation and achievement. Lessons are well structured and the purpose of lessons and new learning content are explained clearly. Classrooms provide stimulating, colourful and print-rich learning environments and the use of the Aistear framework is praised.
- In order to develop the pupils' ability to work collaboratively as part of a group, the existing good use of active, problem-solving approaches to learning, with increased opportunities for pupils to direct their own learning, should be further developed. In the parent questionnaires almost all parents agree that teaching is good in the school and that their child is doing well.
- Teachers draw on a suitable range of assessment tools to monitor individual pupil progress. It is now timely to consider how assessment outcomes can be used further in planning to fully address the range of differences in pupil learning styles within classes.
- The school's commitment to pupils with additional learning needs is promoted through its inclusive environment and very positive interactions between support teachers and pupils. The introduction of class-based interventions to support learning in literacy and numeracy is commended. As this approach is embedded further, every effort should be made to ensure that it is sufficiently focused on the learning outcomes of pupils with additional learning needs within the mainstream classroom.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- Support for pupils' well-being is very good. The school is characterised by its warm and welcoming atmosphere. The teachers and staff demonstrate a keen understanding of individual pupils and their holistic development is nurtured very successfully through the wide range of learning activities and experiences that the school provides. Ancillary staff give invaluable support to the school. In the questionnaires, almost all parents said that their child feels safe, is well looked after and is helped with their social and personal development.
- School management and teachers encourage good quality relationships with parents and the wider community and parents receive updates on school matters. However, the parent questionnaire responses highlight the potential of seeking the views of parents on school matters more regularly. Further opportunities to promote parental

involvement through in-class activities should be advanced. All parents indicated that they feel welcome in the school.

- Confirmation was provided that the board of management has formally adopted the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* without modification and that the school is compliant with the requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. Leadership and Management

- The board of management is very supportive of the work of the school. It functions very effectively and successfully employs the expertise of its members. Teaching, learning and pupil achievement matters are considered at appropriate intervals. The board has played a significant role in the development of the school building and grounds. It is now well positioned to issue an annual report to parents on the work of the school.
- The principal is highly effective in leading and managing the work of the school. She successfully promotes a culture of teamwork and positive working relationships across the school community. She provides strong curriculum leadership and facilitates the implementation of new teaching approaches to improve pupil learning. The deputy principal supports the principal in her role, carrying out her assigned duties professionally and conscientiously which adds to the smooth running of the school.

5. School Self-evaluation

- The school's engagement in a comprehensive process of review and meaningful consultation as part of school self-evaluation, is commended highly. The school should ensure that targets for achievement and actions for implementation in the school's improvement plan, are clearly differentiated.

Conclusion

Based on the school's established practices of school self-evaluation, its openness to innovation in teaching and learning, the school's capacity to develop further is very good.

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, incorporating the Patron Representatives, and Staff are very pleased with the WSE-MLL Report. The recognition of the strength of our key relationships with all stakeholders and the validation of our outcomes, is all the more authentic coming from external scrutiny. We accept unequivocally the findings of the evaluation.

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 will undertake both the key recommendations and other suggestions made in the report. We are proud of our school and again pleased that it has received such a positive report.