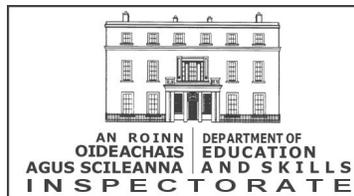


**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills**

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

**Dualla National School
Dualla, Cashel, Co. Tipperary
Uimhir rolla: 02237R**

Date of inspection: 17 September 2015



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Dualla National School in September 2015. This report is based on a selection of lessons observed in a range of learning settings in the school and on interaction with pupils and review of their work. Meetings were held with the principal, in-school management and with board and parent representatives. The evaluation was informed by completed parent and pupil questionnaires, and by review of a selection of school documents. The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

Dualla National School is a co-educational, vertical primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Cashel and Emly. There is a staff of four mainstream teachers, a shared learning support teacher and a shared resource teacher, both of whom are based in the school. There are currently ninety-nine pupils enrolled and overall attendance levels are very good.

The evaluation has found:

- A positive school climate pervades all aspects of school life and the school is highly regarded in the community.
- The pupils display positive attitudes to their learning, demonstrate very good behaviour and the overall quality of their learning is good.
- The teachers demonstrate a strong work ethic and the overall quality of teaching is commendable.
- The in-school management team successfully promotes a range of initiatives to enhance curriculum implementation.
- The board of management supports the school in a conscientious manner and is committed to providing a well maintained and well resourced school.
- The parents' association provides valuable support to the school.
- Very good progress is being made in the development of school self-evaluation (SSE) which is very well led and managed by the principal.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Whole-school plans for English and Irish should be reviewed.
- Greater use should be made of collaborative group work and pair work.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall quality of the pupils' learning is good. The working environment in Dualla NS supports and promotes learning. Opportunities are provided for pupils to engage in a significant number of educational programmes and initiatives. An extensive range of information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to support pupils in their learning. They demonstrate good knowledge and understanding in the subject areas observed. Greater use should be made of collaborative group work and pair work to provide opportunities for all pupils to become central contributors to lessons. In response to questionnaires issued during the evaluation, almost all pupils stated that they enjoyed their lessons and learning.
- The implementation of whole-school initiatives to improve pupil attainment in Mathematics is praised. Considerable emphasis has been placed on the strand unit

of *Data* with positive outcomes for pupils. The school continues to prioritise the strand unit of *Measures*. Skills in problem-solving are taught systematically. In English, overall standards of reading are very good and the specific interventions planned for writing should further improve pupil attainment in this area.

- D'fhéadfaí an cur chuige cumarsáideach i dteagasc na Gaeilge a fhorbairt a thuilleadh tríd an scoil. *The communicative approach in teaching Irish should be further developed throughout the school.*
- The learning achievements of pupils with specific educational needs and those who experience difficulty with aspects of learning are capably supported by the special education teachers. Early intervention and prevention strategies are successfully prioritised.

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching is commendable. A suitable range of teaching methodologies is routinely employed. Teachers hold high expectations for the learning attainment of pupils. Generally, good lesson structure and clear communication skills are demonstrated by teachers. There is a strong commitment to continuous professional development amongst the staff. They are well-informed, reflective practitioners who demonstrate a commitment to the school and to their pupils. Stimulating learning environments are created and classrooms are both print and number-rich. In further developing the quality of teaching, it is recommended that whole-school planning be reviewed in order to more readily facilitate progression and continuity in learning in key curricular areas including English and Irish.
- It is commendable that aspects of *Aistear*, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework are being implemented at infant class level. The development and implementation of language rich thematic-planning and increased parental involvement in *Aistear* is now advised in order to progress this programme.
- Assessment approaches are being developed and improved. It is advised that practices observed be extended throughout the school. Pupil self-assessment strategies should be introduced at all class levels so as to encourage the pupils to reflect upon and to direct their own learning.
- Learning support and resource teachers have established positive relationships with their pupils. Good use is made of diagnostic tools to identify pupils' individual learning needs. Learning targets set for pupils are carefully considered and appropriate strategies are used to support good quality teaching for these pupils.
- Completed parent questionnaires positively endorse the work of the teachers. Almost all respondents reported that they believe the quality of teaching is good in the school.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is very good. The pupils are well managed and they are very well behaved. A caring, respectful school atmosphere is fostered successfully. Good work habits have been established among the pupils and they display positive attitudes towards their learning.
- The school community directs considerable attention towards the maintenance of a safe and secure learning environment and all pupils surveyed reported that they feel safe in their classroom. Almost all parents agreed that their children felt safe and well looked after in school.

- In general, the quality of home-school communication is very good. Parents are kept informed of the school's work through frequent newsletters and through the school's website. There is scope, however, to improve mechanisms whereby the views of all parents can be accommodated when formulating school policies. The parents' association provides valuable support to the school through fundraising and through their assistance in sporting activities.
- 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 properly constituted, it meets frequently and the minutes of meetings are detailed and recorded clearly. The board is highly supportive of the school, diligent in its adherence to regulatory and statutory guidelines and committed to providing a well maintained and well resourced school. Representatives of the board report that they are very satisfied with the quality of teaching and learning in the school.
- The in-school management team comprises the principal and deputy principal. The principal very effectively fosters a school culture of teamwork and collective decision making. He supports and promotes the school's involvement in a range of educational programmes and initiatives including the Comenius Partnership Programme, The Junior Entrepreneur Programme and *Cumann na mBunscol*. He has successfully led the school's growth and development from a two teacher to a four teacher school since his appointment in 2009. He is ably supported by the deputy principal. Together they have introduced a range of technological resources and new initiatives which effectively support and enhance the implementation of the curriculum.

5. School Self-evaluation

- School-self-evaluation (SSE) has been comprehensively addressed and the quality of work in this area is very good. In-depth analysis of numeracy has been undertaken and the school presents its findings under quality statement headings, among them, assessment, learning environment, pupils' engagement in learning, and learning to learn. Detailed school reports and school improvement plans have been prepared. Actions have been implemented throughout the school to good effect. A similar self-evaluative process has also been implemented for literacy. SSE informs a significant element of the agenda for all Croke Park hours, thereby supporting a sustained focus on school improvement. The school is highly commended for its work in this regard.

Conclusion

Given the commitment and dedication of the teachers, the school's capacity to continue to develop further is very good.