

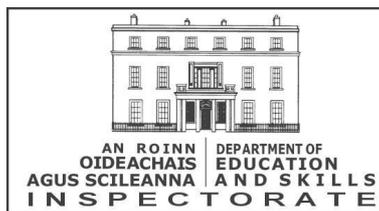
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills**

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

**St Patrick's NS, Crowenstown,
Delvin, Co Westmeath**

Uimhir rolla: 02263S

Date of inspection: 01 May 2014



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in St Patrick's NS, Crowenstown in May 2014. 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 and with board and parent representatives, completed parent and pupil questionnaires, and a selection of school documents.

St Patrick's NS is a co-educational school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Meath. Enrolments have declined in recent years and the school has a current enrolment of 46 pupils. Attendance rates are very good. 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.

The school has **strengths** in the following areas:

- The board of management and parents' association actively support the work of the school.
- The principal and in-school management team provide very good leadership to the school.
- Teachers display a deep commitment to their work and strive for continuous improvement.
- Pupils' learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy are very good.
- A very good emphasis is placed on the development of pupils' writing skills in English.
- A positive school atmosphere pertains, and pupils are courteous in their interactions with adults and peers.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Short-term planning should be consistently informed by curriculum-based learning outcomes.
- An incremental approach should be introduced to the investigation of the school's local historical environment.
- Formative assessment strategies should be further developed to build a richer picture of pupils' learning progress across the curriculum.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning achievements of pupils are commendable. Pupils display a high level of engagement in lessons, and overall, recall aspects of their learning well. A high standard of presentation of written work is evident throughout the school and this is regularly monitored. Overall, pupils' learning experiences and outcomes in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education are of a high quality. Pupils' scientific skills are well developed. It is recommended that a greater emphasis be placed on incrementally developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the school's local historical environment.

- Learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy are very good as is evidenced in standardised test results. There is an effective whole-school approach to the teaching of reading. Pupils have regular opportunities to write in a wide range of genres and to engage in the writing process. To extend pupils' engagement with poetry, it is advised that pupils memorise a selection of poems. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of key mathematical concepts and have developed good strategies to problem solve. Consideration should be given to incorporating time for oral mental mathematics within lessons.
- Tá dul chun cinn maith á dhéanamh ag daltaí i bhforbairt a gcuid scileanna cumarsáide sa Ghaeilge. B'fhiú béim sa bhreis a chur ar fhorbairt a scileanna saorscribhneoireachta. (*Pupils are making good progress in developing their communication skills in Irish. A greater emphasis should be placed on the development of their independent writing skills.*)
- An effective range of strategies is used to assess and document pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy. Standardised tests are analysed and pupils' progress is tracked longitudinally. Pupils' ability to self-assess is being well developed. It is recommended that formative assessment strategies be extended to all areas of the curriculum in order to build a richer picture of pupils' progress. Support for pupils at stage one of the continuum should be recorded in a classroom support plan.

2. Quality of teaching

- Teaching is of a high quality throughout the school. Teachers display proficient classroom management skills. It is evident that teachers are conscientious and open to new ideas and initiatives. Learning intentions are regularly shared with pupils at the outset of lessons. The vast majority of parents indicated in questionnaires that their child is doing well and that teaching is good in the school.
- Long-term planning is of a good quality. There is scope to develop the quality of short-term planning to ensure that teaching is informed by curriculum-based learning outcomes and that specific provision for differentiation is recorded.
- The quality of planning and teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Support is provided on both a withdrawal and in-class basis. Lessons observed were characterised by affirming relationships, the use of a wide range of resources and the use of effective strategies. Overall, pupils are making good progress in attaining their targets. A review of the selection of pupils for learning support is recommended to ensure that support is targeted at pupils most in need and with a view to placing a greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is very good. An affirming and inclusive atmosphere is evident. Relationships in the school are characterised by respect and courtesy. Pupils are very well behaved. In questionnaires, almost all pupils indicated they felt safe in school and in the playground.
- The school is welcoming of parents and the parents' association plays an active role within the school. Good quality information is provided to parents on school life and on their children's educational progress. A wide range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities is provided. Ancillary staff make a valuable contribution to school life.
- 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 provides good governance for the school. It is particularly praised for the high standard to which the school building and recreation areas have been developed. Minutes of meetings evidence wide-ranging discussions and the active role of the board in policy development. The board is advised to certify school accounts annually and to extend its strategies for communicating with the school community.
- The principal provides highly effective leadership to the school. She promotes a culture of distributed leadership and places a core focus on the learning of pupils. Members of the in-school management team undertake a broad range of duties diligently and competently. It is advised that the duties assigned be reviewed regularly.

5. School Self-evaluation

- The school has embarked enthusiastically on the process of school self-evaluation. Through the analysis of school assessment data and consultation with the school community, the school has identified strengths and areas for development in literacy and numeracy. There is evidence of the implementation of the school improvement plan. In some instances, targets set should be refined to ensure that they are specific and measurable.

Conclusion

The school's capacity to engage in school improvement is very good. Staff members engaged very openly with the evaluation process and display an ongoing emphasis on development and improvement.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board endorses the many strengths acknowledged in the evaluation, particularly;

- The positive, affirming and inclusive school atmosphere.
- The high quality of teaching throughout the school.
- The commendable learning achievements of the pupils, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
- The valuable contribution of parents and the Parents' Association to the life of the school.
- The school's enthusiastic engagement in the process of the School Self Evaluation.

The Board is greatly encouraged that relationships in the school are characterised by respect and courtesy, and that our pupils feel safe at school and in the playground (as reported in the pupil questionnaires).

The report offers a constructive analysis of the work of our school, enabling us to further develop our strengths while embracing the outlined recommendations.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

Teachers have begun implementing the recommendations of the inspection. Teachers' short-term planning will be informed by curriculum based learning outcomes. This will then become a basis for formative assessment strategies.

The school's local historical environment will be prioritised in the school's History plan.