1. Introduction

Lenamore NS is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), an action plan of the Department of Education and Skills to address educational disadvantage. Attendance levels are satisfactory. There are 71 pupils enrolled. 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.

2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

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

- There is a strong sense of belonging in the school community.
- The school has a dedicated and hardworking board of management.
- The principal teacher is committed and conscientious.
- The teachers work diligently and are open to adopting new practices in teaching and learning.
- Pupils are respectful of their teachers and of each other.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Music is very good.

The following main recommendations are made:

- It is recommended that the board of management formally adopt the Department’s Child Protection Guidelines for Primary Schools, in compliance with Primary Circular 0061/2006. It is recommended that these child-protection procedures be brought to the attention of management, school staff and parents; that a copy of the procedures be provided to all staff (including all new staff); and that management ensure that all staff are familiar with the procedures to be followed.

- It is recommended that the wide range of pupils’ needs within each classroom be addressed through more effective differentiation of programme and lesson content, especially in the areas of literacy and numeracy.

- Moltar athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar an bpolasaí Gaeilge chun clár leanúnach a leagan síos don ghradamach, don fhoclóir, don scribhneoireacht chruthaitheach, don léitheoireacht agus do mhúineadh na mbriathra. It is recommended that the Irish policy be revised so that it provides a continuous programme for grammar, vocabulary, creative writing, reading and the teaching of verbs.

- It is recommended that the school's policy and practice regarding supervision of the recreation area be revised, with a view to ensuring that pupils are visible at all times to the staff member(s) supervising.
3. **Quality of School Management**

- The board of management is properly constituted and is competent and efficient in executing its duties. The chairperson provides praiseworthy support and guidance to the school staff. The board has facilitated the formal establishment of a parents’ association, which will be functioning later in the school term.

- The board has invested in a wide range of teaching and learning resources including information and communication technology (ICT). The school building and grounds are well maintained. Personnel are allocated effectively and display competence in their respective roles.

- The school community is led by a dedicated and enthusiastic principal. She shows great commitment to the creation of a vibrant and happy learning community. She has established a collaborative working relationship with her staff. The deputy principal carries out her duties diligently.

- The management of pupil behaviour is very good. It is recommended that the school’s policy and practice regarding supervision of the recreation area be revised, with a view to ensuring that pupils are visible at all times to the staff member(s) supervising.

4. **Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation**

- The quality of school planning is good. Key policies are shared with parents. An action-planning approach is used very effectively and efficiently. The staff has identified curricular policies that need review and this concurs with the findings of the evaluation. The quality of some of the policies, including Music and Mathematics is very good. There is a need to review the school’s Irish policy, so that it provides practical guidance to teachers and ensures continuity and progression in the pupils’ learning as they move from one class to another.

- The school has set realistic targets in its DEIS action plan. Many of the actions taken to address numeracy and literacy have proved successful.

- The quality of classroom planning and preparation is good. Teachers plan according to the objectives of the curriculum and plan for the use of a variety of methodologies and resources. It is recommended that teachers plan more carefully for the differentiation of programme and class content in literacy and numeracy, in accordance with the range of pupils’ learning needs.

**Child protection policy and procedures**

- It is recommended that the board of management formally adopt the Department’s *Child Protection Guidelines for Primary Schools*, in compliance with Primary Circular 0061/2006. It is recommended that these child-protection procedures be brought to the attention of management, school staff and parents; that a copy of the procedures be provided to all staff (including all new staff); and that management ensure 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

- All of the lessons observed during the evaluation were well paced, well resourced and well structured. Teachers work hard to make lessons interesting for pupils. Talk and discussion is a key component of all lessons. The interactive whiteboard is used effectively. In most cases, pupils would benefit from more purposeful group work and pair work. It is recommended that the wide range of pupil’s needs within each classroom be addressed through more effective differentiation of programme and lesson content, especially in the areas of literacy and numeracy.

- Tugtar faoi mhúineadh na Gaeilge go díograiseach a gus baintear úsáid éifeachtach as mórchuid áiseanna. Baintear úsáid thairbheach as ra inn, amhráin agus cluichí le linn na foghlama. Moltar níos mó deiseanna a thabhairt do na daltaí chun obair bheire a chleachtadh. Moltar freisin an Ghaeilge a úsáid mar theanga chumarsáide taobh amuigh den cheacht foirmiúil. Moltar úsáid na scéalaíochta i dteagasc na Gaeilge a thorbaítr trí an scol. Déantar soláthar cuí don léitheoireacht. Moltar don scol clár leanúnach a leagan síos agus a chur i bhfeidhm don ghrámadach, don fhoclóir, do scríbhneoireacht chruthaitheach, don litéitheoireacht agus do mhúineadh na mbriathra.

- The teaching of Irish is undertaken diligently and a large number of resources are used effectively. Beneficial use is made of poems, songs and games in pupils’ learning. It is recommended that pupils be given even more opportunities to engage in pair work. It is recommended also that Irish be used as a communicative language outside of the formal lesson. It is recommended that the use of story in the teaching of Irish be developed throughout the school. There is appropriate provision for Irish reading. It is recommended that the school provide and implement a continuous programme in grammar, vocabulary, creative writing, reading and in the teaching of verbs.

- In English, pupils are enabled to express their views through the effective use of circle time, presentation of projects, discussion, brainstorming and debating. Pupils recite rhymes and poetry competently. It is recommended that a listening programme be devised as part of the oral-language programme in English. In the teaching of reading, very good attention is given to the development of pupils’ phonological awareness, sight vocabulary, spelling and grammar. There is good use of large-format books and class novels. There is scope for further work on reading comprehension. There is good provision for English writing.

- The quality of teaching in Mathematics is very good. There is effective use of a variety of concrete materials, activities and games that support pupils’ learning. Number facts (tables) and mental arithmetic are well taught. It is recommended that pupils be given more opportunities to discuss maths problems in pairs and small groups. This could provide a good opportunity for in-class support by the learning-support/resource teacher. The pupils would benefit from further development of mathematical language, greater use of ICT and the development of mathematical trails.

- There is evidence of very good practice in the teaching of Music. Pupils are making very good progress in the areas of musical literacy, composition, performance and listening and responding to music. All pupils learn and play the tin whistle from second class upwards. There is a dedicated Music area in all classrooms.
6. Quality of Supports for Pupils

• The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs and learning difficulties is very good. A comprehensive whole-school policy guides practice. An analysis of pupils’ achievements in standardised tests in English and Mathematics is carried out by the learning-support teacher. Programmes are then devised and tailored to meet the pupils’ needs. Pupils are identified for early intervention following the administration of the Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST). Further diagnostic tests are used to identify specific pupil needs.

• The quality of outcomes and the progression of pupils with special educational needs is good. The teachers prepare an individual learning programme and short-term planning notes and maintain a monthly record of work covered in respect of each pupil or group of pupils. A commendable summary report on each pupil’s progress is forwarded to parents during the year. Work samples, test results and anecdotal notes are all filed systematically. The pupils are making progress in accordance with their abilities.

• Intensive, frequent supplementary teaching is provided by the learning-support teacher and the resource teacher for pupils with special educational needs. There is a praiseworthy emphasis on reading skills, oral language, writing skills and numeracy. The use of a variety of games, tasks and activities supports pupils’ development. Pupils are withdrawn from their classes for most of this work. It is recommended that more in-class support be planned and provided. It is recommended also that an early-intervention programme be developed and implemented.

• The work of the DEIS co-ordinator is very good. Specific targets have been identified in the DEIS action plan. The success to date in the various actions is due to the collaboration of the staff, parents and the co-ordinator. A school library has been established through generous donations from parents. Shared reading and silent reading strategies have been implemented successfully. Healthy lunches are provided through DEIS funding. The pupils have participated in community projects. Communication between home and school has strengthened as a result of these and other activities.

Published, June 2011