

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

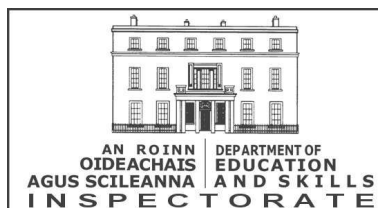
Department of Education and Skills

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

REPORT

**SN Naomh Feichín, An Crois
Claremorris, Co. Mayo
Uimhir rolla: 07075T**

Date of inspection: 15 October 2013



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Feichín (Cross National School), Cross, Co. Mayo, in October 2013. 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. 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.

Cross National School is a rural, co-educational school in the parish of Cross, Cong and The Neale. There are sixty-two pupils enrolled and pupil attendance in the school is good. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam. The school has four teachers: three mainstream teachers and one learning-support teacher. In addition, a resource teacher works with pupils on a part-time basis. At the time of the evaluation the deputy principal was in the role of acting principal.

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

- *The board of management is very supportive of the work of the school.*
- *The acting principal demonstrates effective administrative and management skills.*
- *The teachers use a variety of effective teaching methods.*
- *Good-quality teaching and learning are evident across a range of subjects.*
- *Whole-school and classroom planning and preparation are good.*
- *The pupils are well-behaved and pupil well-being is given due attention.*
- *Good school self-evaluation processes are in place.*
- *The school building and grounds are well-maintained.*

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- *The school's learning-support and resource provision should be reviewed to ensure that more emphasis is placed on early intervention and in-class support.*
- *There is a need for greater differentiation in English and Mathematics within class grades.*
- *A parents' association should be established in the school.*

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The pupils' overall learning achievements are good in English, Irish and Mathematics. Learning achievements in a range of other subjects including Music, Visual Arts and Geography are also good.
- The quality of learning in English throughout the school is good, with much of the work being very good. Good oral language development in English is evident in most classes. Reading standards at each class level are good. Standards in writing range from good to very good, with appropriate emphasis being placed on creative writing. The quality of most pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their written work is good.
- In Irish, pupils in most classrooms demonstrate good oral language skills, although there is a need to place more emphasis on this work in some classes. Most pupils' demonstrate good ability in Irish reading and their comprehension skills are

particularly noteworthy. While some good work is done in Irish writing, it is recommended that pupils be given more opportunities to practise creative writing.

- Overall learning outcomes in Mathematics are good at each class level. Most pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of concepts. They also demonstrate effective problem-solving strategies. Concrete materials are used very effectively at some class levels. There is a need to expand the use of such materials to each class level to enhance the learning process.
- Pupils at each class level recite a good range of poems, rhymes and songs in both languages.
- The progress of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, is good. Pupils with special educational needs are given beneficial support as required, although there is a need to provide for more early intervention. A greater level of in-class support is also recommended to enhance pupils' progress even further.

2. Quality of teaching

- The quality of teaching in the school is good with some very good practice in evidence. There is a need, however, to place greater emphasis on differentiating activities within class grades, especially in English and Mathematics.
- Good planning and preparation are evident at each class level. Appropriate planning, including an individual education plan, is provided for each pupil with learning difficulties or special educational needs.
- The teaching of reading is given due attention at each class level and there is a print-rich environment in Irish and English throughout the school. The teaching staff has been progressive in introducing comprehension programmes such as *Building Bridges*, as well as shared-reading activities. Class libraries are very well-stocked with a good selection of recently-published titles.
- It is recommended that every lesson contain a strong literacy element. This should help to ensure that pupils acquire the vocabulary needed to enhance the learning process across the curriculum.
- Pupils' work is regularly monitored and corrected with appropriate feedback provided.
- The strong emphasis on Mathematics throughout the school is praiseworthy. There is a very good maths-rich environment throughout the school, including very good maths trails around the school building and grounds.
- The quality of pupil assessment is good, with each pupil's progress being effectively recorded in informative pupil profiles.
- The quality of teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs is good. There is a need to focus on providing more in-class support and on a more structured early-intervention programme. These initiatives have already been identified by the school staff as potential areas for development.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- The pupils at each class level are very well behaved. They are courteous, welcoming and eager to discuss what they have learned.
- Pupils are treated fairly and the school strives to address each pupil's needs. It is recommended, however, that even more focus be placed on the specific needs of pupils with allocated resources to ensure that this time is used with maximum effect.
- Relationships with the school community are good, with parents regularly volunteering to assist in school activities and projects. Good communication already exists between the school and parents, although this could be enhanced by the development of a school website.
- It is recommended that a parents' association be established in the school, as a forum for parents to become more actively involved in school life.
- The school is compliant with child protection requirements.

4. Leadership and Management

- The board of management is very supportive of the school and works hard to improve facilities. The board is actively involved in assisting the school in many ways and has overseen, for example, the recent refurbishment and extension. School accounts are certified annually.

- The acting principal is diligent in her work and she demonstrates very good administrative and management skills. The management of resources in the school is very good. A range of improved facilities and teaching resources has been provided in the past few years, from interactive whiteboards and teaching aids to new classrooms and enhanced school surroundings.
- The acting principal receives good support from the acting deputy principal and from all other staff members.

5. School Self-evaluation

- Parent-teacher meetings are held annually and more frequently if required. Parents are sent a written report on the progress of their children at the end of the school year.
- The school has engaged very well with the school self-evaluation process. An appropriate range of evidence has been used to set targets for improvement.
- A school improvement plan (SIP) is in place. The effectiveness of the implementation of the SIP is monitored and regularly reviewed.

Conclusion

The school's capacity to develop further and to engage in school improvement is very good.