

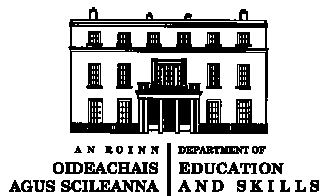
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation  
REPORT**

**St. Eoghan's National School  
Kilmoganny, Co. Kilkenny  
Uimhir rolla: 07481H**

**Date of inspection: 3 December 2013**



## 1. Introduction

St. Eoghan's NS is a rural, co-educational school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ossory. There are thirty pupils enrolled, taught by two mainstream class teachers and two support teachers, one of whom is based in the school. The attendance of most pupils is 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.

## 2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

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

- The principal and the teachers work collaboratively to ensure the provision of good quality educational experiences for the pupils.
- The general parent body along with the parents' association provide valuable support to the school.
- The pupils are enthusiastic and committed learners.
- The teachers are engaging successfully with the school self-evaluation process.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Tá caighdeán an-mhaith á bhaint amach i múineadh agus i bhfoghlaím na Gaeilge. *A very good standard is being achieved in teaching and learning in Irish.*
- The quality of support for pupils with additional learning needs is very good.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- The board of management should: assign specific roles to all board members; circulate an agenda in advance of meetings; and include a formal principal's report in the minutes of meetings.
- Duties assigned to in-school management should be reviewed to place greater emphasis on leading and implementing curriculum initiatives.
- The pupils' skills in free writing, in both English and in Irish should be developed further.

## 3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management displays commitment to supporting the work of the school. It is praised for its review of pupil performance data. However, a further strengthening of its consideration of teaching, learning and pupil achievement matters would be beneficial. In order to continue to develop the quality of management provided by the board it is

recommended that the following aspects of practice be considered: assignment of specific roles to all board members; circulation of an agenda in advance of meetings; and the inclusion of a formal principal's report in the minutes of meetings. It is further advised that the board prepare and publish an annual report on the operation of the school.

- The principal is committed to the school and is diligent in the discharge of his duties. He works collaboratively with the special duties teacher to ensure the provision of good quality educational experiences for the pupils. Both fulfil their assigned duties conscientiously. It is now opportune to review these duties to reflect the evolving priorities of the school. A greater emphasis should be placed on leading and implementing curriculum initiatives.
- The building and grounds are maintained to a good standard. The recent addition of a new classroom serves to significantly enhance the learning environment. It is advised that a strategic maintenance plan be put in place to further improve the building. Areas for consideration should include the provision of improved heating facilities in the learning-support classroom. Ancillary staff contribute conscientiously to the work of the school.
- The school communicates effectively with parents through written correspondence and through the school website. It has a committed and active parents' association, which organises and supports a variety of valuable school events. Written reports, along with annual parent-teacher meetings, inform parents of their child's progress. Parents recognise the good work undertaken by the school with regard to teaching and learning. Responses to questionnaires indicate that all parents are happy with the school and that they consider the school to be welcoming of them.
- The pupils are enthusiastic and committed learners. The school's encouragement of them to take responsibility and to engage in decision making through the *Green Schools committee* and the *Active Flag committee*, is praised.

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

- The quality of the school planning is good. Administrative and organisational policies in a wide range of areas have been devised and are implemented successfully. Curricular policies, many of which have been recently reviewed, aptly reflect the school context and provide useful guidance for curriculum implementation. The English and Irish policies should be augmented to include targeted attention to free writing.
- The quality of classroom planning is very good and monthly progress records are carefully maintained in subject-specific format, building a comprehensive profile of curriculum coverage in both classrooms.
- The teachers are engaging successfully with the school self-evaluation process. Attainment in standardised tests has been examined, the views of parents have been sought and work has commenced on the implementation of a school improvement plan for literacy.
- 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*.

## 5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

- The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. The particular demands of multi-grade teaching are managed well and the teachers work diligently to provide valuable learning activities for the pupils. Lessons are delivered in a structured manner, making good provision for the active involvement of pupils. A wide range of resources including ICT is used appropriately to support teaching and learning. The pupils successfully apply themselves to learning tasks and demonstrate an enthusiasm for learning. Almost all of them indicated through the pupil questionnaire that their teachers explain things clearly in lessons. Most pupils are making steady progress in their learning. All parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that teaching is good in the school.
- Assessment of learning is of a good quality. Standardised and screening assessments are administered and analysed. It is commendable that the school has recently purchased and begun to use some appropriate diagnostic testing. In the responses to the pupil questionnaire, just over half of the pupils reported that they considered that they were doing well at reading. Consequently, greater emphasis on pupil-self-assessment, with particular focus on reading, is now advised.
- Tá caighdeánan-mhaith á bhaint amach i múineadh agus i bhfoghlaim na Gaeilge. Cothaítear dearcadh dearfach i leith an teanga. Úsáidtear modhanna múinte agus acmhainní éagsúla le linn na gceachtanna, ar a n-áirítear, obair bheirte, cluichí ar ríomhairí glúine, cartúin agus drámaíocht, chun an teanga a mhúineadh. Cleachtaítear Gaeilge neamhfhoirmiúil go táirgiúil sna bunranganna, áit ina múintear amhráin agus dánta go rialta. Tá scileanna léitheoireachta na ndaltaí á saothrú go céimniúil agus léann an cuid is mó dóibh le líofacht agus le cruinneas ó úrscéalta beaga. Chun gnóthachtáil na ndaltaí a fheabhsú a thuilleadh, ní mór béim sa bhreis a chur ar scileanna scríbhneoireachta neamhspleácha. Nasctar múineadh na Gaeilge go h-éifeachtach le cleachtadh ar an bhfeadóg stáin.
- *A very good standard is being achieved in teaching and learning in Irish. A positive attitude towards Irish is cultivated. Many teaching methodologies and resources are used during lessons, among them pair-work, laptop computer games, cartoons and drama, to teach the language. Informal Irish is practised successfully in junior classes, where songs and rhymes are systematically taught. The pupils' reading skills are developed consistently and most pupils read with fluency and with accuracy from short fiction books. In order to further improve the pupils' achievements in Irish, an increased emphasis should be placed on the development of free-writing skills. The teaching of Irish is successfully linked with practice on the tin whistle.*
- In English, the quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is good. Commendable emphasis is placed on phonics, spelling, and grammar and on the development of comprehension skills. Most pupils display good capacity in oral language. Early-literacy skills are developed effectively and the majority of pupils achieve a good standard in reading. As the use of differentiated readers has been established successfully throughout the school, consideration should now be given to the discontinuation of the use of a class reader. While the pupils are guided to write in a variety of genres, it is recommended that increased emphasis be placed on the development of the pupils' free-writing skills. Further attention should be directed to the quality of handwriting and to the presentation of written work in some instances.
- Teaching and learning in Mathematics is good. Effective practice includes clear structured teaching, the consistent use of manipulatives in learning and the use of the pupils' immediate environment to support the systematic development of mathematical

skills. Due emphasis is placed on the acquisition of mathematical language. Problem solving strategies are agreed and implemented at whole-school level. Further gains in overall attainment may accrue from both increased emphasis on accuracy and from more rigorous analysis of the outcomes of testing. Through the pupil questionnaires, most pupils report that they are doing well at Mathematics.

- In Drama, the quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is satisfactory. The pupils engage with enthusiasm in lessons and Drama is integrated effectively with other subject areas, most notably with Irish. The teachers employ a range of suitable strategies such as mime, frieze frames, and drama games and the pupils are encouraged to reflect upon the dramatic method. Trips to the theatre enhance the provision and the pupils present an annual Christmas concert in the parish hall. In order to build on the quality of learning outcomes it is advised that a broader range of the elements of Drama be explored and that the Drama contract be introduced in both classrooms.

## **6. Quality of Support for Pupils**

- The quality of support for pupils with additional learning needs is very good. Detailed planning is undertaken to address the pupils' identified needs and they are making good progress in attaining their learning targets. Lessons are well-structured and suitable emphasis is attached to the promotion of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and socialisation. A broad range of high quality teacher-designed resources is used to support the pupils in their learning. The outcomes of assessment are utilised successfully to inform the development of classroom support plans as part of the continuum of support for the pupils.

# **Appendix**

**School response to the report**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

**Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board of Management and staff of St. Eoghan's N.S. value this very positive report.

The Board of Management reiterates the points made in the report that the pupils are enthusiastic and committed learners.

The report affirms that the quality of teaching and learning in the school is very good.

The Board of Management agrees with the inspectorate in their recognition of our very supportive parents.

In conclusion, we, the Board of Management are committed to ensuring a very good quality of leadership and management for the pupils in our school.

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

The Board of Management and staff are working closely together to implement the recommendations in this report.