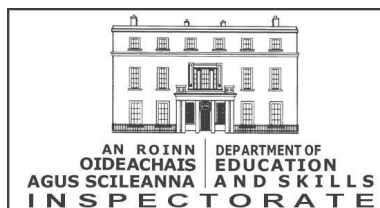


An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning
REPORT

St. Peter's NS,
Athlone, Co Westmeath
Uimhir rolla: 07722D

Date of inspection: 20/11/2013



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in St Peter's NS in November 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 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 six mainstream classes and it provides for the educational needs of girls from second to sixth class and a co-educational special class. St Peter's operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Elphin. Additional resources have been provided to the school because of its designation of Urban, Band One status under the Department's Delivering Equality In Schools (DEIS) initiative. There are 129 pupils enrolled in the school and attendance rates are good for most pupils.

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

- A very well-informed and committed board of management provides strong support for the school.
- The principal and in-school management team provide very effective instructional leadership for teaching and learning.
- High quality teaching and learning are evident throughout the school.
- Teachers demonstrate commitment and professional competence in successfully implementing a wide range of teaching methodologies.
- The school is very successful in fostering positive home-school relationships and in encouraging parental involvement in school activities.
- The school is commended for the provision of a range of material and personal supports for pupils to facilitate their full inclusion in school life.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Ongoing consolidation and revision of new content and language should be a feature of all teachers' practice.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning achievements of the pupils are very good and high levels of engagement, challenge and motivation were observed during lessons.
- Pupils achieve commendable standards in English reading and their high quality writing is evidence of conscientious engagement with process writing and attention to presentation. Most pupils express themselves confidently.
- Achievements in Mathematics are very good with the majority of pupils reaching very good levels of attainment in standardised tests. Pupils engage very positively with mathematical topics and their oral responses and written work demonstrate good understanding of concepts and valuable understanding of problem-solving approaches.
- Sroichtear caighdeán inmholta sa Ghaeilge i ranganna áirithe agus sna ranganna seo labhraíonn agus scríobhann na daltaí le cruinneas agus cumas. I ranganna eile tá gá le forbairt foclóra sa bhreis agus le dul siar a dhéanamh go rialta. *A praiseworthy standard is achieved in Irish in some classes and in these classes the pupils speak*

and write accurately and confidently. In other classes there is a need for extra vocabulary development and regular revision.

- Learning outcomes for pupils in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education are very good with pupils demonstrating investigative skills, and recalling and presenting information on a variety of cross-curricular topics.
- Learning achievements are good for pupils with special educational needs. They work at an instructional level suitable to their learning needs and commendable progress is achieved. Some pupils would benefit from further opportunities to consolidate and revise story sequences and to practise newly-acquired vocabulary.

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is very good. There is evidence that teachers regularly collaborate to ensure that classroom planning addresses pupils' learning needs. All teachers demonstrate competent teaching skills and these are often enhanced by the use of specialised programmes and team teaching to promote the development of literacy and numeracy.
- The widespread and effective use of active and collaborative teaching methodologies is also praiseworthy. In response to the Inspectorate survey, almost all pupils reported that they work in groups frequently and that their teachers' explanations are clear. While most pupils recall facts from previous lessons accurately, in some classrooms there is scope to revise and consolidate the content of previous lessons and to provide pupils with more opportunities to practise new vocabulary.
- Assessment practices are very effective and all teachers maintain a suitable range of assessment records across the curriculum. Teachers are commended for their use of formative assessment methods and the promotion of pupil self-assessment.
- Pupils with special educational needs are taught in the special class and in other mainstream classes throughout the school. Good quality learning programmes are prepared for each pupil to ensure that lessons provide effectively for their priority learning needs.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- The school provides very effective supports to improve pupils' well-being. A very co-operative and supportive atmosphere has been nurtured and pupils relate very positively with the staff and their peers.
- The breakfast and homework clubs contribute significantly to supporting pupils' welfare needs. Pupils benefit greatly from the voluntary support teaching provided for them by four retired teachers.
- The school has fostered very good home-school relationships through initiatives involving the School Completion Programme and the Home-School Community Liaison service. A new Parents' Association has been formed and some parents are involved with the Maths for Fun and Discover Primary Science programmes. All parents report their satisfaction with the school.
- Inclusive policies are implemented to ensure that pupils with diverse learning needs and cultural backgrounds are fully included in school life. The special needs assistants provide very sensitively for pupils' care needs.
- 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

- A very well-informed board of management provides strong support for the work of the school. The board articulates the attainment of high educational standards, pupil welfare and the effective discharge of its statutory duties as its priorities.
- The principal communicates high expectations for the school community and her shared management style encourages a high level of collaboration and delegation

among the staff. The principal and in-school management team provide very effective instructional leadership for teaching and learning.

5. School Self-evaluation

- The school self-evaluation process is very well progressed. Building upon its existing involvement in the DEIS planning process, the school has analysed a range of evidence to identify specific and measurable improvement targets in literacy.
- There is evidence that the improvement strategies identified in the improvement plan are being implemented very effectively at classroom level.

Conclusion

The school's capacity to develop further is very good, based on the school's ongoing involvement in DEIS, its very strong and committed leadership and the school's response to the recommendations of a previous inspection. Continued engagement in its rigorous school self-evaluation process will be central to the development of the school.

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 of St. Peter's National School, Athlone welcomes the findings in relation to the learning achievements of the pupils, the quality of teaching, the leadership and management of the school and the commendable support to facilitate inclusion for pupils.

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 acknowledges the recommendation made by the inspectors which reaffirms the schools decision to target language development for our first school improvement plan. As a staff we intend to implement further strategies for the consolidation and revision of new content and language.