

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

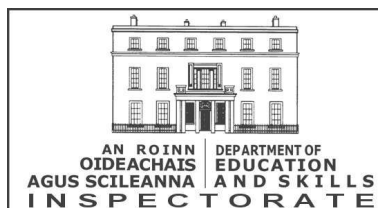
**Department of Education and Skills**

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

**REPORT**

**Aghatubrid Primary School,  
Aghatubrid, Killarney , Co. Kerry  
Uimhir rolla: 09878V**

**Date of inspection: 21 November 2013**



## Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

### Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Aghatubrid Primary School 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 on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

Aghatubrid Primary School is a co-educational, rural school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kerry. It is situated six kilometres from Caherciveen town. It participates in the Green Schools' and Health Promoting Schools' initiatives. A part-time secretary and care-taker contribute constructively to the work of the school. There are ninety-two pupils currently enrolled at the school. Pupil attendance is good.

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

- The board of management is committed to fulfilling its duties and is strongly supportive of the school.
- The teachers approach their work in a professional and diligent manner.
- Pupils' attainment is high.
- The quality of teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy is very good.
- A wide range of methodologies is implemented in mediating the curriculum.
- The parents' association actively supports the school.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- The further development of a communicative approach in Irish will enhance learning outcomes.
- Assessment practices should now be further extended to systematically include the implementation of self-assessment and peer-assessment practices.
- Support resources should be directed to those with the greatest learning needs. The provision of in-class support for pupils and the implementation of an early intervention programme would enhance the current good practice.
- Supervision of pupils should be reviewed to ensure that all pupils are visible in the playground at all times

### Findings

#### 1. The learning achievements of pupils

- Overall, pupils' learning achievements are high. Pupils in the majority of classes are actively engaged in their learning. Progress in English literacy and numeracy is very good. Results of standardised tests in both curriculum areas support this finding. Pupils' achievement in Irish would be enhanced by further development of the communicative approach. In their interactions with the inspector during the evaluation, pupils demonstrated, that they are making very good progress proportionate with their abilities.
- Pupils with special educational needs engage in learning activities which are stimulating and based on their needs. They engage eagerly in these activities. However some pupils' needs are not being fully addressed in group settings for literacy or numeracy. It is recommended that support resources be directed to those with the greatest learning needs. To this end the provisions of Circular 02/05

*Organisation of Teaching Resources for Pupils who need Additional Support in Mainstream Primary Schools* should be fully implemented.

## **2. Quality of teaching**

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is good. Teachers prepare their lessons in a professional manner. Appropriate planning documents are provided to guide teaching activities. A wide range of methodologies and approaches are implemented in mediating the curriculum including collaborative learning, the use of interactive whiteboards and the use of concrete materials. To further enhance the good practice observed during the evaluation it is recommended that team teaching and station teaching be implemented in the infant and junior classes. A specific early intervention programme such as *Aistear* would further support the development of pupils' early literacy and numeracy skills. Some very good practice in the approach to the teaching of Social, Environmental and Scientific Education and Social, Personal and Health Education was observed in one class setting. This practice should be employed on a whole school basis.
- The quality of teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils receive support on a withdrawal basis from two teachers who are shared with other schools. Support is provided to individuals based on their individual needs. Class groupings are also withdrawn for teaching literacy and numeracy. This practice should be reviewed. Support teachers should also be deployed in mainstream settings to support the provision of differentiated, challenging and enriching programmes of work for all pupils. Teachers prepare their work carefully. Individual Profiles and Learning Programmes include specific learning targets.

## **3. Support for pupils' well-being**

- The teachers work diligently and effectively to promote the educational welfare of the pupils in their care. Pupils are well behaved and co-operate willingly with their teachers. During the evaluation two adults supervised pupils in the playground. However, due to the layout of the grounds not all pupils are visible at all times. It is advised that supervisory practices be reviewed to ensure pupil safety. Responses to Department questionnaires administered to pupils are extremely positive.
- Pupils from disadvantaged groups are supported in a sensitive manner. The school operates an after-school club daily for infant pupils. This is funded by the South Kerry Development Partnership's *Tús Programme*.
- All pupils, including pupils with Special Educational Needs are integrated fully and in a seamless way in all aspects of school life. A part-time special needs assistant works collaboratively with teachers and parents to provide suitable support for pupils.
- 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 meets five times a year and minutes are maintained. A financial report is provided at meetings. Accounts are independently certified annually. An annual budget is provided for the provision of teaching and learning resources. The majority of members have availed of training opportunities provided by the patron. The chairperson meets weekly with the principal to discuss school issues. The board also meets with the parents' association and issues a newsletter annually. Policies are discussed and ratified at meetings. Pupil achievement is also a feature of meetings.
- The in-school management team consists of principal, deputy principal and special duties teacher. The principal has a clear vision for the school. She leads the school in a collaborative and inclusive manner. Roll books and the Daily Attendance Register (*Leabhar Tinrimh*) are completed appropriately. However school registers (*Clár Leabhair*) have not been completed since 2000. This issue is currently being addressed. She is capably supported by the in-school management team. Duties are

assigned but require review to ensure compliance with the provisions of Circular 17/00 *Appointments to Posts of Responsibility*.

- An active parents' association works constructively to support the school. In a meeting with the inspector members stated that they are very satisfied with the standard of education provision at the school. They also stated that the teaching staff implement a caring approach to pupils. Availing of training opportunities related to their role would be beneficial to the association. Parent-teacher meetings are held annually. Parents also receive informative written reports on their children's progress. The vast majority of respondents to questionnaires completed by parents were very complimentary of the work of the school .

#### **5. School Self-evaluation**

- A broad range of assessment and diagnostic tools are administered to pupils on a frequent basis. These results are appropriately used to inform the school self-evaluation process. Individual pupil attainment is carefully recorded to monitor pupil progress. Assessment approaches could now be extended to include the use of self-assessment and peer-assessment on a more systematic basis in the school.
- Staff members attended a seminar on School Self-Evaluation earlier this year. An appropriate self-evaluation report and school improvement plan have been devised and are being implemented. Clear targets have been identified in the plan to raise pupil attainment levels in literacy and numeracy. Strategies are being implemented on a whole-school basis to achieve these targets.

#### **Conclusion**

- The school has good capacity to develop further and engage in school improvement. Accessing external support services would enhance this capacity.

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