

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation  
REPORT  
Kilberry NS,  
Kilberry, Co Kildare  
Uimhir rolla: 13165G**

**Date of inspection: 11 April 2013**



## 1. Introduction

Kilberry National School is a co-educational primary school situated in Kilberry, Co. Kildare. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and its ethos is effectively fostered throughout the school. The school is part of the rural Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative. It currently has an enrolment of 124 pupils. Attendance levels are generally good. The board of management 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 board of management and the parents' association are commended for their active support of the school.
- The principal provides very effective leadership to the school.
- A collaborative culture exists among teachers who display a deep commitment to their work and to providing a positive learning environment for pupils.
- Pupils are well behaved and engage respectfully with adults and peers.
- The quality and range of supports for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- The school is advised to create a comprehensive oral language programme throughout the school and to maximise the use of oral language as a teaching strategy in all areas of the curriculum.
- Teachers are encouraged to expand the variety of teaching approaches and strategies used to promote the active involvement of pupils in a learning process that is imaginative and stimulating.

## 3. Quality of School Management

- The quality of the work of the board of management is very good. Meetings are held regularly and members work effectively as a team. The board is commended for developing and maintaining the school building and surroundings to a very high standard and for its commitment to the ongoing safety of the school community. School finances are carefully managed. The board has been active in the review and ratification of organisational and curricular policies.
- The recently appointed principal exhibits highly effective administrative, pastoral and instructional leadership skills. She has a clear vision for the development of the school and she engages in continuous professional development to assist her in her role. She is competently assisted by the deputy principal who has clearly defined responsibilities

within the school. The special duties teacher assists with the management of the school and undertakes a number of initiatives that reflect current priorities. The roles of post holders should be kept under review to respond to the evolving needs of the school.

- The management team is supported by the diligent and committed teaching staff who demonstrate a spirit of collaboration. They participate in a range of professional development courses to enhance the work of the school. The management of the school's resources is good. Classrooms provide clean, stimulating and well-resourced learning environments. The part-time special needs assistant and ancillary staff play a central role in the smooth operation of the school.
- Relationships and communications throughout the school community are very well managed. The newly formed parents' association is active in its support of the school. A broad range of strategies is used to communicate with parents about school activities and their children's progress. In interviews and questionnaires, parents report very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the operation of the school.
- The management of pupils is commendable. Pupils are well behaved and there is a positive atmosphere of mutual respect among adults and pupils. In pupil questionnaires, all respondents reported they felt safe in the classroom and in the playground. A range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities is provided to enhance pupils' experience of school.

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

- The quality of whole school planning is good. A broad range of well-contextualised administrative policies inform the operation of the school. Curriculum plans for the subjects evaluated were developed collaboratively and are generally of a high quality. The content of some plans should be extended to provide further support and guidance for teachers' classroom planning and practice.
- Self-evaluation and self-reflection are becoming embedded in the school culture and a number of areas have been prioritised for development. The school is praised for initiating the procedures advocated in the recently published *School Self-evaluation Guidelines for Primary Schools*.
- The quality of individual teachers' planning is good. Plans outline learning objectives to be achieved together with learning activities. Teachers are advised to provide closer links between broad concepts and skills in each subject area and lesson content and presentation. The monthly progress records outline content that has been effectively achieved.
- 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 quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is good, with excellent practice observed in some settings. Lessons are generally well structured and a variety of teaching approaches was observed with good use of pair-work and team-teaching. To enhance pupils' learning, teachers should actively support pupils' oral language

development in all subject areas and provide opportunities for pupils to engage in the accurate and effective use of subject-specific language across the curriculum. In some settings, pupils' creative and higher-order thinking skills are effectively fostered. This practice should be extended to all classes through the use of a greater variety of teaching approaches and strategies and more active involvement of pupils.

- Pupils' engagement in their learning is good and many can discuss aspects of their work with enthusiasm. While some lessons are differentiated, it is recommended that classroom teachers develop this provision to ensure appropriate challenge or support for pupils. Written work is well presented and regularly monitored and teachers are advised to emphasise accuracy in the final presentation of pupils' work.
- Tá caighdeán maith á bhaint amach i múineadh agus i bhfoghlaim na Gaeilge. Úsáidtear modhanna múinte éagsúla ar a n-áirítear cluichí, rólghlacadh agus dramaíocht chun an teanga a mhúineadh. Daingnítear í trí amhránaíocht agus rainn. Ar an mórgóir, tá struchtúr maith ar cheachtanna agus cuirtear béim mhaith ar an gcur chuige cumarsáideach. I ranganna áirithe, moltar níos mó deiseanna cumarsáide a sholáthar do na daltaí. Tá scileanna léitheoireachta agus scríbhneoireachta á saothrú go céimniúil. Moltar don scoil clár structúrtha a ullmhú don teanga labhartha agus na daltaí a spreagadh an Ghaeilge a úsáid go teagmhasach i rith an lae.
- *A good standard is being achieved in the teaching and learning of Irish. Language is taught through a variety of methodologies, including games, role play and drama. It is consolidated through singing and rhymes. Overall, lessons are well structured and a good emphasis is placed on the communicative approach. In some classes, pupils should be provided with more conversational opportunities. Pupils' reading and writing skills are developed systematically. The school is advised to prepare and implement a structured programme for oral language and to stimulate the pupils to use Irish incidentally throughout the day.*
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is good. Commendable provision is made to develop pupils' reading and comprehension skills. To build on this good practice, it is recommended that a more structured approach to the development of oral language skills be promoted in the school. This will support the integration of oral language, reading and writing in a coherent language learning process. There is a very good emphasis on the development of phonological awareness and pupils in the middle and senior classes read with good levels of fluency. Pupils are given regular opportunities to write in a range of genres and good attention is paid to the writing process.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is good. The school has effectively initiated team-teaching approaches in some classes. This practice is proving effective and the school is monitoring pupils' progress on an ongoing basis. Lessons are well presented and developed. It is recommended that the consolidation of mathematical concepts be enhanced by developing the pupils' accurate and effective use of mathematical language in all classes and by providing opportunities for pupils to discuss and explain mathematical problems and activities.
- The overall quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Geography is good. Teachers place an emphasis on eliciting pupils' prior knowledge at the outset of lessons. Pupils apply themselves well in lessons and display good knowledge of geographical concepts. Project work has been undertaken to further develop pupils' skills. Teachers are advised to link lesson content to overall concepts and ideas in the Geography curriculum.

- Assessment practices within the school are very good. A broad range of standardised, screening and diagnostic tests are administered and good analysis is undertaken. All teachers have developed assessment records to document pupils' learning with detailed assessments in literacy and numeracy. It is recommended that further analysis of assessment outcomes be used to furnish data on pupils' baseline competencies, attainment levels, learning achievements and future learning needs. Overall, progress records in support settings are of a high quality.

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

- Support for pupils with special educational needs of a very high quality and is provided by a learning support teacher based in the school and a shared resource teacher. The continuum of support is implemented effectively. The school has developed a team approach to the delivery of provision and there is very good communication and co-operation between mainstream and support teachers. Support is provided flexibly on a withdrawal, team-teaching and in-class support basis depending on the needs of the pupils. A good emphasis is placed on early intervention strategies. Teaching observed was of a very high quality and was characterised by a lively pace and the use of a wide range of strategies and resources to support pupils' identified learning needs. Support is provided in stimulating learning settings and there is evidence of the effective learning progress of 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 of Kilberry N.S would like to thank our inspector for her courtesy and helpfulness during our W.S.E.

The Board is very pleased to accept this report. We take this opportunity to affirm and thank our teachers, who as identified in the report display deep commitment to their work and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them.

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

As acknowledged in the report, self-evaluation and self-reflection is embedded in the school culture. Work has begun on the development of a comprehensive oral language programme throughout the school. Teachers have undertaken C.P.D. during the holidays and will continue to up-skill to deliver best practice and education to the highest levels.