An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Anaduff National School
Aughamore, County Leitrim
Uimhir rolla: 13656C

Date of inspection: 2 February 2012
1. **Introduction**

Annaduff National School is a mainstream, co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois. The 144 pupils are distributed across five classrooms. During this whole-school evaluation, provision for Irish, English, Mathematics and Music was inspected. 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 works in a purposeful and supportive manner.  |
| - The principal and post-holders attend to their duties effectively and conscientiously.  |
| - Teachers work skilfully and diligently and demonstrate very good commitment to continuous professional development.  |
| - The quality of learning and pupil achievement is good overall.  |
| - The management of pupils is commendable.  |
| - Parents are very supportive and very positively disposed towards the school.  |
| - The quality of school planning is good overall.  |

| The following **main recommendations** are made: |
| - It is advised that English oral language skills be addressed more systematically and that discrete language time be guided by clear objectives.  |
| - Provision for Music should be reviewed to ensure consistency of approach across the school.  |
| - The school should increase the pupils’ hands-on access to computers.  |
| - An agreed approach to reporting on monthly progress should be implemented.  |

3. **Quality of School Management**

- The board of management works in a purposeful and supportive manner. It maintains the school and its environs to very good effect and is proactive in terms of policy ratification and review. Board records are maintained carefully and accounts are audited regularly. In the near future, and supported by the parents’ association, the board will develop the school grounds further. The board should consider providing an annual report on the operation of the school.
- The in-school management team works effectively. The principal has progressed school planning very effectively and official records are maintained carefully. He undertakes his leadership duties in a thorough, courteous manner. He is assisted ably and conscientiously by a deputy principal and post-holder. Their duties accord with departmental guidelines. Other teachers contribute positively to whole-school initiatives and act regularly in leadership roles.

- School staffing resources are managed well overall. There are five mainstream teaching posts and a learning-support post. Additionally, the board employs a resource teacher, part time, to support pupils with special educational needs. Teachers work skilfully and diligently. They demonstrate very good commitment to continuous professional development. For example, some teachers recently attained master’s degrees in Physical Education. From time to time, there is some rotation of teachers but this is an area that might be formalised. Additionally, teacher specialisation should be promoted so as to share the considerable expertise that exists amongst the staff.

- The board has appointed two special needs assistants who provide caring support to pupils. Guided by whole-school policy, there should be regular review of their responsibilities. Ancillary staff comprises a secretary and cleaner, both part time, who contribute very beneficially to the day-to-day operation of the school.

- School physical resources are good. The school presents very well and classrooms are print rich and well organised. There should be clear signage for the main entrance and reception/office and a school bell and intercom system would be beneficial. A wide range of resources has been acquired and created to support teaching and learning. Visualisers are used very effectively. Interactive white boards have been installed in all classrooms and, at this stage, teachers are familiarising themselves with their basic use. The school should increase the pupils’ hands-on access to computers in every classroom.

- The management of pupils is commendable. During the evaluation, the pupils presented as co-operative and well-behaved.

- While school attendance is good overall, the recurring absences of a small number of pupils are a matter of concern for school management and it should continue to monitor the situation carefully.

- The quality of home-school co-operation is good. Amongst other things, the school provides useful supports for new parents and informative newsletters. The general parent body is very supportive and—according to questionnaire responses garnered during the inspection process—very positively disposed towards the school. Almost all respondents agreed that the school provides a welcoming, well-run and safe environment in which teaching is good and children are making good progress in their learning. However, there was some variation in parents’ perceptions about whether they felt sufficiently informed about the relationships and sexuality education policy, whether there was a physical education (PE) lesson every week and whether their views on school matters were sought regularly.

- The parents’ association works very effectively and expresses very strong support and praise for the school. Amongst other things, members assist in event management and in the school garden. Commendably, the association provides an annual report on its operation and a newsletter to parents. It would welcome the opportunity to contribute to a school web site and further involvement in the school planning process. It hopes to increase its parent-education activities.
4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The quality of school planning is good overall. Administrative planning is clear, comprehensive and very well organised. Curricular plans are useful, especially so for English. In its next steps, the school should revisit its Irish plan to ensure specific and clear guidance for all class levels. Action plans for literacy, numeracy and various other areas have been drafted with progress noted in many aspects. The principal’s proactive work in school self-evaluation is commended.

- All teachers provide individual planning and some of this is of a very good standard. In a number of instances, however, further emphasis should be placed on objective-based planning. The content and specificity of monthly progress reports vary considerably from teacher to teacher. An agreed approach should be implemented which contributes to school self-evaluation.

- 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


- Good standards are achieved in the teaching of Irish. Very worthwhile emphasis is placed on conversation and on the use of verbs in every classroom. More use should be made of incidental Irish in a number of classrooms. Many pupils are capable of structuring sentences accurately. The recitation of rhymes and poems is praiseworthy especially in the junior classes. It would be beneficial to promote this in every class. The majority of pupils read with understanding but the provision of additional reading materials is recommended for every class. Writing skills are taught diligently and pupils write texts with some accuracy. Further opportunities should be afforded to pupils to practice free writing.

- Provision for English is strong. Talk and discussion opportunities are prioritised in all contexts and pupils in many classrooms respond with enthusiasm to well-chosen poetry. However, it is advised that oral language skills be addressed more systematically and that discrete language time be guided by clear objectives. Emergent reading is handled very skillfully and, throughout the school, pupils’ reading experiences and attainment are good. Formal reading should be introduced at a later stage at the infant level. Standards in writing are high overall. The current use of workbooks in some classrooms should be reviewed.
• Provision for Mathematics is commendable. Lessons observed during the evaluation were clear, well paced and active. Pupils show enthusiasm for the subject and most are achieving well. Tables and number facts are revised regularly and pupils’ progress is assessed on an ongoing basis. Recently, team teaching has been introduced as a means of extending problem-solving work in the middle classes. While this work was not presented during the evaluation, it holds promise as an approach.

• Work in Music is satisfactory overall. Listening to music and song-singing are attended to regularly. Pupils participate in the Hallelujah concerts and, currently, the senior classes are involved in a very creative sound project with the Artists in Schools scheme. While literacy and composition are addressed in every classroom, there is need to have a more developmental approach throughout the school. Teachers should ensure that sufficient time is allocated to Music in their weekly timetables. During the evaluation, pupils used percussion instruments in several classrooms. From first to sixth classes, most pupils receive tin-whistle tuition from an external tutor. Currently, pupils leave their mainstream classroom for such tuition. This practice should be reviewed. Financial contributions from parents towards such tuition should be discontinued.

• Overall, the quality of overall teaching, learning and pupil achievement is good. Commendably, Aistear is implemented in the infant classroom. In questionnaires, the majority of pupils indicated that they enjoy their lessons and learning. This was evident during the evaluation with many opportunities for pupils to engage in pair and group activities. However, questionnaire responses indicate that pupils do not perceive themselves as having regular opportunities to work in groups. By the time pupils reach the more senior classes, the majority take appropriate responsibility for their own learning. However, this is an area that should be fostered further throughout the school. While most teachers encourage the use of home-work sheets/journals, there should be consistency of approach in this regard.

• Whole-school assessment practice is commendable. Formative assessment is underway in most classrooms with records maintained of pupils’ progress. The majority of pupils make changes to their work after correction by the teacher. This practice should be firmly established in all classrooms. Some teachers have introduced assessment for learning strategies. Standardised tests are administered in English reading and Mathematics and overall attainments in both are good. The general use of a non-reading intelligence test and introduction of the standardised test for Irish should be considered. In their action plans, teachers intend to introduce pupil profiles for every pupil and improved tracking mechanisms across the school.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

• Provision for pupils with additional and special educational needs is good overall. As aforementioned, one of the two support teaching posts is comprised of part-time hours. This part-time arrangement has contributed to the number of personnel changes in the post where staff has moved to other more stable teaching positions. It is important that stability be achieved in the post and to that end the school might arrange for its inclusion in a resource-teaching cluster with other schools.

• Currently, support is provided primarily on a withdrawal basis. The lessons observed were effectively implemented. Learning environments are pleasant and pupil-teacher interactions are very affirming of pupils. In general, written preparation and recording are effective. However, in some instances learning targets for pupils with special educational needs should be more specific. The responsibilities of all those involved in individual educational plans should be outlined and learning targets shared with them.
Throughout the school, pupils are facilitated to part-take in a wide range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities. These include quizzes, write-a-book projects, junior achievement awards, concerts and sporting, environmental and charitable events. Pupils are very successful in their various involvements particularly in sport.
Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management
Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The B.O.M. of Annaduff N.S. would like to acknowledge the professional and enthusiastic approach which made our WSE inspection process an affirming and positive experience. We are pleased that the main strengths of the work of the school were identified and that the commitment and dedication of all members of the school community was affirmed. We also welcome advice and suggestions for future implementation as well as the affirmation of best practice already in existence 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 welcomes and accepts the recommendations made in the report, and in consultation with the principal and staff has prioritised implementation of these recommendations.