

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation  
REPORT**

**Curraghboy National School  
Curraghboy, Co. Roscommon  
Uimhir rolla:13839K**

**Date of inspection: 6 March 2013**



## 1. Introduction

Curraghboy National School is a co-educational school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Elphin. It is located in the village of Curraghboy approximately fifteen kilometres from the town of Athlone. At the time of the evaluation, forty-seven pupils were enrolled in the school and the staff comprised a teaching principal, another mainstream teacher, two visiting support teachers and a part-time caretaker. 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 school fosters a positive, cooperative educational environment in which self-confidence, respect and life-long learning are nurtured.
- There is a strong sense of common purpose among the school community.
- The overall quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement, including pupils with special educational needs, is very good
- The pupils' knowledge and understanding of History is particularly impressive.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- The curricular policies and the school policies on support provision should be further developed.
- The school should focus on developing a strong culture of self-evaluation involving the board, staff, parents and pupils.
- There is a need to provide discrete accommodation for learning-support/resource-teaching purposes to facilitate displays and direct access to concrete materials.

## 3. Quality of School Management

- The school has a very supportive board of management that is properly constituted and meets regularly. Minutes of meetings are clearly recorded and school accounts are certified annually. The board is advised to agree and record at the end of meetings the information that is to be shared with the school community.

- The in-school management team comprises the principal and a special duties teacher. The principal manages the day-to-day life of the school very effectively and sets high expectations in relation to pupil behaviour and achievement. The special duties teacher very capably carries out a broad range of duties in support of the principal. Both teachers collaborate successfully to create a warm, welcoming, positive school atmosphere. It is recommended that the duties attached to the posts of responsibility be clearly documented and reviewed regularly. The board should be kept informed of progress in relation to these duties.
- School resources are diligently managed with particular attention devoted to health and safety issues. A new school building was built on a large site in 1994. The classrooms are well equipped and the school grounds are carefully maintained. The board is currently seeking to provide additional parking facilities necessitated by the increasing numbers of pupils attending the school. The board should also strive to provide a dedicated room for learning-support and resource-teaching purposes.
- The management of relationships with the school community is very good. The board has established close links with the parent body, parish personnel and community organisations. Parents are very supportive of their children's involvement in a wide range of activities including swimming, sports, music, tours, charity work, competitions, quizzes and the Green Schools initiative. While parent questionnaires bear testimony to a high level of satisfaction with the school, they also indicate a need to issue an annual report on the work of the school and to inform parents more fully about the school's relationships and sexuality programme. It is anticipated that the board will attend to these matters. The school has an active parents' association that should consider affiliating with the National Parents' Council.
- The management of pupils is very effective. Pupils display an enthusiasm for learning that reflects the school's aims to foster a spirit of enquiry and an interest in life-long learning. Responses to pupil questionnaires reveal that the pupils have a very high regard for the work of the school and that they all enjoy their lessons and learning.

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

- The board and staff are the main parties involved in the development of school policy. The school plan comprises a broad range of organisational policies stated in clear, concise terms. There is scope to enhance the curricular policies by specifying more clearly the content to be taught at each class level and the teaching methodologies and assessment techniques to be employed.
- While all teachers provide forward planning and maintain records of the work covered, there is scope for greater clarity in the long-term programme outlines. It would also be of value to express short-term objectives in terms of the learning outcomes for the pupils which should then be used to inform the choice of assessment techniques.
- The school is at the initial stages of formal engagement in the school self-evaluation process. The board should review aggregated data on pupil achievement in order to familiarise itself with the standards being achieved in the school particularly in relation to literacy and numeracy. It should also review the recently issued guidelines on school self-evaluation in order to determine its role in the process.
- 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. Group work is very effectively organised to support differentiation and technology is skilfully used in the delivery of lessons. Consideration should be given to extending the assessment strategies being used including standardised tests to assess proficiency in Irish.
- Cothaítear dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge. Gnóthaíonn na daltaí réimse maith foclóra agus cuirtear ar a gcumas réamhfhocail agus nathanna saibhre cainte a úsáid go cruinn le linn de thuairiscí simplí a thabhairt. Múintear raon álainn amhrán agus filíochta ag gach rangleibhéal. Baintear dea-úsáid as leabhair mhóra, leabhair bheaga agus leabhair ghrádaithe chun scileanna léitheoireachta a fhorbairt go héifeachtach. Ba thairbheach an léitheoireacht a leathnú agus irisleabhair, nuachtáin agus fíorleabhair a chur san áireamh. Nasctar na gníomhaíochtaí labhartha agus léitheoireachta go saineúil leis an scríbhneoireacht. Scríbhneoireacht fheidhmiúil is mó a chleachtar agus moltar scríbhneoireacht phearsanta a dhéanamh ar bhun níos rialta. Ní mór freisin réimse na teanga do gach rangleibhéal a chlárú sa phlean scoile chomh maith le clár cinnte gramadaí don scoil.

*A very positive attitude towards Irish is fostered. The pupils acquire a broad vocabulary and are enabled to use prepositions and rich idioms of speech accurately while giving simple accounts. A lovely selection of songs and poetry is taught at each class level. Good use is made of large-format books, small books and graded books for the effective development of reading skills. It would be benefit to extend the reading to include magazines, newspapers and real books. Oral and reading activities are skilfully linked with writing. Functional writing is mostly practised and it is recommended that personal writing be done on a more regular basis. Also, the range of language for each class level should be recorded in the school plan along with a definite grammar programme for the school.*

- The quality of teaching and learning in English is very good. Oral language activities are skilfully integrated with other curricular work and communication skills are conscientiously fostered. Pupils display impressive listening skills at junior level and present arguments with confidence and conviction at senior level. The teaching of reading is approached in a very structured manner ensuring pupils have a range of strategies to draw upon while reading suitably challenging texts. Commendable work on the novel is undertaken from first class onwards and at senior level pupils read widely, engaging with texts that reflect their individual interests. Written work is of a high standard and emphasis is currently being placed on enabling the pupils to use a cursive style of writing. There is scope to explore rhymes and poetry more extensively and to develop greater understanding of the different genres of writing.
- The teaching of Mathematics is well sequenced and pupils display very good understanding of mathematical concepts. Modelling of mathematical language, oral discussion, hands-on activity and insightful questioning are strong facets of the practice. Pupils are enabled to recall number facts swiftly and the successful teaching strategies employed should be recorded in the school plan. There is scope to consolidate the language of some common procedures at certain class levels and to enhance classroom environments through the creation of activity areas and the prominent display of mathematical language, symbols and number materials. It would also be of value to ensure that pupils at all levels meticulously record each step of number operations and solutions to problems.

- There are significant strengths in the provision for History. Clear emphasis is placed in the junior classes on developing the pupils' sense of time and chronology and their awareness of change and continuity. Story, discussion and debate are skilfully used at senior level to develop understanding of different periods of history, the connections between them and their influence on present day society. Senior pupils exhibit an avid interest in History and a broad and balanced understanding of local, Irish and international history, informed also by their personal reading. The school plan in History should be developed to reflect the work covered and to highlight the aspects of local history worthy of study at each class level. Consideration should also be given to the development of a school museum to include maps, documents and other suitable artefacts.

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

- The quality of support for pupils is very good. Support is organised on a withdrawal basis and incorporates early intervention, supplementary teaching in literacy and numeracy, and provision for specific individual needs. Consideration should be given to the organisation of in-class support to facilitate cross-curricular work.
- Support teachers prepare interesting, engaging teaching and learning activities, carefully matched to the pupils' needs. The rapport established with the pupils is praiseworthy and pupils engage earnestly in all activities. Very good problem-solving strategies were observed during the teaching of mathematics and these should be recorded in the school plan for use on a whole-school basis.
- Individual pupil programmes are carefully prepared, informed by in-school observations and assessments, professional reports and agreed school policy. The staged approach to provision should be included in the school plan and teachers should ensure that the baselines from which individual pupil programmes commence are clearly outlined.

# **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 Curraghboy National School wish to acknowledge the professionalism, courtesy and advice of the inspector during our recent Whole School Evaluation and to thank her for her work carried out during the Evaluation. We welcome the positive report and wish to acknowledge the co-operation and support of the parent body in the school. We also welcome the recognition of the role of the school in the wider school community and will continue to foster strong bonds in the community.

**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 recommendations of the report and have started working on implementing the recommendations. We are currently in the process of updating curricular policies, and the school policies on support provision and also endeavouring to put suitable accommodation in place for learning support/resource teaching purposes. We will continue to strive to ensure that our school remains a caring, happy, safe and stimulating learning environment for our pupils, staff, parents and the wider school community.