

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

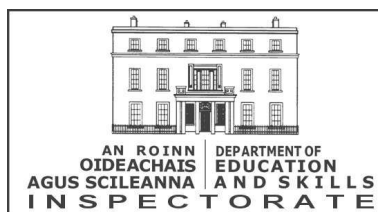
Department of Education and Skills

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

REPORT

**Carnaun National School
Athenry, Co. Galway
Uimhir rolla: 14031N**

Date of inspection: 6 December 2013



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Carnaun National School, Athenry, Co. Galway in December 2013. This report is based on a selection of lessons observed in the learning settings in the school, interaction with pupils and review of their work, meetings with the principal and with the board and parent representatives, completed parent and pupil questionnaires, and a selection of school documents. The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

Carnaun N.S. is a four-teacher co-educational school operating under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam. At the time of the evaluation there were 103 pupils on roll. Enrolments have increased significantly over the past three years and this upward trend is expected to continue. The accommodation throughout the school is of a very high standard and is very well maintained.

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

- The board of management is well informed about the school and takes an active role in its development, both in terms of the physical learning environment and the quality of education provided.
- The quality of teaching, learning and support for pupils is of a very high standard and overall learning outcomes for pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, are very good.
- The teachers make very effective use of a broad range of approaches to develop pupils' literacy skills and most pupils demonstrate very good standards in this area.
- Very good progress has been made in the school self-evaluation process and clear targets for improvement have been identified.
- The school enjoys the strong support of parents.

The following **recommendations** are made:

- The school plan should be updated to reflect the greater emphasis placed by teachers on the integration of literacy skills development across the curriculum.
- The enrolment policy should be updated in light of the growing pupil numbers.
- Chun cur leis an deá chleachtas i múineadh na Gaeilge, ní mór plan forbartha a leagan amach le haghaidh an léitheoireacht. *To add to the effective practice in Irish, a developmental plan for reading should be set out.*

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning achievements of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, are very good.
- Learning outcomes for literacy are very good for most pupils. Role play, games, talk and discussion, story and rhymes are used very effectively to promote oral language development. Emergent reading skills and phonological awareness are very well catered for and a love of reading is fostered throughout each of the class levels. Pupils are enabled to write in a variety of genres and they take very good care with the quality of penmanship and overall presentation of their written work.
- Gabhann taitneamh, tairbhe agus cruthaitheacht leis na straitéisí a úsáidtear chun litearthacht a chur chun cinn sa Ghaeilge. Cuirtear béim cheart ar an gcumarsáid agus forbraítear scileanna éisteachta agus labhartha na ndaltaí go céimniúil. Chun

cur leis an deá-chleachtas seo, ní mór plan forbartha a leagan amach le haghaidh an léitheoireacht agus comhtháthú níos rialta a dhéanamh idir an obair ó bhéal, an léitheoireacht agus an obair scríofa. Moltar machnamh a dhéanamh ar thrialacha caighdeánaithe a úsáid chun gnóthachtáil na ndaltaí a thomhas ó bhliain go bliain.

- *The strategies used to develop pupils' literacy skills in Irish are enjoyable, beneficial and creative. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the communicative approach and pupils' skills in listening and speaking skills are developed in a structured way. To add to this effective practice, a developmental plan for reading should be set out and there should be more regular integration between oral, reading and writing tasks. Consideration should also be given to using standardised tests to measure pupil achievement in Irish from year to year.*
- Most pupils achieve very good standards in numeracy as indicated for example, in the results of standardised tests and in the records of progress maintained by teachers. The programme is carefully differentiated to cater for individual pupil differences in the various multi-grade settings. Samples of pupils' work and the engagement of pupils in the various mathematical tasks set indicate their understanding of concepts, their ability to use appropriate mathematical language and their recall of number facts. Learning is strongly supported by the use of a range of suitable resources, activity-based methodologies and problem-solving approaches.
- A wide variety of useful approaches is used to monitor, record and report on pupils' progress. Parents express their satisfaction with the arrangements in place for parent-teacher meetings.
- A staged approach is taken to the provision of learning support and very effective supports are in place for pupils with special educational needs. It is recommended that a whole-school approach be agreed so that pupils' progress towards the attainment of specific learning targets as set out in individual education plans are more formally monitored and recorded.

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching is very good. Significant strengths were evident in the quality of planning done by individual teachers, the range of methodologies and resource materials used across a range of curriculum areas, and the extent to which teachers match learning tasks to pupil ability.
- The structure and pace of all lessons observed ensured that pupils were meaningfully engaged throughout.
- The school environment is used very effectively to promote environmental awareness and care and to foster a sense of wonder in nature.
- The teachers provide a print-rich, attractive and stimulating learning environment in mainstream classrooms and in the support settings.

3. Support for pupils' wellbeing

- This is an inclusive school where all pupils are enabled to participate equally. The teachers provide a well-ordered, safe learning environment and pupil behaviour is exemplary.
- Evidence was provided to confirm that the school is compliant with child protection requirements.
- From the daily routines observed, it was obvious that pupils are cherished equally and that both effort and achievement are nurtured and celebrated.

4. Leadership and Management

- The board of management is very well informed about the school and takes an active role in its development, both in terms of the physical learning environment and the quality of teaching and learning. The board should consider how it might support the setting up of a parents' association to strengthen its links with the general parent body.

- The principal provides highly effective leadership and shares his vision for the ongoing improvement and development of the school with the school community. He is very well supported by the deputy principal who carries out a broad range of duties in a very capable manner.
- Individual teachers take on leadership roles in a voluntary capacity and their shared commitment to the development of the school is praiseworthy.
- The school has a very informative website that is updated regularly and is used effectively to manage communication with parents and to celebrate school achievements. Parents report that the school is welcoming of them.

5. School Self-evaluation

- Overall, the school is engaging very effectively with the school self-evaluation process. The views of parents, pupils and teachers have been sought in establishing a broad evidence base and the data gathered has been used to draft a school improvement plan in line with Circular 39/2012.
- Clear, specific targets for improvement have been set and teachers have agreed whole-school collaborative approaches to teaching and learning in literacy. In keeping with best practice, progress towards the achievement of targets is discussed at staff meetings.

Conclusion

The school's capacity to develop further and to engage in school improvement is very good.