Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Lisaniskey National School
Oran, Co. Roscommon
Uimhir rolla: 14356S

Date of inspection: 06 October 2011
1. Introduction

Lisaniskey NS is situated fourteen kilometres from Roscommon town. It has four mainstream class teachers. There are eighty-six pupils enrolled.

This whole-school evaluation focused on the quality of teaching and learning in Gaeilge, English, Mathematics and Physical Education. 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:

- Pupils are very well behaved and are managed very effectively by their teachers who place due emphasis on positive interventions.
- The quality of teacher planning is very good. There is evidence of continuity and progression in the programmes taught to the pupils.
- The principal has established a very positive atmosphere in the school. He is encouraging and supportive of other staff members.
- Sá Ghaeilge, tá cáilíocht an teagaisc, na fighlmaí agus ghnóthachtáil na ndaltaí go hana-mhaith. The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Gaeilge is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning in English is very good. A variety of effective teaching methodologies and resources is used to develop pupils’ literacy skills.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Physical Education is very good.

The following main recommendations are made:

- It is recommended that station teaching be introduced in literacy and Mathematics to ensure pupils can work at their own ability level thus maximising individual progress.
- It is recommended that the staff engages in a school development planning process to establish a self-evaluation agenda and promote school improvement.
- It is recommended that the school be proactive in sharing information with parents and in supporting parents with their children’s learning.
- It is recommended that pupil performance be tracked to ensure individual pupils are making progress in line with their ability, both in mainstream classes and in support settings.
- It is recommended that Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Individual Profile and Learning Programmes (IPLPs) for pupils in receipt of support teaching include SMART targets and a summary of assessments and baseline data which can be used to evaluate progress.
3. **Quality of School Management**

- The quality of the work of the board of management is good. There are clear roles and responsibilities assigned to different members of the board. The board has overseen an extension to the school building during its term of office. It is recommended that the school's accounts be audited annually and that the board be made aware of school achievement in standardised tests.

- The quality of the work of the in-school management team is good. The principal has established a very positive atmosphere in the school. He is encouraging and supportive of the very hard-working staff. There is high quality collaboration between the principal and deputy principal. It is recommended that posts of responsibility be reviewed in the light of Primary Circular 07/03. In a questionnaire issued to the parent body as part of the evaluation, the majority of parents agree that the school is well run.

- The quality of the management of resources is good. The school is well resourced and there has been significant investment in information and communication technology (ICT) which is used to very good effect by teachers. There is scope for more pupil engagement with ICT.

- The quality of the management of home-school communication is fair. Annual parent-teacher meetings and end-of-year written reports keep parents informed of their children's progress. Parents are not involved in any curricular initiatives and they indicate a low level of unawareness of specific school policies. It is recommended that the school be more proactive in sharing information with parents and in supporting parents with their children's learning.

- The quality of the management of pupils is very good. Pupils are very well behaved and participate appropriately in class activities. They are managed very effectively by their teachers who place due emphasis on positive interventions.

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

- The overall quality of school planning and school self-evaluation shows scope for development. While organisational policies are generally of a good quality, curricular plans are generic in nature and fail to capture the many high-quality teaching approaches used in the school. The staff should engage in regular school-review to establish long-term targets. The planning process should be used as a vehicle for school improvement. It is recommended that parents become involved to some degree in the planning process.

- The quality of teacher planning is very good. Teachers prepare detailed long-term and short-term schemes of work using a common template. There is evidence of continuity and progression in the programmes taught to the pupils.

- School authorities provided evidence that, in compliance with Primary Circular 0061/2006, the board of management has formally adopted the Department’s *Child Protection Guidelines for Primary Schools*. Evidence was provided to show that these child protection procedures have been brought to the attention of management, school staff and parents; that a copy of the procedures has been provided to all staff (including all new staff); and that management has ensured that all staff are familiar with the
procedures to be followed. A designated liaison person (DLP) and a deputy DLP have been appointed in line with the requirements of the guidelines.

5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

- The quality of overall teaching, learning and pupil achievement is good. Teaching is focused and active methodologies are used by all teachers. Lessons are structured and paced effectively. It is essential that pupil performance be tracked to ensure individual pupils are making progress in line with their ability.

- Sa Ghaeilge, tá cáiliocht an teagaisc, na foghlaíma agus ghnóthachtáil na ndaltaí go han-mhaith. Leagann formhór na n-oidí béim inmholta ar rannta, dánta agus amhráin. Eagraítear gníomhaíochtaí spreagúla chun rannpháirtíocht na ndaltaí a chothú agus an cur chuige cumarsáideach a chruthú chun cinn. Bhí na daltaí in ann cant go leanúnaigh agus go muineachtaí faoi théamh a tháinsigh agus sonraithe saibhreas teanga. Moltar do na múinteoirí caighdeán a thabhairt san áireamh agus a thabhairt an t-ealaíon úsáid i dtaithíocht na ndaltaí.

The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Gaeilge is very good. A majority of teachers place a commendable emphasis on rhymes, poems and songs. They organise motivating activities to promote pupil participation and to progress the communicative approach. Pupils could confidently speak at length about different themes and a richness of language was noted. It is recommended that teachers take into account the pupils' high standard when preparing writing tasks to ensure they are challenged.

- The quality of teaching and learning in English is very good. Early-literacy skills are developed very effectively. Pupils are supported in developing their literacy skills through a variety of teaching methodologies and resources. While pupils display an avid interest in books, they would benefit from better organised and better stocked class libraries. The quality of pupils' reading and writing is very good although individual pupil attainment varies significantly from year to year. It is recommended that literacy stations be established to ensure pupils can work at their own ability level thus ensuring maximum individual progress.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is good. The language of Mathematics is developed by a majority of teachers but approaches vary considerably. Concrete materials and visual aids are used to very good effect but additional use should be made of the school environment. Pupils would also benefit from a structured approach to problem-solving. There are very effective and stimulating approaches to the teaching of Mathematics in individual classrooms which should be shared. It is recommended that use be made of station teaching to engage pupils in mathematical activities which match their ability level.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Physical Education is very good. Full participation is achieved by all teachers who place an exemplary emphasis on skill development. Pupils' understanding was highest in classrooms where talk and discussion was used. All teachers are reminded about the importance of teaching a broad and balanced physical education curriculum which incorporates five strands each year.

- The quality of assessment is fair. Pupil progress is assessed through the correction and monitoring of their work, through class tests and tasks, and through standardised tests in literacy and numeracy. While the staff has graphed whole-school performance in
standardised tests there is little attention given to tracking individual pupils. It is recommended that each pupil’s progress be tracked annually.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- The school has access to two shared learning-support teachers and one shared resource teacher. Two of the three teachers are based in the school. The overall quality of interventions for pupils with special educational needs is good. A majority of teachers place a praiseworthy emphasis on the development of pupils’ life skills. There was some superior practice observed during the evaluation where teachers engaged individual pupils in devising a learner profile and personal strategies to attain their targets. All teachers have very good relationships with their pupils.

- Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Individual Profile and Learning Programmes (IPLPs) are established for each pupil in receipt of support. It is recommended that the targets in each pupil’s plan be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timed (SMART). The staff is reminded that class work should not be undertaken in the support setting. Where pupils are referred to learning support, it is recommended that additional diagnostic testing be undertaken to ensure pupils’ specific needs are identified and targeted.

- The quality of outcomes and progression of pupils with special educational needs was difficult to ascertain during the course of the evaluation. It is recommended that the child’s IEP/IPLP includes a summary of assessments and baseline data to enable their outcomes be evaluated.
Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

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

The Board welcomes and accepts the findings of the Whole School Evaluation on the workings of our school. We thank the Inspector for her diligence and professionalism in her interaction with the board, pupils and staff of Lisaniskey NS. The whole process proved to be a very positive and beneficial experience for all involved, affirming and rewarding. The findings of the report will give renewed impetus and direction to our Plean Scoile. We intend to use the report’s findings as part of our system of self-evaluation and continuous improvement.

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

In line with the recommendations made by the Inspector, we have put in place a system whereby pupils’ performance can and will be tracked to ensure they are making progress in line with their ability.

In line with the inspector’s recommendations, we have begun a structured approach to problem-solving in Mathematics.

We have become much more conscious of the need to involve the parents in the life of the school, and have kept them at all times informed and aware of the activities ongoing in the school.