

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

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

REPORT

**Derrycreha National School,
Glengarriff, Co Cork
Uimhir rolla: 14430E**

Date of inspection: 14 October 2013



Introduction

Derrycreha National School is a rural, co-educational primary school located four kilometres east of Glengarriff in West Cork. Currently, forty-one pupils attend the school and enrolment trends are falling in accordance with the demographic decline in the area. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross. 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.

During the evaluation the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms and support-teaching settings was reviewed. A sample of school planning and policy documents and records of assessment were examined. Interviews were held with the staff, the board of management and with representatives of the parents' association. Questionnaires were issued to all parents and to pupils from 3rd to 6th classes.

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

- The board of management is properly constituted and discharges its duties effectively.
- The school building is well-maintained and effectively resourced.
- The school enjoys strong community support and good channels of communication have been established with all of the education partners.
- The principal manages the school effectively and has a very supportive and dedicated staff.
- Pupils are well behaved and display positive dispositions to learning.
- The general standards of pupil achievement as measured by assessment data are very good.

The following areas **require improvement**:

- The board of management should review and revise its enrolment policy and code of behaviour.
- The publication of an annual report by the board of management would be beneficial to all members of the school community.
- Moltar béim sa bhreis a chur ar scileanna cumarsáide na ndaltaí a fhorbairt agus a cleachtadh sa Ghaeilge. *It is recommended that an additional emphasis be placed on the development of pupils' communicative skills in Irish.*
- It is recommended that the approaches to assessment be extended and a wider range of subjects be incorporated into the process.
- The establishment of a tracking system for pupils in learning support and resource settings would greatly enhance the monitoring of pupils' ongoing progress.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning achievements of the pupils are very good. Pupils engaged well with the lessons observed. Their literacy achievements, as reflected in school assessment data, are very good. The upgrading of the school library has made a positive contribution to pupils' engagement in reading. Good standards are achieved in numeracy. Evidence available in the school indicates that pupils with special-educational needs are making satisfactory progress in line with their ability.

- Tá caighdeán maith bainte amach sa Ghaeilge trasna na scoile. Moltar do na múinteoirí níos mó béime a leagan ar chothú líofachta na ndaltaí. Moltar go gcuirfí gníomhaíochtaí ar fáil ina mbeadh ar na ndaltaí múnlaí agus focail nua a úsáid go neamhspleách i gcomhthéacsanna réalaíche.
Pupils generally have a good standard of Irish. Teachers are encouraged to place greater emphasis on fostering pupils' fluency. It is recommended that activities are provided for pupils to use new words and phrases independently in realistic contexts.
- A satisfactory range of assessment practices has been developed in the school. Available data is analysed and effective records are maintained. Pupils' written work is regularly monitored and positive evaluative comments are provided by the teachers. It is recommended that the approaches to assessment be extended and a wider range of subjects be incorporated into the process.
- The need to expand resources in information and communications technology (ICT) to further promote literacy and numeracy across the curriculum has been identified as a priority by the school staff.

2. The quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching in this school ranges from good to very good. A variety of appropriate teaching methodologies are applied and the teachers plan and prepare for lessons in a diligent manner.
- There are three support teachers attending the school. Teachers working with special educational needs (SEN) are professional and committed to appropriately addressing the needs of their pupils. There is evidence of good planning practices and individual educational plans (IEPs) are in place for pupils in receipt of supplementary teaching. It is recommended that specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timed (SMART) targets be included in all IEPs. In addition, the establishment of a tracking system for pupils would greatly enhance the monitoring of pupils progress in learning support and resource teaching settings.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- Pupils are very well managed in the school. They are well behaved, cooperative and courteous with well-developed work practices and positive dispositions to learning. Responses to the pupil questionnaires indicate that they are happy in school. Positive home-school relationships are evident from the results of the parent questionnaire. Parents play an active and supportive role in school life and good channels of communication have been established. The responses from the parental questionnaires indicate a parent body that is happy with educational provision within the school.
- The special needs assistant, secretarial and cleaning staff members all greatly assist in the day-to-day operation of the school and their influence on school practices is visible.
- 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*.

4. Leadership and Management

- The board of management is properly constituted and discharges its duties effectively. It has been instrumental in ensuring the school building and grounds are well maintained and resourced. It is now recommended that the board reviews and revises its enrolment policy to reflect the inclusive ethos and practice in the school. It is further recommended that the code of behaviour be reviewed in accordance with the NEWB guidelines. The publication of an annual report by the board of management would be beneficial in disseminating details of its work to the wider school community. In addition, the board needs to examine the issue of long-term strategic planning for the school in light of changing demographic trends in the area.
- The principal plays a key role in managing the school effectively. She, with the assistance of the deputy principal, builds a positive learning environment and promotes a high level of pastoral care.

5. School Self-evaluation

- The school has taken positive initial steps in the school self-evaluation process. Literacy has been identified as the focus area for the current school year and data gathering and analysis of evidence has been undertaken.

Conclusion

There was strong evidence during the evaluation of a commitment by the principal and staff to school improvement. The school's capacity to develop further is good. It is a reflective educational community with the capacity to manage change and promote an agenda for school improvement.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

We are happy with the contents of the report- it is a fair/justified observation of our school at that time.