

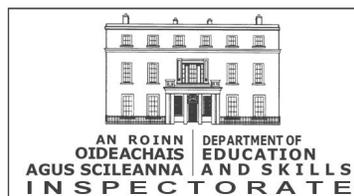
An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Scoil Naomh Dominic,
Kenagh, Co. Longford
Uimhir rolla: 15154L

Date of inspection: 19 May 2016



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Scoil Naomh Dominic in May 2016. This report is based on a selection of lessons observed in a range of learning settings in the school, interaction with pupils and review of their work, meetings with the principal and with board and parent representatives, completed parent and pupil questionnaires, and a selection of school documents. The board accepts the report as the final inspection report available for publication and wishes to respond formally to the report. The Board agrees that the response submitted will be included as an appendix to the published report. The board's response is submitted below.

The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois. Enrolment figures have increased significantly in recent years. The 151 pupils enrolled are accommodated across five classrooms. Attendance levels are very good for almost all pupils.

The evaluation has found:

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is of high quality with some very good practice observed.
- The board of management and the in-school management team are highly committed to the school.
- Highly commendable channels of communication exist among the school community.
- Very good engagement with school self-evaluation is impacting positively on teaching and learning.
- While pupils have opportunities to write in a variety of genres, there is potential for pupils to further develop their writing skills through editing and redrafting their work.
- Pupils demonstrate good awareness of environmental care and their scientific skills are well developed. An incremental approach to the study of the school's local environment will further enhance learning outcomes in Social, Environment and Scientific Education (SESE).

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Further development of the pupils' independent writing skills in English and Irish should be prioritised.
- In SESE, greater emphasis should be placed on incrementally developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the school's local environment.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning achievements of pupils, including pupils with special education needs, are commendable. Pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum. They are motivated, show good levels of sustained engagement in their learning tasks, and recall aspects of their learning with competence.
- Overall, pupils' learning experiences and outcomes in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education are good. Pupils' scientific skills are well developed. They demonstrate good awareness of the importance of caring for the environment. It is recommended that a greater emphasis be placed on incrementally developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the school's local environment.
- The quality of learning outcomes in Mathematics is very good. The whole-school focus on the development of pupils' mathematical language and problem-solving skills is developing pupils' ability to clarify and communicate their thinking. The provision of more challenging learning experiences for cohorts of pupils is praiseworthy.
- Learning outcomes in English are good. The recent introduction of literacy interventions in first class is effective. Phonological awareness and word-attack skills are well developed. Pupils read a variety of texts across a range of genres. Valuable use is made of poetry and rhymes to foster and develop language. While pupils have opportunities to write in a variety of genres, their independent writing skills should be further developed through engagement in the writing process.
- Tá dul chun cinn maith á dhéanamh ag daltaí i bhforbairt a gcuid scileanna cumarsáide sa Ghaeilge. Moltar béim sa bhreis a chur ar fhorbairt a scileanna saorscríbhneoireachta.
Pupils are making good progress in developing their communication skills in Irish. It is recommended that a greater emphasis should be placed on the development of their independent writing skills.
- Excellent standards are achieved in singing performances. The school choir represents the school in national events and many pupils' instrumental playing is highly accomplished.

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is of a high quality with some very good practice observed. Praiseworthy features of practice include high expectations for pupils' learning, the creation of stimulating learning environments and skilful whole-class teaching. The use of collaborative and self-directed learning activities, observed in many classes, should be extended to all settings.
- Information and communications technology (ICT) is used very well as a teaching tool. While teachers place emphasis upon developing pupils' ICT skills, additional opportunities for pupils to use ICT as a learning tool are advised.

- Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is commendable. Individual education plans (IEPs) are drawn up in a collaborative and consultative manner. The majority of IEPs are clearly underpinned by the use of assessment data. In some instances, making more explicit use of assessment data will facilitate improved tracking of pupils' progress in relation to the attainment of targets.
- A comprehensive range of school planning documents is available. The planning process is on-going with the systematic review and development of policies. Overall, curriculum plans are of good quality. In some curricular subjects, future reviews should focus more closely on incremental approaches to pupils' learning in order to further guide teachers' classroom planning.
- All teachers provide appropriate planning for their lessons. To enhance the effectiveness of short-term planning, all teachers should adopt the use of curricular objectives in SESE and in oral English.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- The management of pupils is effective. Pupils are cooperative and positive in their learning. In the Inspectorate surveys, almost all parents reported that their child is treated fairly and respectfully and most pupils reported that they feel safe and that there are clear rules against hurting others.
- The school provides a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities which enrich pupils' educational experiences and foster their positive self-esteem.
- 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 provides very good governance to the school. The board is committed to promoting the welfare of pupils and is well informed regarding curriculum issues and education standards. The board provides an agreed report to the school community after each meeting. The parents' association also provides an agreed report to the board in relation to its work. This practice is highly commendable.
- The in-school management team consists of the principal and deputy principal. The principal works in an extremely committed manner and provides high quality visionary leadership. He is ably assisted by the deputy principal who carries out a range of duties in a conscientious manner. Ancillary staff contributes very beneficially to the day-to-day operation of the school.
- The school promotes an open-door policy for parents and, in their responses to the Inspectorate questionnaire, almost all parents agree that the school is well run, that teaching is good in the school and that their child is doing well in school. The parents' association is very supportive of the work of the school.

5. School Self-evaluation

- Very good engagement with school self-evaluation (SSE) is impacting positively on teaching and learning in English and Mathematics. The school is commended for its deep engagement with the sub-themes of the SSE framework and its use of benchmarks against quality statements when evaluating practice.

Conclusion

The school's capacity to develop further is very good. Well-established self-evaluation practices indicate openness to continuous improvement.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The board of management of St. Dominic's N.S welcomes the very positive Whole School Evaluation MLL report of the Inspectorate. We welcome the affirmation of the positive practices, initiatives and high standards of the teaching, learning and management in our school. The board of management believes that this report is a tribute to the commitment, dedication and professionalism of the school staff, parents and board of management in the provision of education and care towards the pupils of our school.

Part B: 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 the recommendations made in the report and will work closely together with the Principal and staff to use the recommendations to further enhance teaching and learning in our school as part of our ongoing school self-evaluation process.