

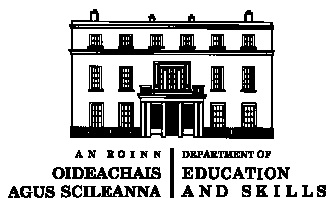
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation  
REPORT**

**Annagh National School  
Annagh, Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare  
Uimhir rolla: 15221A**

**Date of inspection: 19 September 2013**



## 1. Introduction

Annagh National School is a co-educational, national school, located close to the town of Miltown Malbay in the west of County Clare. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Killaloe and is included in Rural DEIS, the Department of Education and Skills' action plan for educational inclusion. In addition to the three mainstream class teachers, two teachers provide learning support and resource support to pupils with supplementary learning needs. Current enrolment stands at seventy-eight pupils whose school-attendance rates are very good.

A whole-school evaluation (WSE) was carried out in the school in September 2013. The evaluation focused on the quality of teaching and learning in Irish, English, Mathematics and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE). 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 principal and in-school management team demonstrate noteworthy commitment to their leadership roles.
- Sa Ghaeilge, tá cáilíocht an teagaisc agus na foghlama go han-mhaith agus baintear caighdeán ard amach sna scileanna teanga. *In Irish, the standard of teaching and learning is very good and high standards are achieved in the language skills.*
- The school atmosphere is welcoming and positive. Pupils are very well managed and motivated through the implementation of very effective systems.
- The teachers are hard-working and consistently good standards are in evidence in teaching. Overall, standards in learning are good to very good.
- A broad range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities is provided for pupils, enabling them to extend their talents and develop a range of skills.

The following main recommendations are made:

- School management should ensure that teachers are consistently deployed in accordance with circulars issued by the Department of Education and Skills.
- The mainstream class teachers need to establish and implement more consistent and more effective planning practices.
- In English, further emphasis needs to be placed on developing pupils' vocabulary and oral language skills.
- The school should acquire and use a broader range of reading materials in Irish. In English, additional reading materials are required to support the development of pupils' early-reading skills.
- In allocating additional support to pupils, the school should ensure that pupils with the most significant educational needs are prioritised and that the most suitable form of support is provided to enable pupils to make progress at an appropriate rate.

### **3. Quality of School Management**

- The overall quality of school management is good. The board of management meets regularly. It effectively fulfils its roles in developing and reviewing school policies, in maintaining and improving the school building and grounds and in providing resources. School accounts are certified annually. Members of the board enable pupils to participate in activities which develop their skills and promote life-long participation in education. This work is highly commendable.
- The principal and in-school management team demonstrate noteworthy commitment to their leadership roles and to continuously reviewing and improving the quality of teaching and learning. There is evidence of very effective co-operation between personnel and the various roles and responsibilities are clearly delineated and outlined. School documentation is very well presented.
- Recently, and for a number of successive years, teachers were not deployed in accordance with the circulars issued by the Department of Education and Skills. The school reviewed its practice in this regard at the commencement of this academic year and teachers are now appropriately deployed. The board of management and principal should ensure that this is consistently the case in all future instances.
- While the school does not have a parents' association, parents are involved in school events and they are kept informed of the school's work in developing policies. The management of pupils is very good. A reward system which is aimed at encouraging participation and positive behaviour is successfully implemented. The responses received through parent and pupil questionnaires issued during the evaluation were positive overall.

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

- Good quality whole-school policies and curriculum plans are compiled. The quality of the planning provided by the mainstream class teachers ranges from satisfactory to good. As their practices vary considerably, it is recommended that the teachers establish and implement more consistent approaches to planning. To further improve the quality of the short-term plans and monthly progress reports, there is a need to specify more clearly the curriculum-related objectives and skills to be developed. Additional learning targets need to be included in some curriculum areas, most notably in the oral language strand of the English curriculum.
- Very good progress is being made in school self-evaluation. The perspectives of pupils, parents and teachers have been considered in establishing the priorities for the school's development. The school's preliminary focus has been to address the development of pupils' comprehension skills. Appropriate programmes are being implemented in support of this work.
- 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**

- During the WSE the quality of teaching observed in English, Mathematics and SPHE was consistently good and in Irish, it was very good. Teachers present lessons clearly and effective teaching methodologies are employed to explore concepts and enhance pupils' understanding. Pupils engage in lessons diligently and with enthusiasm and the overall achievement of the majority of pupils ranges from good to very good.
- Tá cáilíocht an teagaisc agus na foghlama sa Ghaeilge go han-mhaith. Tugtar go cuí faoi mhúnlú na teanga agus baintear dea-úsáid as réimse modhanna múinte. Spreagtar na daltaí chun an Ghaeilge a labhairt go rialta agus trasna an churaclaim trí chórais luaíochta. Labhraíonn siad go muiníneach agus le foclóir leathan. Aithrisíonn siad dánta, canann siad amhráin agus tugtar deiseanna luachmhara dóibh chun páirt a ghlacadh i ndrámaí agus chun uirlisí traidisiúnta a fhoghlaim. Forbraítear scileanna léitheoireachta agus scríbhneoireachta go córasach. Léiríonn na daltaí le tuiscint an-mhaith ar théacsanna agus ar an ngramadach agus sonraítear caighdeán an-mhaith ina gcleachtaí scríbhneoireachta. Moltar raon d'ábhair léitheoireachta, idir ábhair leictreonacha, leabhair ghrinn agus tuilleadh leabhair leabharlainne agus úrscéalta a úsáid ar bhonn leathan.

*The standard of teaching and learning in Irish is very good. The modelling of language is appropriately undertaken and a range of teaching methods is used. The pupils are encouraged to speak Irish regularly and across the curriculum through a reward system. They speak confidently and with a broad vocabulary. They recite poems and sing songs, and they are given valuable opportunities to take part in dramas and to learn traditional instruments. Reading and writing skills are developed systematically. The pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of texts and of grammar and very good standards are noted in their written exercises. It is recommended that a range of reading materials including electronic materials, comic books and additional library books and novels be used more widely.*

- Overall, English is well taught. In oral language, the implementation of the *Aistear* programme is recommended in the junior class together with more consistent use of a structured oral language programme throughout the school. The good work undertaken in early reading could be enhanced by placing additional emphases on informal reading activities. While the majority of pupils read accurately and fluently some would benefit from more explicit teaching of reading skills and more extensive use of differentiated reading materials. Strategies to improve pupils' comprehension of texts are carefully taught. Early writing skills are developed progressively and in the middle and senior classes, pupils write competently in a range of genre. The quality of pupils' handwriting is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Mathematics is good. Creditable emphases are placed on developing pupils' understanding of mathematical vocabulary and the relevance of mathematical concepts in day-to-day situations. During lessons, pupils actively explore materials and they work co-operatively to discuss and solve problems. Information and communication technologies are used to good effect. A number of pupils would benefit from more differentiated teaching in Mathematics and from support which is targeted specifically to their needs.
- The quality of teaching and learning in SPHE is good. The discrete SPHE lessons are effectively underpinned by the positive school culture and the emphasis placed on pupils' holistic development. Arrangements are in place to ensure that pupils receive instruction through a range of programmes. In the lessons observed, good class discussions and activities were facilitated and pupils expressed their views on a range of topics.

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

- Resource teaching and learning support are provided to pupils by two teachers. Good-quality in-class support is provided and in the junior setting, team teaching is provided as a means of ensuring early intervention in literacy. Good-quality support is provided by withdrawing individual pupils and small groups of pupils from the mainstream classroom to well resourced support settings. Individual educational plans (IEPs) are provided for pupils. These are carefully compiled and targets are outlined. Along with the weekly progress records which are kept, weekly plans should be set out in advance of the period of instruction.
- The school needs to ensure that more suitable arrangements are consistently put in place to provide supplementary targeted support to pupils who present with learning difficulties. This will require deeper analyses of pupils' abilities, their attainment in standardised and diagnostic tests; and their progress in mainstream class settings. These analyses will assist the school in establishing the specific aspects of English and Mathematics to be addressed. This will also inform the content, form and duration of support to be provided so as to ensure pupils make progress more consistently and at a more appropriate rate.

*Published March 2014*

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

## **Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report**

Our B.O.M. welcomes the findings in this report which affirm the many strengths of teaching and learning in our school, the commitment and dedication of the staff both inside and outside of school time, the work of our pupils and the support provided by our parents and school community, in enabling us to provide high quality learning opportunities for our pupils.

Our B.O.M. welcomed the confirmation at our meeting with the Inspector that assessment is well embedded in our school, through our consistent use of a wide variety of assessment tools. The current graphs of our standardised results in English and Maths show fewer pupils near the lower end and a greater percentage of pupils past half way and above the higher end of the curve of normal distribution. These results show a consistent improvement year on year, a wonderful progression for any school.

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

Our B.O.M. and staff will carefully examine the recommendations made in this report and use them to further inform our practices to enable us to provide our pupils with an even more stimulating learning experience.