Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Bunscoil Lughaidh Naofa, Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan
Uimhir rolla: 15329U

Date of inspection: 10 November 2011
1. Introduction

Bunscoil Lughaidh Naofa is a Catholic girls’ primary school in Carrickmacross, County Monaghan. It has an enrolment of 254 pupils and attendance is good overall. There are nine class teachers and four support teachers, two of whom are part time, employed in the school. The board of management 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:

- Overall standards of teaching are high in all curriculum areas evaluated.
- The board of management is commended for its effective management of the school in particular its provision of excellent facilities.
- The principal and staff provide a happy, caring and inclusive learning environment for pupils.
- The parents’ association makes a valuable contribution to the enrichment of pupils’ educational experience.
- Pupils are very well-behaved and positively disposed towards learning.
- Is inmholta mar a chuirtear an Ghaeilge chun cinn sa scoil. (*The school is commended for its promotion of the Irish language*).

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- It is recommended that a strategic plan be devised, in collaboration with all partners, to enhance school self-evaluation and curricular development.
- Further engagement in curricular leadership by the in-school management team is recommended.
- Learning programmes should be more closely aligned to pupils’ needs in some support settings.
- It is recommended that team teaching be explored to address differentiated needs of pupils.

3. Quality of School Management

- The work of the board of management is very good. It is properly constituted and functions appropriately. It has established a systematic approach to the improvement of school facilities and has been very successful in providing a comfortable learning environment for pupils and staff. It is now timely that the board increases its involvement in school self-evaluation and review.
• The principal creates a collegial atmosphere among staff and promotes the holistic development of pupils. She has been successful in fostering the Irish language. The deputy principal and post-holders fulfill their assigned duties diligently and support the efficient operation of the school. The in-school management team has been proactive in leading some aspects of curriculum implementation very successfully. This element of their role should be further extended in the regular review of posts. Further engagement in curriculum leadership, under the guidance of the principal, would enhance the development of the school.

• The school has established some effective modes of communication with parents including a bi-annual newsletter and a text-a-parent service. Parents of middle and senior classes are informed of pupils’ progress. It is advised that written progress reports be provided for all pupils and that standardised test results are made available in written format to parents.

• The parents’ association works purposefully to enhance school life. Representatives of the parents’ association reported that parents were very satisfied with the educational provision in the school. This was confirmed in parent questionnaires administered during the evaluation. There is need, however, for the board of management to explore additional modes of communication with the parents’ association and further facilitate parental involvement in their children’s education.

• The quality of the management of resources is good in general. Teachers are deployed appropriately. The ancillary staff makes a considerable contribution to many aspects of school life. Resources are used effectively, overall. Information and communications technologies (ICT) could be more extensively employed to support pupils’ learning. There is also need to augment resources to enhance the implementation of the Irish and English curriculum.

• The management of pupils is very good. Pupils are very well behaved and display high levels of self-confidence. Teachers interrelate with pupils in a very caring and affirming manner.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

• The quality of whole-school planning is satisfactory and pertinent administrative and curricular plans are in place. The enrolment policy needs to be modified in line with legislation and additional policies devised to support the management of the school. Curricular plans inform teachers’ planning to some extent. There is need to review these plans to ensure progression in learning on a whole-school basis.

• Further development of the school self-evaluation process should now be undertaken, whereby the in-school management team, in collaboration with all partners, engages in reflective enquiry on the work of the school. It is recommended that a strategic plan be developed and action plans be devised to support school improvement. Further parental involvement in the planning process should also be facilitated.

• Teachers’ individual planning is good overall. A whole-school agreed approach should now be adopted to classroom planning. Monthly progress reports are maintained. There is scope for greater use of these documents to monitor the implementation of the curriculum throughout the school.
• 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

• **Baintear caighdeán an-mhaith amach i labhairt na Gaeilge sa scoil. Is inmholta an plean uile-scoile atá deartha agus curtha i bhfeidhm don Ghaeilge neamhfhoirmiúil. Tá tuiscint mhaith ag na daltaí ar an teanga agus tá sé ar a gcumas abairtí simplí a struchtúrú go muiníneach. Chuirfeadh sé go mór lena saibhreas teanga dá bhorbófáil an plean uile-scoile chun an t-ábhar teanga a rianú do gach rangleibhéal. Forbrar leanna léitheoireachta na ndaltaí go héifeachtúil agus léann an dúshlán sleachta áirithe go lófa agus léas le tuiscint. Ní mór, áfach, tuilleadh ábhar léitheoirí a chur ar fáil do na daltaí. Cleachtann na daltaí éagsúla scríbhneoireachta agus scriobhann siad i seánraí éagsúla go hoiriúnach.**

• **A very good standard is achieved in oral Irish. The whole-school plan that has been devised and implemented for incidental Irish is commendable. Pupils have a good understanding of the language and can construct simple sentences with confidence. To enrich pupils’ language the whole-school plan could be further developed to delineate the language content for each class level. Reading skills are developed proficiently and pupils read texts with fluency and understanding. However, there is need to make a wider range of books available to enhance their reading experiences. Pupils engage in various writing activities and write appropriately in a variety of genres.**

• **The overall quality of teaching and learning in English is very good. Commendable emphasis is placed on the incremental development of pupils’ vocabulary and expressive language skills throughout the school. Considerable attention is given to the development of a range of reading skills which contributes to the very good quality of pupils’ learning outcomes. Providing pupils with a wider range of reading material aligned to their individual level will further enhance their literacy skills. The conventions of writing are addressed in a systematic and effective manner. The overall standard of pupils’ independent writing and the quality of their penmanship is praiseworthy.**

• **The quality of teaching and learning in Mathematics is good. Pupils demonstrate a confident knowledge of basic number facts and an appropriate mastery of procedural computations. A consistent whole-school approach to the usage of mathematical language is noteworthy. The employment of team teaching and the implementation of differentiation strategies in all classes would further advance pupils’ progress. Greater emphasis on the development of pupils’ problem solving skills is also advised.**

• **The quality of teaching and learning in Drama is very good. Lessons are well structured where safe fictional environments are strategically created and suitable stimuli employed to encourage pupils’ spontaneity and creativity. Pupils are effectively enabled to cooperate and create fictional relationships through the active exploration of various themes. Reflection on drama is gainfully facilitated and pupils’ insight and problem solving skills are successfully fostered. Pupil attendances at theatrical productions and participation in school performances enrich their drama experiences.**

• **The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good in the curriculum areas evaluated. An appropriate variety of teaching methodologies is employed effectively and lessons feature high levels of purposeful engagement by pupils. A culture of high expectations for pupil achievement is in evidence. Teachers’ questioning techniques are**
particularly praiseworthy. In general pupil achievement is high and commensurate with their abilities.

- Standardised tests are administered in Mathematics and reading. Further analysis of standardised test results would enhance planning and practice. Some formative assessment practices are used purposefully in a small number of classes and these good practices should be extended throughout the school.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- While there are many satisfactory aspects relating to the provision for pupils with special educational needs there remains some scope for development within this area. All supplementary tuition is currently provided by withdrawing pupils from class. It is recommended that team-teaching be explored to address the differentiated needs of some pupils. Individual education programmes have been devised in consultation with all partners. The supplementary tuition provided for some pupils reflects an over-emphasis on their class programme. It is recommended that learning programmes be more closely aligned to pupils’ needs. Teacher-pupil interactions are affirming and all lessons observed were suitably paced and resourced. The Reading Recovery programme is effectively implemented within the school and participant pupils demonstrated commendable progress in the development of literacy skills.

- Overall the provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is good; appropriate assessments are administered, lessons are well structured and engagement with pupils is very affirmative. There is need, however, to further align education programmes to pupils’ language needs and to maintain progress records on pupils’ proficiency. It is advised that other models of support be explored to facilitate pupils’ engagement with mainstream curriculum learning.

Published March 2012
Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management
Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report
On behalf of the whole school community the Board of Management of Bunscoil Lughaidh Naofa wishes to thank the Inspectorate for the professional and affirmative manner in which they conducted the Whole School Evaluation in November 2011. We are appreciative of the positive and supportive comments of the Inspectorate following its completion. The Board is happy with the content of the report and pleased that the collegial atmosphere, positive learning environment and contribution of the Parents Association is acknowledged.

Area 2: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection
The Board of Management in conjunction with the Whole School Community are now endeavouring to implement the recommendations as laid down by the Inspectorate.