

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

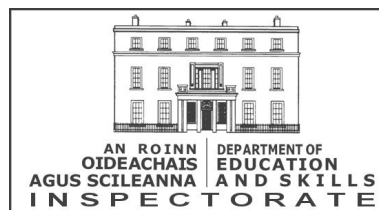
Department of Education and Skills

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

REPORT

**Kildallan National School
Ardlougher, Belturbet
County Cavan
Uimhir rolla: 15452T**

Date of inspection: 15 January 2014



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Kildallan National School in January, 2014. 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.

Kildallan National School is a rural, co-educational school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kilmore. The current enrolment of 52 pupils is accommodated across three classrooms. School attendance is very good overall. 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.

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

- The contribution of the board of management to the organisation and maintenance of the school is very effective.
- The overall quality of teaching is commendable with some excellent individual practices observed.
- Teachers create very positive, stimulating learning environments with high expectations of pupil behaviour and achievement.
- The pupils' overall attainment in literacy and numeracy is very good.
- A wide range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities enhances pupils' educational provision.
- High-quality work is underway in school planning and school self-evaluation.
- Whole-school assessment procedures in literacy and numeracy are very good overall.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- In order to ensure appropriate continuity and progression in Irish, Music and the Visual Arts, a more structured whole-school approach to curriculum implementation is needed.
- In respect of provision for pupils with additional learning needs, a more uniform approach to teachers' individual planning is required and the current caseload should be reviewed in order to maximise the number of pupils in receipt of support.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning achievements of pupils are good. Pupils demonstrated high levels of engagement and co-operation in the observed lessons.
- Overall learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy are very good, as is also evidenced in standardised test scores. Junior pupils' emergent literacy development is very successful and, in the middle and senior classes, there is effective provision for reading and writing. Literacy is supported through attractive, print-rich environments. Guided by a school improvement plan, there has been highly commendable progress in the development of the pupils' comprehension skills. There is a clear approach to oral language development in some teachers' planning; this should be the case in all. The pupils can recite a number of poems and rhymes successfully.

- Tá torthaí foghlama na ndaltaí i nGaeilge go maith. Tá ag éirí go maith le cur chuige uile-scoile atá á chur i bhfeidhm chun gnéithe den labhairt a fhorbairt. Baineann na daltaí feidhm éifeachtach as an nGaeilge neamhfhoirmiúil, go háirithe sna hardranganna. Cé go bhfuil caighdeán léitheoireachta agus scríbhneoireachta na ndaltaí sásúil den chuid is mó, ní mór cur chuige uile-scoile a chur i bhfeidhm don dá shnáith seo. Ar an iomlán tá gnóthachtáil na ndaltaí sna scrúduithe caighdeánaithe go maith i nGaeilge. (*In Irish, oral learning outcomes are good. Whole-school approaches to aspects of oral language development are progressing well. Pupils' incidental use of Irish is effective, especially in the senior classes. While reading and writing standards in Irish are satisfactory overall, there should be a more systematic whole-school approach to both strands. Overall pupils' attainment in standardised tests for Irish is good*).
- Pupils are making very good progress in Mathematics supported by the use of worthwhile concrete resources. In the senior classes, the pupils' knowledge of History is very good. Throughout the school, pupils have regular opportunities to listen to music and perform and, as observed in the middle classes, they sing well. There are regular opportunities for pupils to create art and their artwork is displayed prominently. To ensure appropriate continuity and progression in the pupils' learning across the strands of Music and the Visual Arts, a more structured whole-school approach to curriculum implementation is needed.
- In questionnaires, distributed as part of the evaluation, most pupils indicated that they enjoyed their lessons and learning and that their teachers explained things clearly. There was greater variation in the pupils' responses in respect of their use of computers during lessons, participation in group work and having a say in how things are done in the school; this variation in response should prompt further reflection at school level.

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching is commendable with some excellent individual practices observed. Teachers work in a purposeful and collaborative manner and display very good commitment to continuing professional development. The school is resource-rich in respect of information and communication technology; teachers use it regularly in their teaching.
- All mainstream teachers provide individual regular classroom planning, some to a very high standard. Going forward, a common approach to short-term planning is advised.
- Whole-school assessment of learning is very good. Pupils' progression is tracked carefully and results are shared with parents. Some *assessment for learning* activities are undertaken including the use of pupils' self-assessment folders. As a next step, more comprehensive recording of progress across all four strands of the Irish curriculum should occur.
- Currently, three teachers—one part-time, two based elsewhere—provide support to pupils with additional learning needs. At the time of the evaluation, one teacher was on approved leave. The quality of teaching observed was good, and in some cases, very good. The support room is very well presented and teacher-pupil rapport is excellent. Commendably, learning support is provided through both withdrawal and in-class initiatives. Progression in learning is good overall. For the most part, there is purposeful target setting and appropriate recording of progress in the support-teaching setting. However, in some instances, this should be improved. There is capacity to include additional pupils on the learning-support caseload; this should be addressed without delay.

- Responses to parental questionnaires, distributed as part of the evaluation process, indicate a positive regard for the school. Almost all parents felt that teaching is good in the school and that their child is making good progress. Discussion with representatives from the parents' association corroborates this.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- During the evaluation, the management of pupils was very effective and they presented as very co-operative and well behaved. Structured break-time activities enhance the social inclusion of pupils. Teachers show great care for and commitment to their pupils. A special needs assistant supports the needs of individual pupils very effectively.
- In their questionnaires responses, most parents indicated that the school was a welcoming place and that their children felt well cared for and safe there. Additionally, most parents indicated satisfaction with discipline and anti-bullying procedures. However, the responses of a very small number of parents highlight the need for the school to remain ever vigilant in this area. Almost all parents agreed that their child enjoys school.
- The school provides a wide range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities to enhance pupils' educational provision.
- 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 very effective in the organisation and maintenance of the school. It has overseen an extensive building programme and plans to continue to develop the outdoor play areas, as resources permit. The chairperson is a regular and supportive school visitor. A job-sharing arrangement in one mainstream classroom is managed very effectively. Ancillary staff supports the work of the principal and the board very efficiently. The board should consider disseminating further information about its good work by providing an annual report to parents.
- The principal demonstrates very good school leadership characterised by high levels of commitment and earnestness. She has very good rapport with staff and pupils and prioritises a welcoming, active and secure environment for all. She is supported very ably and willingly by the teaching staff, in particular by the deputy principal.
- The management of relationships with the school community is very good with regular information provided through information letters, text alerts and the school web site. From their questionnaire responses, most parents feel that their views are sought on school matters. Going forward, there are opportunities for more parental engagement in curricular initiatives.
- The parent association works diligently to support school activities and undertakes various fundraising activities.

5. School Self-evaluation

- Whole-school administrative and curriculum planning is very comprehensive. Led capably by the school principal, high-quality work is underway in school self-evaluation and an improvement plan for literacy has been developed.

Conclusion

The school's capacity to develop further is very good, given the dedication and professionalism of the teaching staff and the support of the board of management.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of Kildallan N.S. welcomes the WSE-MLL report. We accept its findings which affirm the quality of teaching and learning in our school. It acknowledges the commitment and dedication shown by all within the whole-school community.

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 Principal and staff have taken on board all aspects of the recommendations. Their implementation has been prioritised as part of the school's Development Plan. In respect of pupils with additional learning needs the current case load has been amended as advised.