

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

St. Colman's BNS,
Sleaveen East,
Macroom,
Co. Cork
Uimhirrolla: 15597W

Date of inspection: 6 December 2013



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in St. Colman's Boys National School in December 2013. 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 review of a selection of school documents. The current enrolment is 144 pupils. 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.

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

- The board of management and parents are very supportive of the school.
- The principal has overseen the development of the school to date with enthusiasm and efficiency.
- The in-school management team and staff members make a very positive contribution to the school.
- Sroichtear caighdeán ard sa Ghaeilge. (*A high standard is achieved in Irish*)
- The pupils' work on display in classrooms and on corridors is of high quality.
- The quality of teaching and care afforded to pupils with special educational needs is excellent.
- The tracking of pupil progress in the special classes is praiseworthy.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Moltar saorscríbhneoireacht a chur chun cinn sa Ghaeilge. (Promotion of free writing in Irish is recommended)
- An increased usage of manipulatives in the teaching of Mathematics is recommended.
- Mathematical language and specific problem-solving should be identified for each class level.
- Closer links between the school plan, teachers' individual plans and the monthly progress records should be established.
- The voice of parents and pupils should be sought in addressing school development issues.
- The further development of curricular, organisational and SEN policies is recommended.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning achievements of pupils are good. Pupils are making steady and good progress respectively in literacy and in numeracy.
- Sroichtear caighdeán ard in an-chuid ranganna sa Ghaeilge. Moltar teacht ar chomhthuiscint maidir le aithriseoireacht na filíochta ar bhonn scoile uile. Is dúshlán anois é d'fhoireann na scoile dul chun cinn sa bhreis a dhéanamh sa saorscríbhneoireacht.
- *High standards are achieved in Irish. Teachers should reach whole school agreement on the recitation of poetry. Promotion of free writing activity is encouraged.*
- Pupils read with purpose and fluency in English. They have access to a wide variety of reading material to develop their skills. Ipads have been introduced to the junior classes to further develop the pupils' interests in reading. The appreciation and writing of poetry is praiseworthy practice. Pupils write in a variety of genres and work presented in copybooks is recorded neatly. Pupils' written work is celebrated by teachers with displays of quality work in the classrooms.

- The quality of learning in Mathematics is good and very good in many cases. The interactive white board (IWB) is utilised productively to complement learning activity. The pupils are active in the learning process and their engagement in productive discussion is valuable. An increased use of manipulatives is advised to complement their learning. Overall, the pupils' work is presented neatly in copybooks. An increased engagement in the linking of concepts to the pupils' own environment is recommended. Mathematical language and specific problem-solving strategies should be outlined for each class level. Oral mathematics is recommended to consolidate pupils' learning.
- The pupils' understanding of History is developed effectively through focussed discussion and in the exploration of timelines. Active discovery learning is promoted through high quality project activity. Pupils are afforded regular opportunities to develop their skills in selected drama activity.
- Very good provision is made for pupils presenting with special educational needs (SEN) in resource and in learning support settings. An encouraging environment is developed and appropriate resources are utilized. Staff is advised to regularly track the progress of pupils. The use of social and emotional/behavior checklists is recommended.
- The quality of provision for pupils in the special classes for autism and moderate general learning disability (GLD) is praiseworthy. A range of effective teaching methodologies is exercised and matched to the social, sensory, and behavioural needs of pupils. The tracking of pupils' progress is comprehensive.

2. Quality of teaching

- The quality of teaching and learning in this school is good and very good in many instances. Teacher questioning and discussion of concepts are positive features of good classroom practices. A number of worthy initiatives such as shared /paired reading have been introduced to support pupils' skill development. Station-teaching and guided reading could be usefully introduced in addressing the range of pupil learning. Teachers are advised to reach consensus in poetry recitation.
- Teachers' planning is good. However, staff is advised to develop a greater linkage between the school plan, teachers' individual planning and the monthly progress records, to ensure a consistency and continuity in curriculum delivery.
- Déantar an-iarracht an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn sa scoil agus baintear leas fóna as straitéisí éifeachtúla chun scileanna teanga na ndaltaí a chothú.
- *A determined effort is made in the teaching of Irish and in the cultivation of pupils' language skills.*
- The quality of teaching provided in the SEN setting is very good. The teachers are congratulated on the extensive range of in-service courses undertaken. Individual education plans (IEP/IPLP) are well structured and detailed. In some instances it is necessary to make targets more specific. The IEP/IPLP process is inclusive and welcomes the involvement of parents. There is a need for greater consistency in short-term planning. In the ongoing development of SEN provision, staff is advised to convene meetings periodically.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- A spirit of inclusion and respect is promoted throughout the school. School structures ensure a consistency in supporting pupils both pastorally and educationally. Pupils' needs are addressed effectively through an extensive range of activities provided during and after school time. Pupil achievement is celebrated consistently. The results from pupil questionnaires are very positive. The forming of the student council affords an excellent opportunity to maximise the voice and influence of pupils.
- The special needs assistants are praised for the quality of care they afford to pupils. They attend to a variety of needs that present in the mainstream and in the SEN settings in a supportive and committed manner.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. They are informed regularly on the progress of pupils. The results from the parent questionnaires indicate a high degree of satisfaction with teaching and learning 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, in general, with the requirements of the *Child*

Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. Management is reminded to display the name of the designated liaison person in a prominent place and to report regularly to the board on issues of child protection.

4. Leadership and Management

- The Board of management is properly constituted and supports the staff and school organisation consistently. The board has invested generously in a wide range of educational resources. The board is reminded to ensure all policies are signed and dated.
- The principal is held in high esteem by the board of management. He is complimented on the development of the school, enabling it reach its current high standards. He is advised to identify additional time to address further curriculum development.
- The in-school management team (ISM) is hardworking and conscientious and each member has undertaken an extensive range of duties. Many members of staff give generously of their time in assuming additional responsibilities.

5. School Self-evaluation

- All teachers maintain informative assessment records. Assessment data is routinely shared with teachers. This good practice could be usefully extended to other curricular areas. Test results are analysed and results are used productively to inform teaching and learning.
- The school has engaged diligently with school self-evaluation processes (SSE). Comprehension and problem-solving have been targeted for further development. Staff is advised to seek the input of parents and pupils to ensure a wide-ranging perspective in the development of school initiatives.

Conclusion

The foundations for school improvement are now in place and these foundations will facilitate growth and development into the future. The further development of curricular, organisational and SEN policies is advised.

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 St. Colman's B.N.S welcomes the findings of this report, highlighting as it does the high standards of teaching, learning, management, self-evaluation and planning at this school .The Board also acknowledges the results from the parent questionnaires which indicated a high degree of satisfaction with teaching and learning provision.

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 and staff acknowledge the recommendations made in the report which will form a key part of our on-going school self-evaluation process.