An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Edenderry No 2 NS,
Monasteroris, Edenderry, County Offaly
Uimhir rolla: 15638K

Date of inspection:  22 September 2011
1. Introduction

Edenderry No 2 NS is a co-educational primary school in the town of Edenderry, County Offaly. Under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Bishop of Kildare and Meath, the school caters for pupils from infants to sixth class. It espouses a Christian ethos and its vision is evident in the daily life of the school. There are 82 pupils currently enrolled and attendance rates are very good. 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:

- The board maintains the school building to a very high standard and provides a well-resourced stimulating and safe learning environment for pupils and staff.
- The principal combines her teaching and management roles effectively. She provides strong and purposeful leadership and has established very good relationships with pupils, parents and staff.
- The teachers are competent and diligent in their work. They are committed to ensuring that pupils receive a broad and balanced education and much effective practice in teaching and learning is in evidence throughout the school.
- The pupils are well behaved, polite and courteous. They work conscientiously and cooperatively with staff and one another.
- Levels of pupil attainment are very good.
- The whole-school approach to supporting pupils with additional learning needs is very effective. Programmes of work are well designed. Documentation is comprehensive, and collaboration between the support team and classroom teachers is very good.

The following main recommendations are made:

- Some administrative policies need to be reviewed to ensure that they comply with current legislation. Curriculum plans should be further contextualised to the needs and circumstances of the school.
- The procedure for monthly reporting by teachers should be reviewed so that greater emphasis can be placed on recording the specific learning outcomes achieved.
3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management works diligently in the interest of the school and board members undertake their responsibilities very effectively. The board is to be commended for the manner in which the school building and grounds are maintained. Finances are carefully managed and accounts are audited annually.

- The principal provides strong and purposeful leadership which contributes significantly to the success of the school. Post-holders carry out their duties competently and diligently. In line with best practice, consideration should now be given to the annual presentation of an action plan outlining how these duties are to be fulfilled. There is a high level of teamwork and collegiality among the whole staff and a shared commitment to the development of the school and the raising of standards. School records are meticulously maintained.

- Teaching staff are deployed effectively and their skills and abilities are used to good effect to meet pupils’ needs and to improve provision. The school is very well resourced and all classrooms provide bright, clean, safe and stimulating learning environments. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is commendable.

- The management of relationships with the school community is very good and parents are generous with their time in supporting school events. The parents’ association is enthusiastic and supportive and works diligently to raise additional funding for school needs. Parents are positively encouraged to communicate with the school about their children’s progress. Questionnaire responses indicate that all parents feel welcome in the school and the vast majority are happy with the school.

- The management of pupils is very good. Staff are sensitive to the pupils’ academic, personal and social needs. Standards of behaviour and discipline are high. Pupils are polite, respectful and courteous. They work conscientiously and co-operatively with the staff and with one another.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- Organisational and administrative plans are of good quality and facilitate the smooth operation of the school. The board is advised to continually review its administrative policies to ensure that they comply with current legislation and Department of Education and Skills guidelines. Curriculum plans have been created for all subjects. When these plans are being reviewed there is scope to contextualise them further to the particular needs of the school and to record and disseminate the good practice that exists throughout the school.

- The teachers are committed to the process of school self-evaluation and have formulated an action plan. This process should be enhanced by setting specific, measurable, achievable and time-bound targets.

- All teachers provide long and short-term plans and prepare very well for their teaching. It is recommended that the good practice observed in most classrooms of using specific, curriculum-based learning outcomes be adopted in all short-term planning and that the procedure for completion of the monthly progress reports be adapted to reflect those learning outcomes achieved.
Child protection policy and procedures

- School authorities provided evidence that, in compliance with Primary Circular 0061/2006, the board of management has formally adopted the Department’s Child Protection Guidelines for Primary Schools. Evidence was provided to show that these child protection procedures have been brought to the attention of management, school staff and parents; that a copy of the procedures has been provided to all staff (including all new staff); and that management has ensured that all staff are familiar with the procedures to be followed. A designated liaison person (DLP) and a deputy DLP have been appointed in line with the requirements of the guidelines.

5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is very good. Appropriate teaching and learning materials are prepared and the use of a variety of teaching methodologies elicits a high level of very productive pupil participation. Teachers give clear instructions and explanations. Pupils’ efforts and achievements are acknowledged through constructive use of praise and encouragement and the majority present as confident and committed learners. They are making very good progress and demonstrate very good levels of achievement in the curriculum areas evaluated. Positive learning environments and well-developed organisational and classroom management skills are evident. ICT is used effectively as a pedagogical tool in all classes. Questionnaire responses indicate that the majority of pupils find their lessons interesting and enjoy their learning. Pupils’ work is carefully monitored. Standards of written work and presentation are very good. There is scope for the good practice of differentiating teaching and learning activities observed in some classes to be extended.

- The quality of assessment and recording is very good. A broad range of formal and informal assessment modes is used at every class level. Methods range from observation and questioning to more formal and structured testing. An analysis of standardised test results has been undertaken and this is yielding valuable data which is being used to inform planning and practice.

- Déantar iarracht mhacánta ard-chaighdeán Gaeilge agus teacht dearfach i leith na teanga a chothú. Cuirtear na ceachtanna i láthair go briomhach agus úsáidear raon d’acmhainn chomh maith le hamhráin agus rannta chu’n tacú leis an teagasc. Déantar obair rialta sna ceithre snáitheanna agus éiríonn leis na h-oidi na tri threimhse cumarsáide a eagru. Dirítear áird ar chruinneas sa létitheoireacht agus léann formhór de na daltaí go líofa. Déanann siad iarracht chreidiúnach ar shliocht a scriobh. Baineann na daltaí sult agus taitneamh as an bhfoghlaim sna ranganna Gaeilge.

- An honest effort is made to foster good standards and a positive attitude towards Irish. Lively lessons are presented and a range of resources as well as songs and verses are used to support the teaching. The four strands are worked on regularly and the teachers succeed in managing the three phases of communication. Attention is paid to accuracy in reading and the majority of pupils read fluently. They make credible attempts at writing passages. The pupils enjoy their learning in Irish classes.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is very good. Lessons are well structured enabling the simultaneous development of pupils’ oral, reading and writing abilities. Phonological awareness and word recognition skills are expanded in a progressive and developmental way. Pupils read with commendable fluency and discuss reading material in an age-appropriate manner. Both the functional and creative aspects of writing are addressed and opportunities are provided to write in a variety of genres. While pupils enjoy a varied repertoire of poetry further emphasis on learning poetry by
heart is advised. Many pupils express themselves confidently and articulately. The development of a school-wide, curriculum-based programme of oral language will help extend their confidence and competence.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is very good. A well-balanced programme is followed. Creative methodologies are employed and new concepts are explained clearly. Purposeful practical activities alongside the proficient use of concrete materials facilitate understanding and reinforcement. Oral discussion is used to highlight relevant mathematical language.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Drama is very good. Activities are well managed by the teachers. The impulse to make-believe is fostered and pupils are enabled to engage in improvisational drama and to enter fully into the fiction they are creating. A variety of drama strategies and conventions is used. Reflecting on drama is an integral part of the process and pupils engage in discussions to explore possible alternative courses of action.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- Very good practice was observed in the provision of support for pupils with additional learning needs and the staged approach is implemented effectively. Relevant and creative programmes of work are prepared for pupils experiencing difficulties in literacy, numeracy and social skills. Support teaching is provided on both a withdrawal and in-class support basis. Both teachers demonstrate high levels of commitment to the pupils and have established positive and caring relationships with them. Early intervention procedures are effective. Appropriate individual profiles and learning programmes are formulated in consultation with all relevant partners and class teachers have copies of these programmes. Collaboration between the support team and classroom teachers is very good and pupils are making steady progress.

- The school community provides a warm, caring and affirming school atmosphere which serves to create a very nurturing and supportive environment for all pupils. Instances of disadvantage are dealt with sensitively and discreetly.

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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 and staff of Edenderry No. 2 N.S. (Monasteroris) would like to thank the inspector for making the inspection a positive experience and we are very pleased with this affirming report. The board welcomes the very positive findings of the report, particularly in acknowledging the positive relationships and cooperation between staff, pupils and parents, the high levels/standards of pupil attainment and behaviour and the hard work and commitment of all members of the school community in ensuring that our school provides a welcoming safe and stimulating learning environment for our pupils.

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 acknowledges the recommendations made in the report. The two administrative policies referred to have been reviewed and ratified. Updating our curricular policies is a continuous process in our school. We are currently reviewing our templates/procedures for the teachers’ monthly reports in line with the recommendations.