

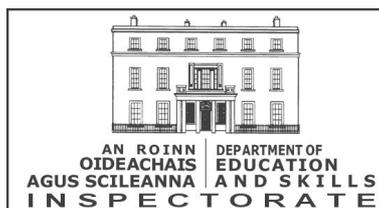
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills**

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

**REPORT**

**Rathgormack National School  
Rathgormack, Carrick on Suir, Co. Waterford  
Uimhir rolla: 15963V**

**Date of inspection: 4 February 2015**



## Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

### Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Rathgormack National School in February 2015. 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. 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.

Rathgormack National School is a co-educational, rural primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Waterford and Lismore. There are currently 130 pupils enrolled and attendance rates are very good.

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

- The overall learning achievements of pupils are very good and they are making steady progress across the curriculum.
- In English, pupil learning is of a very good standard.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good and the teachers ensure that a variety of active methodologies are used to engage the pupils in their learning.
- Very good and regular use is made of the school's local environment and visits from local experts, including members of the parent body, are used to enhance learning in many areas of the curriculum.
- The pupils are well behaved, co-operative and courteous, with positive dispositions to learning.
- Relationships between home and school are very positive and the parents' association gives valuable assistance to the school.
- The board of management is very supportive of the work of the school.
- The dedicated principal manages the school very effectively and sets high expectations for pupils.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- The use of diagnostic assessment to identify the individual learning priorities of pupils with special educational needs should be expanded upon.

### Findings

#### 1. The learning achievements of pupils

- Overall, the learning achievements of pupils are very good and they are making steady progress across the curriculum. In the questionnaires administered during the evaluation, most pupils reported that they enjoy their lessons and learning.
- Tá cáilíocht an teagaisc agus na foghlama sa Ghaeilge go maith. Leagtar béim chuí ar fhorbairt scileanna labhartha na ndaltaí i ngach rang agus baintear úsáid fhiúntach as obair bheirte agus ról imirt. Léann na daltaí le tuiscint agus le cruinneas réasúnta. Moltar ábhar léitheoireachta sa bhreis a aimsiú chun scileanna léitheoireachta na ndaltaí a chothú a thuilleadh.

*The quality of teaching and learning of Irish is good. Appropriate emphasis is placed on developing the pupils' speaking skills in all classes and worthwhile use is made of pair work and role play. The pupils read with understanding and with reasonable accuracy. A wider range of reading material should be acquired to improve the pupils' reading skills further.*

- In English, pupil learning is of a very good standard. The development of oral language skills and vocabulary is very successful through the use of poetry and nursery rhymes, along with pupil participation in debating and the implementation of the early childhood curriculum framework *Aistear*. Praiseworthy reading standards are reached by most pupils. To enhance provision, it is advised that the differentiation of instruction in reading be developed further at all class levels. The quality of the pupils' creative writing output is laudable.
- Overall achievements in Mathematics are commendable. During lessons, manipulatives and maths games are employed effectively, and suitable emphasis is placed on problem-solving. The ongoing focus on the development of mental mathematics and problems-solving skills should lead to continued improvements in pupil outcomes. The range of available mathematical resources should be expanded in order to continue the active-learning approaches in use by pupils.
- In Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE), the school grounds and garden and the wider local environment are used effectively to support pupils' learning. The school has participated successfully in the Green Schools Programme for a number of years. The pupils experience a broad programme of learning in Physical Education.
- The quality of assessment of pupil progress in mainstream classrooms is laudable and a variety of appropriate approaches are in use by teachers. Work on self-assessment has begun in some classes and this aspect of provision should be developed across the school.

## **2. Quality of teaching**

- The overall quality of teaching is very good. Positive and attractive learning environments have been created throughout the school and the teachers ensure that a variety of active methodologies is used to engage pupils in their learning. Collaborative learning approaches are used effectively in some settings. The teachers make very good and regular use of the school's local environment and local experts, including members of the parent body, to enhance learning in many areas of the curriculum. In the questionnaires, all parents reported that teaching is good in the school.
- Commendable support is provided for pupils with special educational needs. Support is provided both on a withdrawal and an in-class basis. Whole-school decisions regarding approaches to support should continue to be focused on maximizing opportunities to meet the needs of target pupils. While some good use of diagnostic tools to identify pupils' individual learning needs was noted, it is recommended that their use be expanded upon.
- Overall, the quality of teacher planning and preparation is good. Practice is most effective where teachers provide specific detail regarding intended learning outcomes for pupils and the differentiation approaches to be employed to take account of the pupils' differing learning needs.

## **3. Support for pupils' well-being**

- The pupils are very well managed in the school. They are well behaved, co-operative and courteous, with positive dispositions to learning. Responses to the pupil questionnaires indicate that all pupils feel safe in school and most pupils like school and feel safe in their class and in the playground. Ancillary staff play an important role in supporting pupils' well-being.
- Very positive home-school relationships are evident in the school. The parents' association gives valuable assistance to the school and parents are very involved in a number of school activities. Very effective channels of communication have been

established between school and home. The responses from the parent questionnaires indicate that almost all parents are happy with 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*.

#### **4. Leadership and Management**

- The board of management is very supportive of the work of the school. The members are made aware of pupils' educational achievements and the school's legal and policy responsibilities.
- The dedicated principal manages the school very effectively. She has a clear vision for the school and sets high expectations for pupils. Very good collaboration is evident between the principal and the deputy principal in the sharing of management duties.

#### **5. School Self-evaluation**

- The school self-evaluation process is progressing well with commendable work taking place in the area of numeracy. While agreed actions are already having a positive impact on pupil learning, targets which are more specific in nature should be set for each priority area.

### **Conclusion**

The school's capacity to continue to engage in school improvement is very good.

## **Appendix**

**School response to the report**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

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

The school staff and Board of Management wishes to acknowledge the positive and affirming findings of the Whole School Evaluation MLL contained in this report.

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

Follow-up action has commenced in the following recommended areas:

- 1) A range of mathematical resources has been purchased in order to continue the active learning approaches in use by pupils.
- 2) Further diagnostic testing has also begun.
- 3) Differentiation of instruction in reading will be developed further in 2015/2016.