Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Camcloon National School
Ballydangan, Co. Roscommon
Uimhir rolla: 15980V

Date of inspection: 20 September 2011
1. Introduction

Camcloon NS is one of two schools in the rural parish of Moore in south county Roscommon. At the time of the evaluation, the principal had been working in the school for six months and the other two teachers observed were both in their first month in the school. There were fifteen pupils enrolled. It is evident that the school has strong support from the small community that it serves. The school building and recreation area have been developed and maintained to a very good standard.

This whole-school evaluation focused on the quality of teaching and learning in Irish, English, Mathematics and Geography. 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.

2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

The following are the main strengths of the work of the school:

- The board of management and teachers have a very good working relationship with the parent body and the wider local community.
- The school building and recreation area have been developed and maintained to a very good standard.
- The provision and management of equipment and materials are very good.
- There is a positive atmosphere in the school, with evidence of very good working relations among teachers and pupils.
- The teachers demonstrated a very good ability to manage and motivate their pupils.
- The overall quality of the teaching and learning observed was good.

The following main recommendations are made:

- The school should nominate a member of staff to deputise for the designated liaison person (DLP) in her absence, in accordance with the Department’s Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.
- The teachers should ensure that the school’s curricular policies reflect the current good practice in the school.
- Moltar do na múinteoirí úsáid níos mó a bhaint as an gcur chuige cumarsáideach i dheagasc na Gaeilge, ionas go mbeidh na daltaí ábalta an teanga a labhairt go neamhspleách le haghaidh cumarsáide.
  It is recommended that the teachers make greater use of the communicative approach in the teaching of Irish, so that pupils will be enabled to speak the language independently for communicative purposes.
3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management is properly constituted and operates in accordance with relevant legislation and Department rules. The minutes of board meetings are recorded and maintained in a transparent manner and the school’s financial accounts are certified independently. The interest and commitment of the board of management were very much in evidence during the meeting that took place as part of the evaluation. The board deserves credit also for the very good condition of the school building and recreation area.

- The principal oversees the daily operation of the school effectively as well as teaching the middle and senior classes. She was appointed in the January prior to the whole-school evaluation. She is involved in continuing professional development with a view to developing her knowledge and skills in the area of school leadership.

- The school’s other mainstream class teacher also has a special-duties post of responsibility. It is recommended that the duties attached to this post be reviewed in order to provide a clear job description. The revised post description should be signed by the chairperson of the board and the post holder.

- There is evidence that the school is held in high regard by the small community it serves. Parents’ responses to questionnaires indicate a very high level of satisfaction with the service provided by the school. As part of this evaluation, the inspector met with officers of the school’s parents’ association, who spoke very highly of the work of the school.

- Pupil attendance is very good. The school register and attendance records are properly maintained. Historical records of registration and attendance were digitalised for the school’s recent centenary celebrations.

- The quality of communication with parents regarding their children’s progress is good. There are annual parent-teacher meetings and the school provides a written end-of-year report. It is recommended that the school include information regarding pupils’ performance in standardised tests in the written reports.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The school plan contains policies for various organisational areas, including those required by legislation and Department regulations. It is recommended that all policies that have been ratified by the board of management be signed by the chairperson. The school plan also contains curricular policies. It is recommended that the new school staff members familiarise themselves with these policies and make modifications where necessary, with a view to ensuring that policy and practice are in agreement. As policies are being revised or developed, it is recommended that parents be given opportunities, through the parents’ association, to comment on the policies before they are ratified by the board.

- Confirmation was provided that the board of management has formally adopted the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-primary Schools (September 2011) without modification. The school is compliant with the requirements of Primary Circular 0061/2006. School authorities provided evidence that arrangements are being put in place to ensure compliance with the requirements of the recently published Circular 0065/2011 and Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools as a matter of priority. At present the role of deputy DLP is assigned to a member of the board of management who is not a staff member. It is recommended that the school nominate a
member of staff as deputy DLP, in accordance with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is good. Teachers demonstrate a very good ability to motivate and manage their pupils. There is good differentiation of content and methodologies for the different class levels and for individual pupils. Both class-room teachers show a good awareness of the importance of language development across the curriculum. In some cases, this needs to be addressed in a more structured way and teachers were advised accordingly.

- The quality of teaching and learning in English is good. There is a good range of play equipment in the school and adequate time is given to structured play in the junior room. It is recommended that the range of play activities be extended to include opportunities for socio-dramatic play. There is evidence of very good cross-curricular approaches to oral-language development in both classrooms. Suitable approaches to the teaching of reading are in use, with an emphasis on equipping pupils with the skills and the motivation to become successful readers. Teachers were advised that pupils would benefit from more scope and variety in the programmes for English writing and poetry.

- Sonraithe ar scóip chun forbartha i dteagasc agus i bhfoghlaim na Gaeilge. Baineann na múinteoirí úsáid as raon d’acmhainní cuí sna ceachtanna. Is léir go mbeidh machnamh déanta acu ar an bhfocóir atá le múineadh. Baintear úsáid as rainn agus amhráin chun an fhoghlaim a bhuanadh. Moltar do na múinteoirí níos mó béime a leagan ar chothú líofacht na ndaltaí. Moltar go gcuirfí gníomhaíochtaí ar fáil ina mbéadh ar na daltaí múnlaí agus focail nua a úsáid. Moltar go bhfuil gníomhaíochtaí ar fáil ina mbéadh ar na daltaí múnlaí agus focail nua a úsáid, agus moltar go bhfuil gníomhaíochtaí ar fáil ina mbéadh ar na daltaí múnlaí agus focail nua a úsáid. Tugadh comhairle do na múinteoirí freisin maidir le húsáid na Gaeilge go teagmhach sa seomra ranga i rith an lae.

There is evidence of scope for development in the teaching and learning of Irish. The teachers use a range of appropriate resources in the lessons. It is evident that they give careful consideration to the vocabulary to be taught. Verse and song are used to reinforce the learning. It is recommended that the teachers place more emphasis on developing the pupils’ fluency. It is recommended that activities be provided that require the pupils to use new phrases and vocabulary independently for communicative purposes. The teachers were advised regarding the incidental use of Irish in the classroom throughout the day.

- The quality of teaching and learning in Mathematics is good overall. There is good use of appropriate equipment and materials. There is also very good use of activities that require pupils to practise and develop their mathematical vocabulary. The pupils were active during the lessons observed.

- Appropriate class programmes are in place in Geography. The teaching and learning observed was good. Lessons were well structured and the pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the relevant concepts.

- The quality of assessment in the mainstream classes is generally good. The school administers standardised attainment tests in English and Mathematics annually and also administers the Middle Infant Screening Test.
6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- The two mainstream class teachers provide effective support for the learning of individual pupils as required. There is also good attention to the pupils’ social and personal development.

- A learning-support teacher visits the school for two and a half hours each week. The teacher observed was new to the school and was also in her first month in the learning-support role. In the lessons observed, there was effective use of suitable activities and resources to develop literacy. Good profiles had been developed for the pupils in receipt of learning support. Advice was given regarding the identification of individual learning targets and other aspects of the IEP process. The school was advised also with regard to the format and scope of the individual learning programmes and with regard to the involvement of parents in the process.
Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management
Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection 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

All recommendations have been or will be implemented in the near future.