

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

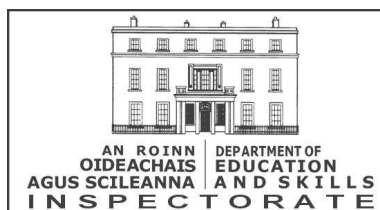
**Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning**

REPORT

**Scoil Mochaomhóg
Two Mile Borris
Thurles
Co. Tipperary**

Uimhir rolla: 16211C

Date of inspection: 16 October 2013



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Scoil Mochaomhóg Naofa, Two Mile Borris in October, 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 selection of school documents. 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.

Scoil Mochaomhóg Naofa is a five mainstream co-educational rural school which operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Cashel and Emly. The school has a special class for pupils with Emotional and Behavioural Disturbance (EBD). The principal, who has teaching responsibility for the EBD class, was appointed to the school in 2010.

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

- *The teachers are hardworking and very committed to the school and the pupils.*
- *Staff members are embracing change and are engaging in a range of initiatives focused on improving teaching and learning. Several innovative practices are being introduced at different class levels.*
- *Very good work has been undertaken in school self-evaluation to date.*
- *In general, the learning outcomes in Mathematics are good to very good.*
- *The overall school environment is very welcoming and classrooms are very well-organised.*
- *The school is highly regarded by pupils and parents.*

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- *Approaches to literacy instruction (reading and writing) should be reviewed and developed at whole-school level and resources to support differentiated literacy instruction should be provided. Pupils' outcomes in writing should be improved.*
- *A whole-school review of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and special educational needs should be undertaken.*
- *The effectiveness of curricular initiatives should be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis and this work should be led by a member of the in-school management team.*

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning achievements of the pupils in numeracy are good to very good. The majority of pupils' attainment in English reading ranges from satisfactory to good. Pupils' writing, in both languages, has scope for development. Sa Ghaeilge, tá scileanna cumarsáide na ndaltaí (obair labhartha, éisteachta, scríofa agus an léitheoireacht) ar chaighdeán sásúil. [*In Irish, pupils' communication skills (oral work, listening, writing and reading) are at a satisfactory standard.*]
- Most pupils are engaged and work purposefully. Pupils' learning could be significantly enhanced by placing an increased emphasis on differentiating teaching and learning for pupils in composite class groups. On-going assessment data should also be collected and analysed to better inform teaching and learning.

2. Quality of teaching

- The quality of lessons observed in English ranged from satisfactory to good. Elements of *Literacy Lift Off* are being introduced and station teaching is a welcome initiative in introducing differentiated instruction. The pupils' oral language skills, phonics and phonological skills are developed appropriately. Comprehension skills are being introduced through the implementation of the *Building Bridges* programme. While writing is a feature of the work at each class level, there is significant scope for development in the standard of pupils' outcomes. The implementation of a systematic approach to writing such as the *First Steps Writing* approach is recommended to facilitate literacy instruction. The principles underlying *Literacy Lift Off* should be implemented in full in senior infants, first and second classes and a range of levelled readers should be provided.
- The quality of lessons observed during the evaluation in Mathematics ranged from satisfactory to good. In the middle and senior classes, pupils' engagement in activities is generally good to very good. Where good practice was observed, concepts were taught systematically and number facts consolidated. To enhance the provision further, oral maths and problem-solving strategies should be further emphasised at all class levels. Whole-school strategies to introduce differentiated teaching in Mathematics should be considered by mainstream-class teachers, with the support of the members of the special education team.
- Sa Ghaeilge, tá caighdeán an teagaisc sásúil, cé go bhfuil gnéithe le forbairt ag léibhéil áirithe. Sna meánranganna agus sna hardranganna bhí eolas cuí ag na daltaí ar an ábhar a bhí clúdaithe. Moltar scileanna cumarsáide na ndaltaí a threisiú agus na tréimhsí cumarsáide a chinntiú i ngach ceacht. Ba choir béim bhreise a leagan ar scileanna léitheoireachta na ndaltaí a mhúineadh go foirmiúil agus an Ghaeilge a úsáid mar theanga bhainistíochta an ranga níos forleithne. *(In Irish, the standard of teaching is satisfactory, although there are aspects to be developed at certain class levels. In the middle and senior classes, the pupils had a suitable knowledge of the material covered. It is recommended that emphasis should be placed on enhancing pupils' communication skills and the communicative stages of each lesson. Additional emphasis should be placed on teaching reading skills formally and Irish should be used more extensively as the language of classroom management.)*
- Some very commendable work was observed in the four support settings during the evaluation. The provision in the school needs to be reviewed to ensure that it adheres to the *Learning Support Guidelines* and to *Circular SP ED 02/05*. Further attention needs to be given, at whole-school level, to the model of in-class support which is currently provided. In this regard, consideration should be given to facilitating support teachers to work collaboratively with mainstream class teachers as they support literacy initiatives. Plans for individual pupils are provided and the inclusion of a broad range of specific, individualised and measurable learning targets which are defined and monitored regularly is recommended.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- Overall, pupils' behaviour is good in most settings. Two special needs assistants support the inclusion of pupils in school life. It is recommended that pupils' listening and attention skills should be further developed in order to improve the overall quality of learning at some class levels.
- 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 principal leads the school self-evaluation process effectively. She encourages staff members to engage in professional development and she facilitates them to introduce initiatives into their work. She is well supported by the school secretary. Teachers with special duties undertake a range of tasks which are relevant to the work of the school.
- The board of management provides support to the school and the chairperson maintains close links with parents, pupils and school staff. The board has overseen the extension of the school building and this work is very commendable.
- The parents' association works enthusiastically to support the school in a range of activities and parent questionnaires indicate very high levels of satisfaction with the school.

5. School Self-evaluation

- The teaching principal is leading the school self-evaluation process effectively and a good school self-evaluation report has been drafted. Many of the actions outlined in the school improvement plan (SIP) are being implemented. Some initiatives such as in-class support, station teaching for English and assessment for learning require further development. It is recommended that members of the in-school management team should monitor the implementation of the targets in the SIP to ensure that the curricular initiatives which are being implemented in the school contribute to pupils' literacy and numeracy attainment.

Conclusion

The school's capacity to develop further is 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 recognised the need to improve reading levels in the lower classes and had already identified this in their own SSE. 'Literacy Lift Off' was scheduled for Feb 2014.

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

Learning support provision has been reviewed and 5th/6th class are no longer split for literacy and numeracy.

Learning support will be targeted at those children below 12th percentile or who present with Specific Learning Difficulties

L.S. targets have been reviewed.