

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Kilrane NS,
Kilrane, Rosslare Harbour,
Co. Wexford

Uimhir rolla: 16605A

Date of inspection: 5 December 2013



1. Introduction

Kilrane National School is a co-educational vertical primary school with a special class for pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It is under the patronage of the Catholic bishop of Ferns. The school receives support under the *School Completion Programme*. The attendance of most of the 278 pupils enrolled is 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 pupils of Kilrane NS experience an inclusive learning environment and the commitment to and provision for their care and wellbeing is of a very high quality.
- The principal, teachers, special needs assistants and ancillary staff demonstrate commendable levels of effective teamwork and collaboration.
- The pupils are well behaved, engage in activities with interest and enthusiasm and are respectful and considerate in their interactions with their peers.
- The board of management functions effectively and the board, the parents' association and parents generally are very supportive of the work of the school.
- The implementation of a range of effective interventions to promote English reading and mathematical problem-solving is impacting positively on learning outcomes for pupils.
- The overall quality of support for pupils with additional learning needs is commendable.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- The principal and in-school management team should strengthen their role in the promotion of school improvement, particularly in monitoring closely the impact of literacy and numeracy initiatives.
- A review of approaches to classroom planning is recommended, incorporating a clearer focus on the intended learning outcomes for pupils, their skill development and provision for differentiation.
- To ensure further challenge for learners, it is recommended that the teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning, problem-solving and higher order thinking skills.
- In English, it is recommended that the school implement a structured approach to the development of pupils' writing and editing skills across the range of writing genres.
- Sa Ghaeilge, moltar béim níos láidre a leagadh ar dhul chun cinn scileanna cumarsáide na ndaltaí.

3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management functions effectively and carries out its duties in a conscientious and focused manner. The board demonstrates a good awareness of the school's literacy and numeracy priorities. It is commended for its work on the upgrading and maintenance of the school building and recreational areas to a very high standard.
- The principal manages the work of the school successfully. He actively promotes a culture of teamwork and encourages the implementation of teaching and learning initiatives. In particular, he has played a central role in the extension and upgrade of the school building. The principal is ably supported by the committed and hardworking members of the in-school management team. Their work contributes to the provision of a broad range of learning experiences for pupils. The principal and in-school management team are now well placed to strengthen their role in the promotion of school improvement, particularly in monitoring closely the impact of literacy and numeracy initiatives across the school. In the questionnaires, all parents expressed the view that the school is well run.
- The pupils of Kilrane NS experience an inclusive learning environment. The commitment to and provision for their care and wellbeing is of a very high quality. Commendable levels of pupil behaviour and cooperation are in evidence. In the questionnaires, almost all pupils reported that they get on well with the other children. The pupils demonstrate high levels of interest and enthusiasm in the range of school activities. The special needs assistants make a valuable contribution to the care of pupils.
- The management of relationships and communication with the school community is of a high standard. The parents' association, parents generally and the local community are very supportive of the work of the school. They contribute beneficially to the range of resources in use and the breadth of activities provided for pupils. In their questionnaire responses almost all parents reported that the school is welcoming of them.
- The school buildings and grounds are maintained to a very high standard and are enhanced through attractive displays of the pupils' written and art work. A good range of resources, including ICT, is used to support teaching and learning. Consideration should now be given to the number of textbooks in use in some curriculum areas.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The quality of whole-school planning is good overall. A wide range of curriculum plans and organisational policies has been formulated and provides guidance for teaching and learning and directs the smooth operation of the school. To build on this work, the development of a strategic plan which would provide for the cyclical review of individual curriculum plans and organisational policies is advised.
- While teachers present long-term and short-term plans of work and monthly progress records, there is scope to develop the quality of individual teacher planning. A review of approaches to classroom planning is recommended, incorporating a clearer focus on the intended learning outcomes for pupils, their skill development and specific provision for differentiation.
- As a result of the school's productive engagement in school self-evaluation, a number of literacy initiatives have been introduced which are impacting positively on pupils' learning. Further clarity of the targets set and the manner in which progress on these targets will be monitored and measured will support further improvements.

- 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*.

5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

- The quality of overall teaching, learning and pupil achievement is commendable. Lessons are well structured and build on pupils' prior learning. There is a strong emphasis on language learning across the curriculum and some skilful opportunities are provided for pupils to work collaboratively. To ensure further challenge for learners, it is recommended that the teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils' to develop their independent learning, problem-solving and higher order-thinking skills. In the questionnaire responses, all parents reported that teaching is good in the school and that their child is doing well and most pupils indicated that they enjoy their lessons and learning.
- Some useful approaches to the assessment of pupil learning are in evidence through the school. In particular, the use of baseline information and the ongoing tracking of pupils' progress during team-teaching literacy interventions are commended. As a means of maximising the impact of assessment activity on teaching and learning, it is recommended that a wider range of assessment approaches be agreed and implemented across the school.
- Ar an iomlán, tá múineadh agus foghlaim na Gaeilge agus gnóthachtáil na ndaltaí ar chaighdeán sásúil. Éiríonn leis na hoidí dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge a chothú agus déantar soláthar maith d'fhillíocht agus d'amhránaíocht. I roinnt ranganna tá cleachtas éifeachtach le feiceáil. Sna chomhtheacsanna seo, baintear dea-úsáid as raon straitéisí gníomhacha. Tá tuiscint mhaith agus stór focal oiriúnach ag formhór na ndaltaí agus déanann siad sár-iarracht iad féin a chur in iúl. In ainneoin sin, tá easpa muiníne agus líofachta i gcumas cainte de thromlach na ndaltaí. Moltar béim níos láidre a leagadh ar dhul chun cinn scileanna cumarsáide na ndaltaí. Chun an sprioc seo a bhaint amach, moltar struchtúir teanga agus briathra a mhúineadh go córasach agus a chleachtadh i slí nádúrtha. Léann na daltaí na teacsleabhair ranga le cruinneas agus tuiscint oiriúnach agus cleachtar scríbhneoireacht fheidhmiúil go rialta.

Overall, teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Irish is of a suitable standard. The teachers successfully promote a positive attitude to Irish and good provision is made for poetry and song. Effective practice is in evidence in some classes. In these contexts, good use is made of a range of active strategies. Most pupils display good understanding and an appropriate vocabulary and they make great efforts to communicate. Despite this, a majority of pupils display a lack of confidence and fluency. It is recommended that greater emphasis be placed on the progression of pupils' communication skills. To achieve this goal, it is recommended that language structures and verbs are taught systematically and are practised in authentic contexts. Pupils read the class textbooks with accuracy and appropriate understanding and they engage in functional writing regularly.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is commendable. In general, the pupils communicate with their teachers and peers with praiseworthy confidence and competence. Some good approaches to poetry are in evidence. The teachers are praised for the range of effective interventions in place to promote literacy, in particular reading and comprehension skills. As a consequence, reading standards are of a high quality. In the questionnaires, most pupils reported that they think they are doing well at reading. To build on this good work, consideration should now be given to the

further development of approaches to emergent reading in infant classes. Some fine examples of the pupils' personal writing are in evidence. It is recommended that the school implement a structured approach to the development of the pupils' writing and editing skills across the range of writing genres.

- Teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is of a high quality. Lessons are implemented effectively and are characterised by due attention to oral and mental mathematics, the explicit teaching of new concepts, constructive links to the pupils' environment and well-designed active-learning opportunities. The school-wide promotion of number competence and the increased opportunities for participation in collaborative problem-solving are of particular merit. The pupils demonstrate good understanding across the strand and strand units. In the questionnaires, most pupils expressed the view that they are doing well at Maths.
- Provision for Drama is of a competent standard overall. The teachers draw on a good range of drama strategies, with guided reflection being promoted successfully in some classes. Pupils participate in activities with high levels of interest and co-operate effectively with each other. Progress in their ability to engage confidently in improvisational Drama is in evidence and is worthy of further development. Opportunities to integrate learning in Drama with other areas of the curriculum are used successfully.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- The overall quality of support for pupils with additional learning needs is commendable and its implementation is supported by a large support-teaching team. The teachers have engaged in a wide range of pertinent continuing professional development and have established beneficial working relationships with external professionals. Teacher-pupil relationships are positive and affirming. Teaching is flexible and adapted to take account of pupils' interests and a suitable balance of in-class support and withdrawal is achieved. In general, the pupils engage purposefully in the range of learning activities and suitable pupil progress is in evidence.
- In the main, education plans are of a good quality and are prepared in co-operation with parents and class teachers. In response to the complex nature of the school's provision and the wide range of personnel involved, it is advised that, in all instances, the full range of an individual pupil's learning needs are incorporated in a single education plan and that learning targets are consistently specific.
- Learning support/resource teachers and classroom teachers collaborate successfully and a number of high quality team-teaching and individualised interventions are being implemented. In the special class for pupils with an ASD, an appropriate range of ASD-specific teaching approaches is used and the pupils are provided with regular opportunities to engage in learning activities on an individual and group basis. Pupils with an ASD experience meaningful opportunities to engage with their peers in mainstream classes. Pupils with EAL benefit from focussed interventions that contribute effectively to language acquisition and their active participation in classroom and school life.

Published April 2014

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 wish to thank the DES Inspectors for the professional and courteous manner in which they carried out the Whole School Evaluation. The BOM is very pleased the inspectors acknowledged that “the pupils of Kilrane National School experience an inclusive learning environment and that the commitment to and provision for their care and wellbeing is of a very high quality”.

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 BOM acknowledges the findings of the report which affirm the day to day life of the school. The recommendations will be central to the school’s culture of continuous development and will be prioritised for immediate implementation.