

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

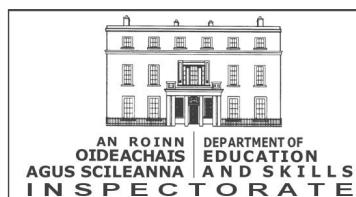
**Whole School Evaluation  
Management, Leadership and Learning**

**REPORT**

**Scoil Naomh Mhuire, Staplestown,  
Donadea, Co Kildare**

**Uimhir rolla: 16777G**

**Date of inspection: 05 March 2014**



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

### Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Scoil Naomh Mhuire, Staplestown in March 2014. 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.

Scoil Mhuire is a co-educational school under the patronage of the bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. Attendance rates for the 89 pupils enrolled are very good. At the time of the evaluation, three temporary/substitute teachers were covering the absences of permanent staff members.

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

- Management and leadership within the school are of a high quality.
- The overall quality of teaching and the learning achievements of pupils are commendable.
- Teachers use an effective blend of methodologies during their lessons.
- Good use is made of the school's local environment in the delivery of the curriculum.
- A very good emphasis is placed on the development of pupils' writing skills.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Moltar deiseanna labhartha a leathnú chun muinín na ndaltaí a fhorbairt sa Ghaeilge labhartha (*It is recommended that speaking opportunities are extended to develop pupils' confidence in spoken Irish*).
- Further use should be made of assessment data to inform planning and provision for differentiation.
- A review of the selection of pupils for learning support is recommended to ensure that support is targeted at pupils most in need and with a view to placing a greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention.

### Findings

#### 1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning achievements of pupils are commendable. Pupils engage well in classroom activities and many competently recall their learning. Their skills to work individually and co-operatively are well developed. Very good use is made of the school's local environment. Overall, pupils' learning experiences and outcomes in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education are of a high quality.
- Learning outcomes in numeracy and literacy are good as is evidenced in standardised test results. Emergent literacy skills are very well developed in the infant classes and pupils follow differentiated reading programmes. The use of differentiated readers should be extended within the school and a more systematic focus should be placed on the teaching of comprehension skills. Pupils' ability to write in a range of genres and to engage in the writing process is very well developed. Written work is generally well monitored. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of key mathematical concepts and can apply strategies to problem solve.

- Cothaítear dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge. Cé go léiríonn tromlach na ndaltaí tuiscint mhaith ar an teanga, moltar a muinín sa teanga labhartha a fhorbairt. B'fhiú cur chuige forásach a chur i bhfeidhm i leith forbairt teanga na ndaltaí. (*A positive attitude to Irish is fostered. While the majority of pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the language, it is recommended that their confidence in the spoken language be developed. A spiral approach to developing the pupils' language should be implemented*).
- Teachers employ a wide range of strategies to assess pupils' learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy. There is scope to develop the assessment of progress for pupils attending learning support. A good emphasis is placed on pupil self-assessment. The challenge for teachers is to make further use of this assessment data to inform the differentiation of teaching and learning.

## 2. Quality of teaching

- Teaching in the school is of a high quality with very good practice observed in some settings. Almost all learning environments are attractive and productive. Teaching is informed by high quality planning and preparation. Teachers use a wide range of active and participatory methodologies effectively. The quality of play-based learning in the infant classes is highly commendable. Further provision for differentiation of learning activities is recommended to ensure that pupils are supported and challenged in line with their ability. A commitment to ongoing professional development is evident among teachers. In questionnaires, the majority of parents report that the quality of teaching is good and that their child is doing well at school.
- The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with low-incidence special educational needs is very good. This was characterised by very high quality individual planning, comprehensive assessment records and effective teaching approaches. The teaching observed in the learning support setting was good. A review of the selection of pupils for learning support is recommended to ensure that support is targeted at pupils most in need, with a view to placing a greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention. Further use of assessment data is advised when devising and reviewing the targets and programmes of work for pupils attending learning support.

## 3. Support for pupils' well-being

- There is good quality support for pupils' well being. A positive learning atmosphere is evident and teachers regularly affirm pupils' efforts and achievements. Pupils are courteous and respectful. The school participates in a wide range of activities to promote pupils' well being and to prevent bullying. The use of 'worry boxes' in all classrooms is commended. The majority of pupils report in questionnaires that they feel safe in school and enjoy good relationships with their peers.
- 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 provides good governance for the school. It has led the development of the school's facilities and resources. Minutes of meetings evidence wide ranging discussions with an appropriate emphasis on policy development and teaching and learning in the school. Parents are supportive of the school and the majority indicate that they are happy with the work of the school. The board should develop further strategies to communicate with the parent body about its work.
- The principal provides effective leadership to the school. She has led the development of a significant range of policies and plans. In collaboration with the

deputy principal, she capably directs whole-school initiatives and prioritises the key areas of teaching and learning.

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

- The school is praised for its active engagement in school self-evaluation processes in recent times. Through a process of consultation and comprehensive data analysis, it has developed a school improvement plan for numeracy. There is evidence of its implementation in teachers' planning and practice.

#### **Conclusion**

The school's capacity to develop further is very good. Significant progress has been made in implementing recommendations from previous incidental inspections and staff display a commitment to ongoing school improvement.

# 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 of Scoil Naomh Mhuire NS welcomes this report which recognises and affirms the high quality of teaching and learning which takes place in our school.

#### **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 and staff acknowledge the recommendations made in the report and plan to review our school plan accordingly. We have already reviewed our selection procedure for learning support and have placed a greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention strategies. The recommendations will also form a key part of our on-going school self-evaluation process and will help inform our school improvement plans.

We would like to thank the staff, the pupils, the parents and the whole school community for their contribution to the ongoing development of the school.