

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

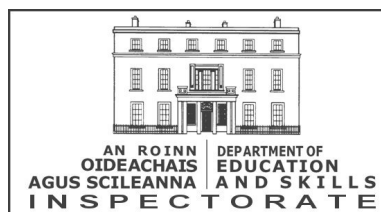
Department of Education and Skills

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

REPORT

**Scoil Chaoimhín Naofa,
Glendalough, Co. Wicklow
Uimhir rolla: 16924Q**

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 Chaoimhín Naofa 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.

Scoil Chaoimhín Naofa is a co-educational vertical primary school, located in the rural parish of Glendalough, under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. A special class for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) was established in September 2013. The attendance of the 112 pupils enrolled is generally 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.

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

- the inclusive, welcoming school atmosphere and strong sense of community
- the commitment of the board of management
- the very effective leadership and management of the principal
- the overall very good quality teaching, learning and pupil achievement
- the dedication of all staff to pupils' well being and learning needs and to ongoing school improvement
- the highly commendable levels of pupil behaviour and engagement in learning and
- the very supportive parents' association, parent body and local community.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- the enhancement of existing assessment practice to include an agreed approach to the use of assessment information to inform planning, teaching and learning for the breadth of pupil ability levels and
- the further promotion of the pupils' higher-order thinking skills and independent learning abilities across the curriculum.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- Pupils are provided with a broad and balanced range of curriculum experiences and the overall quality of their learning achievements is very good. Positive levels of pupil progress are in evidence for pupils with special educational needs.
- In English, the quality of pupils' reading generally is very good. In their questionnaire responses, most pupils believe they are doing well at reading. Some praiseworthy examples of pupils' engagement in the writing process across a range of genres are in evidence. While many pupils express themselves with suitable competence, further emphasis on the development of their discrete oral language skills will enhance their confidence and the development of their higher-order thinking skills.
- Ar an iomlán, tá ardchaighdeán le sonrú i bhfoghlaím na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge. Ar mhaithe le gnóthachtáil na ndaltaí a uasmhéadú, ní mór a muinín agus a scileanna foghlama neamhspleácha sa teanga a fhorbairt a thuilleadh. *Overall, a high standard of pupil learning in Irish is evident. To enhance pupils' achievement levels further development of their confidence and independent-learning skills is advised.*

- Pupils' learning in Mathematics is of a very high standard and a majority of pupils believe they are doing well at Maths.
- In arts education, fine examples of the pupils' creativity in a range of media are attractively displayed. Pupils demonstrate suitable emergent understanding of musical literacy and the standard of their singing is highly praiseworthy. In Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), pupils discuss topics covered, their project work and the local environment with good levels of understanding.

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is very good. Lessons are well structured, resourced and implemented. In their questionnaire responses, all pupils assert that teachers explain things clearly. Teachers' engagement in team-teaching and the sharing of expertise is praiseworthy.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is commendable and is responsive to the needs of the pupils. The formulation of an action plan to guide developments in response to the newly-established special class for pupils with ASD is praiseworthy.
- Successes in literacy teaching include the implementation of early intervention strategies, the use of graded reading materials and class novels and the introduction of the Aistear programme. To enhance these good practices, the teaching of specific comprehension skills, the use of a range of reading approaches and the development of the pupils' editing skills should be extended and embedded.
- Sa Ghaeilge, baintear úsáid sciliúil as raon de stráitéisí múinteoireachta. Chun cur leis an dea-obair seo, moltar dul siar go rialta ar ábhar na dtéamaí éagsúla agus deiseanna níos mó a thabhairt do na daltaí labhairt as a stuaim féin. *In Irish, skilful use is made of a range of teaching strategies. To build on this good work, regular revision of the content of the various themes and the provision of more frequent opportunities for pupils to speak independently are recommended.*
- The teaching of Mathematics is very good and the promotion of mental mathematics is very effective. The proposed implementation of whole-school approach to problem solving and the enhancement of pupils' confidence in Mathematics as part of the next stage of the school's improvement plan is commended.
- Some very effective approaches to assessment, including the promotion of pupil self-assessment and careful tracking of pupil progress, are in evidence. The enhancement of existing assessment practice to include an agreed approach to the use of assessment information to inform planning, teaching and learning for the breadth of pupil ability levels is recommended.
- In SESE and SPHE, lessons are integrated effectively with literacy learning and the richness of the local environment is exploited very successfully.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- The quality of support for pupils' well being and the relationships between pupils and staff are of a very high quality. Pupil behaviour and their engagement in learning are highly commendable.
- An inclusive, welcoming school atmosphere and strong sense of community is evident. Very good relations exist between the school, the parents and the wider community. The parents' association, parent body and local community are very supportive of the

work of the school. In their questionnaire responses, all parents affirm the good school atmosphere, that they are happy with the school and that it is well run.

- 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 well informed about the operation of the school and the standards of pupil learning, and is committed to school improvement.
- The principal demonstrates very effective leadership and management skills and competently leads collaborative planning processes. A collegiate atmosphere is promoted successfully. The dedicated in-school management team discharge their duties conscientiously and competently.

5. School Self-evaluation

- The school has embarked pragmatically on a process of school self-evaluation. Baseline assessment information and evidence from pupils, parents and teachers have been used to develop specific targets for the development of pupils' learning in numeracy.

Conclusion

- The school's capacity to develop further is very good. A range of actions has been implemented following recommendations made during an incidental inspection in 2011. The dedication of all staff to pupils' well being and learning needs and to ongoing school improvement is a particular strength of the school.

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 Chaoimhín Naofa, Glendalough gratefully acknowledges this WSE MLL report. We are pleased that it affirms the high quality of teaching and learning in our school, together with the commitment of staff, parents and the whole school community.

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 welcome the recommendations made in this report. Together we have undertaken to enhance our assessment procedures with a view to informing the learning in our school. Through the SSE process, we plan to put an emphasis on higher order thinking skills and to develop further the pupils' capacity for independent learning.