

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

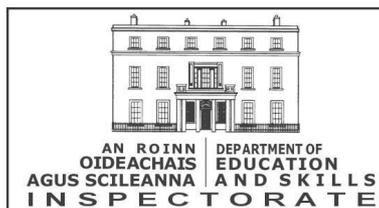
**Department of Education and Skills**

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

**REPORT**

**Scoil Naomh Sheosaimh  
Kilmastranny, County Roscommon  
Uimhir rolla: 16927W**

**Date of inspection: 30 April 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 Sheosaimh in April 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 a representative of the board, completed parent and pupil questionnaires, and a selection of school documents. The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

Scoil Naomh Sheosaimh is a small rural co-educational primary school and the school population has remained stable since 2010. Two mainstream class teachers are based in the school and additional support for pupils with special educational needs is provided by a learning support teacher who is based in Keadue National School. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Elphin. Attendance levels for most pupils are very good.

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

- The board of management provides very high levels of support to the school.
- The overall school environment is attractive and is very welcoming.
- The principal works very hard to foster a spirit of teamwork and collaborative decision making.
- The quality of teaching observed during the evaluation in the different settings was good to very good.
- Overall, the quality of learning achieved by pupils in literacy and numeracy is very good.
- The principal and other members of the staff have established very good lines of communication with the school community.
- The management of pupils is very good.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Consideration should be given to the introduction of a differentiated reading programme in all the infant and junior classes.
- The implementation of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* to provide pupils in the infant and junior classes with opportunities to engage in play activities should be considered in the future.
- The affiliation of the parents' association to the National Parents' Council (Primary) should be encouraged by the board.

### Findings

#### 1. The learning achievements of pupils

- In general, a broad and balanced curriculum is delivered throughout the school. Overall, pupil attainment, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy is of a very good standard.
- Drama is taught effectively as a subject throughout the school. It is used extensively as a methodology in a wide range of subjects, particularly in Irish. The school ensures that appropriate experiences are provided in Social Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) through the exploration of local history and also through participation in the Green Schools' Programme.

- All pupils read with fluency and accuracy. A wide range of reading materials is explored at junior, middle and senior classes. As part of the school self-evaluation process, the school is implementing an oral language programme which ensures that discrete time is provided for oral language lessons. In order to cater for varying ability levels in reading, particularly in the infant and junior classes, the school might consider the extension of the literacy intervention initiative in senior infants and first classes to all classes in the junior classroom. Overall the quality of pupils' writing throughout the school is of a very high standard. Children are provided with opportunities to write in different genres. Samples of children's writing are displayed and some samples are chosen by the children and retained in their self-assessment learning folders (SALF).
- The quality of learning outcomes and pupil achievement in Mathematics is of a very high standard. During the evaluation period some exemplary practice in the teaching of Mathematics was observed. Particularly commendable was the use of concrete materials and the provision of opportunities for pupils to engage in problem solving in group settings, leading to the creation of high-quality classroom conversations about Mathematics. The use of computer-based learning environments such as *SCRATCH* in senior classes is recommended to enhance the development of pupils' problem-solving skills.
- Caitear go han-bríomhar le teagasc na Gaeilge ar fud na scoile. Tá an-mholadh ag dul do na hoidí as a n-iarrachtaí chun an comhrá, an léitheoireacht agus scríobh na teanga a chur chun cinn. Labhrann cuid mhaith de na daltaí le líofacht shuntasach ar raon leathan d'ábhair ina gcuireann siad féin suim. Éiríonn go creidiúnach leis na daltaí sa léitheoireacht agus léann a bhformhór le brí agus le tuiscint. Moltar anois ábhar léitheoireachta níos leithne a chur ar fáil tríd an scoil, mar shampla, cineálacha éagsúla téacs a sholáthar sna meánranganna agus sna hardranganna chun chur leis an dea-chleachtas atá ar siúl. Déantar cúram den scríbhneoireacht Ghaeilge agus is léir ón obair scríofa go bhfuil caighdeán creidiúnach á shroichint ag formhór na páistí.

*Irish is taught enthusiastically throughout the school. The teachers merit much praise for their efforts in promoting speaking, reading and writing. Accordingly many of their pupils achieve significant levels of fluency in topics which are of particular relevance to their own lives. The pupils succeed creditably in their reading and the majority of them read with meaning and understanding. It is recommended that a wider range of reading materials might be provided throughout the school for example, various types of text might be supplied for the middle and senior classes to further enhance the very good work undertaken. Written work in Irish is well attended to and it is evident from the work samples that a creditable standard is reached by the majority of pupils.*

- A shared learning support teacher (LST) provides a good range of appropriate supports to pupils who are experiencing learning difficulties. Individual Pupil Learning Profiles (IPLPs) and Individual Education Plans (IEPs) outline the provision made for individuals and groups of pupils with differing abilities. Targets, tasks and activities based on the assessment data available and the programmes recommended by the relevant professionals are carefully implemented. The learning support teacher tracks the progress of individual pupils and administers appropriate diagnostic tests to assist in the identification of suitable learning targets. The LST, together with the mainstream class teachers, collate a range of data on pupils' learning outcomes. This collaborative work should be further developed and the introduction of team teaching, which would facilitate the implementation of literacy and numeracy initiatives in the infant and senior classes, should be considered.
- The school uses a wide range of assessment strategies and diagnostic instruments to track the progress of individual pupils. Pupils' work is evaluated by individual class teachers and appropriate feedback provided to pupils in their copies. The use of SALF folders has been particularly successful with the pupils engage in the self-evaluation of their own work.

## **2. Quality of teaching**

- The quality of teaching and learning in this school is of a very high standard. Teaching approaches, including the use of information and communication technology (ICT), are well matched to pupils' learning needs and preferred styles of learning. The school is also engaged in the FÍS project and have produced a film on local history. A very wide range of teaching approaches and strategies is employed across all settings, to ensure the development of content, knowledge, skills and pupil engagement. The implementation of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* should be considered in the future to provide pupils in the infant and junior classes with opportunities to engage in a programme of structured play.

## **3. Support for pupils' well-being**

- Pupils are very effectively managed and the engagement of pupils in all the lessons observed was of a very high quality. The pupils were on task at all times and pupils with special educational needs were provided with access to the curriculum through a range of appropriate activities and differentiated programmes. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is organised in the school. Almost all of the children surveyed indicated that they thought this is a good school, that their teacher explained things clearly and the vast majority of children indicated that they felt they were doing well at Mathematics and reading. All children stated that they felt safe in school.
- Confirmation was provided that the board of management has formally adopted the *Child Protection 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 a very high level of support to the school and the principal maintains close links with the whole school community. This is exemplified by the quality of the internal and external school environment and the plentiful supply of educational resources.
- The principal provides democratic and participative leadership to the school community. She nurtures collaborative decision-making and her vision to improve teaching and learning is commendable. The special duties post-holder contributes effectively to the overall management of the school. She communicates very effectively with stakeholders through regular newsletters, the school website and the text-a-parent facility.
- It is reported that parents are very supportive of the school and parent questionnaires indicate high levels of satisfaction with the school, the quality of education and the care and support provided for their children. In order to ensure that all members of the school community are informed of the work of the board, it is recommended that an annual report be published. Currently there is an active parents' association in the school. It is recommended that the parents' association would affiliate to the National Parents' Council in the near future.

## **5. School Self-evaluation (SSE)**

- The school engages in a cyclical review of its curriculum plans and administrative policies. Each of the mainstream staff has assumed the role of curriculum co-ordinator for Mathematics and for literacy. Collaborative decisions are made around

the implementation of initiatives in the school. Parental and pupil input has been sought during the SSE review process of literacy in the school.

## **Conclusion**

- The school's capacity to develop further and to engage in school improvement is potentially of a very high level.