An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

SN Coill Mór
Drummin, Westport, Co. Mayo
Uimhir rolla: 17039V

Date of inspection: 21 October 2010
1. **Introduction**

SN Coill Mór, Drummin is a two teacher co-educational school under the patronage of the Archbishop of Tuam situated 18 kilometres south-west of Westport. Currently there are 20 pupils enrolled. The school is very well maintained and very attractively presented. 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.

2. **Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development**

   The following are the **main strengths** of the work of the school:
   - There is a strong culture of co-operation and teamwork evident in this school.
   - The school is very well resourced and attractively maintained.
   - Some very effective teaching was observed in both Irish and English.
   - There are very useful strategies in place on a whole school basis for the delivery of the Social Personal and Health Education programme.
   - The quality of the supplementary teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs is of a very high standard.
   - Pupils are courteous, diligent and very well behaved.

   The following **main recommendations** are made:
   - It is recommended that school registers be provided and maintained with immediate effect.
   - It is recommended that greater emphasis be placed on oral maths with frequent revision of topics covered.
   - It is recommended that the reliance on workbooks be reduced.
   - It is recommended that the school plan be reviewed with a view to ensuring that it aids the implementation of the curriculum in this particular school context.

3. **Quality of School Management**

   - The board of management is to be commended for the provision and maintenance of the high quality and very attractive school building and grounds. The board is advised to review its current financial arrangements and to ensure that accounts are certified annually, as is required by the Education Act (1998).

   - The principal is to be praised for fostering a strong culture of co-operation and team-work across the staff. Currently, the in-school management team operates on an informal basis. It is advised that more formal structures of team meetings be established to ensure on-going school improvement. It is further advised that the post of responsibility be reviewed to allow for a more equitable distribution of tasks.

   - High quality resources for teaching and learning are used effectively to implement the curriculum. It is advised that greater use be made of the information and communication technology (ICT) that is available.
• At the time of the evaluation, no school registers had been maintained in the school for the previous ten years. These are important school documents and the school is advised to address this issue with immediate effect.

• The management of pupils in this school is very good. Pupils are co-operative, courteous and diligent. Pupil questionnaires indicate that all pupils like school and consider this school to be a good one.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

• The quality of school planning is fair. While extensive planning documentation is available, in most cases it is generic in nature and does not reflect the particular context of this small two-teacher school. It is recommended that the school devise whole-school plans which will assist the implementation of the curriculum in this particular context.

• A culture of self-evaluation has not yet been established in this school. The school has recently introduced some very worthwhile initiatives such as First Steps for literacy. The school is advised to monitor pupil learning outcomes systematically and to evaluate the changes in the delivery of the curriculum in the light of this information.

Child protection policy and procedures

School authorities provided evidence that, in compliance with Primary Circular 0061/2006, the board of management has formally adopted the Department’s Child Protection Guidelines for Primary Schools. Evidence was provided to show that these child protection procedures have been brought to the attention of management, school staff and parents; that a copy of the procedures has been provided to all staff (including all new staff); and that management has ensured that all staff are familiar with the procedures to be followed. A designated liaison person (DLP) and a deputy DLP have been appointed in line with the requirements of the guidelines.

5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

• Both classroom teachers demonstrate a high level of fluency and accuracy in Irish. Very high quality teaching of Irish was observed in the junior room. In this classroom a strong emphasis was placed on fostering a love of the language and on the development of strategies to enrich pupils’ communication skills. It is advised that this good practice now be extended across the school. Currently there is an over-reliance on textbooks in the senior classes. There is scope for development in the standards achieved by these pupils in speaking, reading and writing Irish.

• Tá Gaeilge chruinn, liofa ag an meirt oide ranga. Tugtar faoi deara múinteoireacht Ghaeilge ar chaighdeán an-ard ar fad sa seomra sóisearach. Sa seomra ranga seo cuirtear bheim láidir ar chothú grá don teanga agus ar thorbaire straitéis chun scléanna cumarsáide na ndaltaí a theiseú. Moltar anois an dea-chleachtas seo a leathnú trasna na scoile. Faoi láthair, braithneann an obair go rómhóir ar théacsleabhar sna ranganna sinsearacha. Tá gá le forbairt a dheanamh ar chaighdeán labhartha, léitheoireachta agus scribhneoireachta na ndaltaí sna ranganna seo.

• The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in oral English is good. Useful strategies have been adopted on a whole-school basis to enhance pupils’ communication skills. Very effective strategies are in place to develop emergent reading and writing skills. It is advised that a greater emphasis be placed on process writing in the senior
room with a reduction in the reliance on workbooks. The school has adopted worthwhile strategies to foster a love of reading and the majority of pupils speak enthusiastically and knowledgeably about their favourite authors.

• Good quality work was observed in the teaching of Mathematics. Parental questionnaires show a high level of satisfaction with the teaching of this subject. Commendably, individual programmes have been devised for pupils with special needs in the mainstream classes. To further develop this good work, the school is advised to place a greater emphasis on oral maths, with frequent revision of topics previously covered. It is recommended that an agreed problem-solving strategy be devised on a whole-school basis.

• The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is very good. Very effective whole-school strategies are in place to enhance pupil self esteem with very good use made of a wide array of resources.

• The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is good overall. Teachers demonstrate a keen awareness of individual pupil needs and provide the necessary supports to enhance their learning.

6. Quality of Supports for Pupils

• This is an inclusive school and it welcomes pupils with special educational needs. As the class size is very small, teachers are able and willing to respond to individual needs.

• Very high quality teaching approaches and interventions for pupils with special educational needs were observed during the course of the evaluation. Individual education plans (IEPs) reflected priority learning needs identified in the relevant professional reports. Ongoing assessment of progress was evident in the meticulous records maintained.

• Parent-teacher meetings are held annually and the school operates an open door policy in addressing parental concerns. Written reports are issued annually. A parents’ association provides valuable practical and financial support to the school. It is advised that additional opportunities be provided for parents to collaborate in the development of the school plan.

Published, February 2011
Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management
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 school registers have been attended to and are now as required.
- School plans are currently under review with the aspiration to re-write two per term – specifically geared to our own situation.
- The school book list for the coming year will show substantial reduction of books.