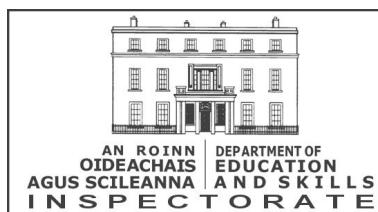


**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills**

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

**St. Kevin's National School
Tara Hill, Gorey, Co. Wexford
Uimhir rolla: 17235V**

Date of inspection: 03 April 2014



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in St Kevin's National School 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 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.

St Kevin's National School is a vertical, co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ferns. There are 226 pupils enrolled and the attendance of most pupils is very good.

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

- The learning achievements of pupils are of a high quality across the curriculum, with a significant number of pupils achieving very good learning outcomes.
- The pupils display a positive attitude to learning and engage with very high levels of interest and motivation.
- The overall quality of teaching is high, with particularly effective practice observed in a number of instances.
- The support for pupils' well-being is very good and their holistic development is promoted successfully through the range of learning experiences provided.
- The board of management and parents' association provide effective support for the ongoing development of the school.
- The principal exemplifies very high professional standards, promotes a culture of teamwork, and leads and manages the work of the school in a highly effective manner.
- The school is commended for its effective engagement in school self-evaluation and improved learning outcomes in English literacy priorities are strongly in evidence.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- In order to achieve improved learning outcomes in Irish, the teachers should provide regular opportunities for the pupils to build their confidence and to develop their fluency in using the language.
- In agreeing learning targets for pupils with special educational needs, the school should ensure that the range of school relevant recommendations contained in externally produced assessment reports are implemented.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The learning achievements of pupils are of a high quality across the curriculum, with a significant number of pupils achieving very good learning outcomes. Pupils with special educational needs also record good progress, including the development of their self-confidence and sense of achievement. Very good pupil progress is in evidence in English literacy and Mathematics. In the questionnaires, most pupils stated that they think they are doing well at reading and Maths. In order to achieve improved learning outcomes in Irish, the teachers should provide regular opportunities to build the pupils' confidence and to develop their fluency in using the

language. Particularly noteworthy learning achievements are in evidence in the Visual Arts, Music, and Social, Environmental and Scientific Education.

- The pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum, including regular opportunities to engage in learning activities in their local and wider environments. They display a positive attitude to learning and engage with very high levels of interest and motivation. They demonstrate a good ability to work independently and collaboratively with their peers. The pupils' written work confirms significant progress in learning at each class level.
- The school-wide introduction of pupil self-assessment opportunities is praised. The greater use of assessment-for-learning approaches and the provision of regular opportunities for the pupils to direct their own learning is advised.

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching is high, with particularly effective practice observed in a number of instances. The teachers successfully communicate high expectations regarding pupil participation and achievement. Lessons are consistently well structured and build successfully on prior learning. The purpose of lessons and new learning content are explained clearly. Knowledge, skills and concepts are consolidated effectively.
- The quality of teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs is good, with some examples of very good practice in evidence. Support sessions are well structured and are delivered in a supportive, encouraging environment. In agreeing learning targets, the school should ensure that the range of school relevant recommendations contained in externally produced assessment reports are implemented.
- In the questionnaires, almost all parents expressed the view that teaching is good in the school and that their child is doing well.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- Support for pupils' well-being is very good and the school is characterised by its open and welcoming atmosphere. The holistic development of pupils is promoted successfully through the range of learning experiences provided. These include exposure to the arts, the fostering of environmental awareness and care and the development of physical well-being. To facilitate and further develop the involvement of pupils in age-appropriate decision-making, consideration might now be given to establishing a pupils' council. In the questionnaires, almost all parents reported that their child feels safe and well looked after at school, and most pupils stated that they get on well with the other children.
- A strong culture of co-operation exists between home and school. Praiseworthy guidance is provided to parents to support their child's learning. The parents' association successfully supports the work of the school. In particular, it is commended for the range of interesting projects engaged in to broaden the pupils' learning experiences and to provide opportunities for parents to participate in school-based activities.
- 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 functions effectively and successfully employs the expertise of its members. It contributes significantly to the development of school policy and to ensuring that the school building and grounds are maintained to a very high standard. The board is commended for its regular written reports to parents outlining the work of the board and the school.
- The principal leads and manages the work of the school in a highly effective manner. She successfully cultivates an ethos of care and promotes a culture of teamwork and positive working relationships across the school community. She exemplifies very high professional standards, provides strong curriculum leadership and, in collaboration with school staff, has introduced a wide range of initiatives to improve pupil learning. She is ably assisted by members of the in-school management team who fulfil their assigned duties professionally and capably.

5. School Self-evaluation

- The school is commended for its effective engagement in school self-evaluation to advance pupil achievement in English literacy. Clear priorities for improvement have been identified following school-based assessment and meaningful consultation with pupils, parents and teachers. The literacy priorities are being addressed in a consistent and incremental manner across the school and as a consequence, improved learning outcomes for pupils are strongly in evidence. The school self-evaluation process for numeracy has commenced. It is recommended that the development of the pupils' problem-solving skills and the needs of more able learners in Mathematics form a significant element of this ongoing work.

Conclusion

The school's capacity to develop further is very good.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The BOM and staff of St Kevin's N.S. value this positive report which affirms the work of the school. The Board appreciates that the quality of teaching and learning, and also the support for pupils well-being and holistic development was highly commended.

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 recommendations cited in the report will be implemented as part of the school's continuous improvement process.