An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Cuilmore National School
Newport, Co. Mayo
Uimhir rolla: 17321O

Date of inspection: 21 September 2011
1. **Introduction**

Cuilmore NS is located in the parish of Burrishoole and situated four kilometres from Newport. It has undergone significant staffing changes in recent months with a new principal appointed in January 2011 and a new assistant teacher appointed in September 2011. The current enrolment in the school is twenty-one pupils.

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:

- The school is managed effectively through its hard-working board of management and its committed principal.
- The quality of school resources is very good. In particular, the range of literacy and numeracy resources is commendable. Resources are organised and stored in an exemplary manner.
- The quality of school planning and school self-evaluation is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning in literacy and Mathematics is very good. Individual pupils are making consistent progress in these areas.
- The quality of assessment is very good with very effective use of baseline data. High-quality individual pupil profiles are maintained for all pupils.
- The quality of the relationship between pupils and teachers is very good. The pupils are welcoming and confident.
- The quality of teaching approaches and interventions for pupils with additional needs is very good. A successful early-intervention programme is in place for infants. The quality of outcomes of pupils with such needs is very good with clear advances in their learning evident in the past academic year.
- The quality of partnership between the learning-support/resource teacher and mainstream teachers is commendable. All teachers share their plans of work to ensure there are clear links between work in the classroom and work in the support setting.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Parental involvement should continue to be encouraged with the introduction of literacy initiatives such as ‘shared reading’ and ‘literacy for fun’.
- The staff should adopt a whole-school approach to teacher planning which focuses on pupil outcomes and skill development.
- Pair work should be used consistently in all curricular areas.
3. **Quality of School Management**

- The quality of the work of the board of management is very good. There are clear roles and responsibilities assigned to different members of the board. The board has overseen significant refurbishment and development of the school building and yard in recent years. The school's finances are managed judiciously and accounts are audited annually.

- The quality of the work of the in-school management team is very good. The principal is committed and enthusiastic in her approach. She is very effective in her organisation of the school and has undertaken training for her new role since she was appointed in January 2011. She has established an atmosphere of collegiality among her staff. A deputy principal has not yet been appointed. In a questionnaire issued to the parent body as part of the whole-school evaluation, all parents agreed that the school is well run.

- The quality of the management of resources is very good. The school accommodation is bright, spacious and very well maintained. The development of the school yard has encouraged pupils to play appropriately during break times. The school is very well resourced and all resources are organised and stored in an exemplary manner. The level of resourcing to support literacy and numeracy is commendable.

- The quality of the management of home-school communication is good. Annual parent-teacher meetings and end-of-year written reports keep parents informed of the progress of their child. Pupils’ journals are also used for day-to-day communication. Parents are not currently aware of or involved in any curricular initiatives. The staff has identified parental involvement as a priority target this year. The staff also has plans to develop a school website.

- The quality of the management of pupils is good. Pupils are very friendly and welcoming. They present as confident learners. Due to the small numbers in both classrooms a relaxed atmosphere prevails. It is recommended that clearer classrooms rules be established and reinforced to ensure pupils’ self-management skills are adequately developed.

4. **Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation**

- The quality of the school planning and school self-evaluation process is very good. There is evidence of consistent, progressive, context-based planning in both organisational and curricular areas. The chairperson signs and dates each policy on ratification.

- The quality of teaching planning is good. Teachers prepare long-term and short-term schemes of work but approaches to planning differ. It is recommended that the staff adopt a whole-school approach to teacher planning with a focus on pupil outcomes and skill development.

- 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

- The quality of overall teaching, learning and pupil achievement is good. Pupils’ language skills and cognitive skills are developed consistently. Work is frequently differentiated for individual pupils to support their learning. It is recommended that additional use be made of pair work across the curriculum.

- Sa Ghaeilge, tá cáilíocht an teagaisc, na foghlama agus ghnóthachtáil na ndaltaí go measartha ar an iomláncé go bhfuil cleachtais mhaithe curtha i bhfeidhm ag múinteoirí áirithe. Baintear feidhm chuí as ábhair léirithe agus cluichí teanga chun na daltaí a spreagadh. Cé go leagtar béim ar ranpháirtíocht iomlán, moltar an cur chuige cumarsáideach a chur chu’n cinn. Moltar modh an aistriúcháin a sheachaint agus na ceachtanna Gaeilge a stiúradh i nGaeilge amháin. Moltar chomh maith béim sa bhreis a leagan ar rannta, dánta agus amhráin. Scriobhann na daltaí a leabhairín féin chun scileanna léitheoireachta agus scríbhneoireachta a fháirbaí. Moltar go hard an cleachtas seo.

The overall quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Gaeilge is fair although there are good practices in place by individual teachers. An appropriate use is made of visual aids and language games to motivate the pupils. While full participation is emphasised it is recommended that the communicative approach be promoted. It is recommended that a translation approach be avoided and that Irish lessons be conducted in Irish alone. It is further recommended that a greater emphasis be placed on rhymes, poems and songs. The pupils write their own little books to develop their reading and writing skills. This practice is praiseworthy.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is very good. Lessons are based on clear assessments of pupils’ abilities. Early-literacy skills are developed very effectively and supported by a structured early-intervention programme. Pupils’ oral language skills are consistently developed. Their written work is displayed attractively in their classrooms and along the corridors. Pupils write in a variety of genres and the quality of their handwriting is very good.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is very good. Both teachers use talk and discussion and concrete materials effectively. Pupils’ problem-solving skills are appropriately developed. The staff promotes the incidental learning of Mathematics by having number facts displayed around the school and by encouraging the pupils to play mathematical games during break times.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Drama is very good. Both classrooms display drama contracts. The pupils are enabled to engage realistically and dramatically in the lessons. Programmes of work in Drama are advantageously linked to other curricular areas. The elements of Drama are addressed effectively through the content.

- The quality of assessment is very good. The staff has inherited an exemplary system of assessment for literacy and numeracy, particularly in the infant classes. Pupil profiles are maintained which document baseline data and subsequent progress and include samples of work. There is clear recording of dates of achievement. A range of standardised and diagnostic tests is carried out. Considering such successful approaches to assessment in literacy and numeracy, the staff might now consider devising a range of assessments for each of the curricular areas.
6. **Quality of Support for Pupils**

- The school shares a learning-support/resource teacher (LS/RT) who is based in the school. A significant number of pupils with specific learning difficulties are enrolled in the school. The board provides open access for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) to the school and teachers prioritise the participation of all pupils in appropriate programmes of work.

- The quality of teaching approaches and interventions for pupils with SEN is very good. Pupils' learning needs are identified early and a successful early-intervention programme is in place for infants. Pupils avail of in-class support or are withdrawn in small groups or individually, depending on their needs. Teaching is focused and promotes language development.

- The quality of partnership between the LS/RT and mainstream teachers is commendable. All teachers share their plans of work to ensure clear links between work in the classroom and work in the support setting. Individual education plans (IEPs) and individual profile and learning programmes (IPLPs) are prepared for each pupil in receipt of support and are shared with parents and class teachers. Significant profiles have been developed on each pupil. The staff is reminded that class work should not be undertaken in the support setting.

- The quality of outcomes and progression of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The vast majority of pupils have made clear advances in their learning in the past academic year.

*Published January 2012*
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 and staff of Cuilmore National School welcome and accept the Inspector’s very positive evaluation report on our school. We commend the visiting Inspector for her courtesy, support and professionalism. The objective evaluation afforded by this process was very affirming of the high standards and good practices that have always been part of Cuilmore National School. We intend to use the report’s findings as part of our system of school self-evaluation and continuous improvement.

Area 2  Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

All staff members are in the process of adopting a whole-school approach to planning.

Pair work has been promoted more in all classes and curricular areas.

“Maths for Fun” and “Literacy for Fun” initiatives will be further developed during 2012.