Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Scoil Náisiúnta Móin Ruadh Mixed
Knocktopher, County Kilkenny
Uimhir rolla: 17590S

Date of inspection: 06 April 2011
1. Introduction

SN Móin Ruadh Mixed is a rural, co-educational, vertical primary school with a current enrolment of 44 pupils. It is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ossory. Pupils’ attendance is very good. The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix to 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 characterised by a strong sense of community, an ethos of caring and belonging, and a commitment to the welfare of pupils.
- The principal and board of management provide dedicated and effective leadership.
- The overall standard of teaching and learning in the curriculum areas evaluated is high.
- Parents and pupils are very satisfied with the quality of school provision, as evidenced in the questionnaire responses.

The following main recommendations are made:

- In providing for pupils with special educational needs, it is recommended that a more comprehensive range of diagnostic tools be used to contribute to the setting of specific targets for individual pupils and to facilitate the regular review of pupil progress.

3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management operates effectively and is committed to supporting the work of the school. Clearly defined responsibilities are allocated to individual board members and are undertaken diligently. The board has worked conscientiously at ensuring that there are positive relations between all the education partners.
- The quality of school leadership is very good. The principal is commended highly for her dedication and her capacity to lead and manage the school. She is committed to the welfare of the pupils and to the ongoing development of the school. She is ably assisted by the special-duties teacher, who supports her in the day-to-day running of the school and who also undertakes specific pastoral and curriculum duties.
- The school building and grounds are maintained to a very high standard. Classrooms are presented attractively and extensive teaching and learning resources, including ICT, are used effectively. The responses to the parent questionnaires indicate that all parents are of the view that the facilities in the school are good.
- Although there is no parents’ association in place, parents are involved in the life of the school and are kept informed of the progress of their children. In the parent questionnaires, all parents confirmed that the school welcomes them. To further build on
the good relations that exist between the school and parents, it is recommended that the school actively promotes the establishment of a parents’ association.

- The pupils are valued members of the school community and are treated with fairness and respect. They are well mannered and co-operative.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The quality of school planning and school self-evaluation is very good. Curriculum plans for all areas of the curriculum and a range of organisational policies have been devised collaboratively by the principal and teaching staff, in consultation with the board of management.

- The teachers prepare long-term and short-term plans and record progress in each of the curriculum areas. This planning demonstrates that a wide and varied curriculum is being presented, with appropriate attention afforded to linkage and integration between subjects and to a variety of teaching methodologies and approaches.

- 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 standard of teaching and learning in the school is high. The school has forward-thinking teachers who readily embrace change. They manage the multi-class situation very effectively and through the successful implementation of a range of assessment strategies, differentiate the work to cater for the needs of all pupils. Classroom atmospheres are positive and interactions between teachers and pupils are encouraging and supportive. The parent questionnaire responses indicate that all parents are happy with the quality of teaching in the school. All the pupil questionnaires indicate that the pupils consider their lessons interesting.

- Tá muineadh na Gaeilge sa scoil ar chaighdeán an-mhaith. Éiríonn leis na hoidí dearcadh dearfach le haghaidh na Gaeilge a chothú. Baintear úsáid éifeachtaí as raon straitéise mar obair bheirte, cluíchí agus drámaíocht chun scileanna éisteachta, labhartha agus tuisceana na ndaltaí a chothú. Éiríonn leis na daltaí cumarsáid an-éifeachtaí a dhéanamh le linn na ngníomhaíochtaí labhartha. Céadúil leis an léitheoireacht go cúramach agus léann na daltaí le brí agus le cruinneas. Déantar cúram córí den obair scríofa agus tá dul chun cinn creidteach a feiceáil.

The quality of teaching of Irish in the school is very good. The teachers succeed in cultivating a positive attitude to the Irish language. Effective use is made of a range of strategies such as pair-work, games and drama in cultivating the pupils’ listening, speaking and comprehension skills. The pupils succeed in engaging in highly effective communication during oral activities. Reading is cultivated carefully and the pupils read with understanding and accuracy. Suitable attention is given to written work and creditable progress is in evidence.
• The quality of teaching and learning in English is very good. Oral language is an integral component of all lessons and is developed suitably across all curricular areas. The teachers are successful in cultivating the pupils’ interest in reading and they are actively encouraged to read for pleasure as they progress through the school. Due emphasis is placed on the development of the pupils’ writing skills. They experience writing in a variety of genres and for a variety of purposes and audiences at each class level. Examples of their completed work are displayed attractively.

• In Mathematics, high-quality teaching is in evidence. Concepts are explained clearly, resources are employed appropriately and the pupils’ oral mathematical abilities are promoted purposefully. The pupils demonstrate suitable understanding of work previously undertaken and this is also reflected in their positive evaluation of their mathematical abilities in the pupil questionnaires.

• The quality of teaching and learning in Social, Personal and Health Education is very good with a varied and interesting curriculum being presented to the pupils. There is a very inclusive atmosphere in the classrooms and it is evident that the delivery of SPHE permeates all aspects of school life.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

• The collaborative approach to supporting pupils with special educational needs is praised. Effective and positive communication structures exist between school staff and parents.

• Teacher-pupil interactions are supportive and encouraging and serve to build the pupils’ self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities. A wide range of resources is available and they are well organised and utilised efficiently.

• While provision is mainly on a withdrawal basis, the commencement of in-class support is praised. It is now advised to further extend this practice with particular emphasis on pupils in the infant classes.

• It is recommended that a more comprehensive range of diagnostic tools be used to contribute to the setting of specific targets for individual pupils and to facilitate the regular review of pupil progress.

Published November 2011
Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The B.O.M. of S.N. Móin Ruadh wish to thank the inspector for the report.