

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

**Whole School Evaluation**  
**REPORT**

**Kilbrien NS,**  
**Ballinamult, County Waterford**  
**Uimhir rolla: 17643N**

**Date of inspection: 5 March 2012**



## 1. Introduction

Kilbrien NS is a vertical, co-educational, rural primary school which operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Waterford and Lismore. There are currently 16 pupils enrolled and the attendance rate of most pupils is very good. 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.

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

The following are the **main strengths** of the work of the school:

- The board of management is commended for its commitment to the school.
- The parents, along with the parents' association, provide valuable support to the school.
- The principal carries out her duties with commitment and dedication.
- A good sense of teamwork characterises the staff, and the teachers are committed to the holistic development of the pupils.
- The pupils are managed effectively and they are cooperative, confident and positive in their learning.
- The quality of overall teaching, learning and pupil achievement is commendable.
- Praiseworthy support is provided for pupils with special educational needs.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Curricular plans should be reviewed to ensure that there is a greater focus on the intended learning outcomes for pupils. Specific targets for improvement should be developed to address school priorities in literacy and numeracy.
- Sa Ghaeilge, moltar a thuilleadh deiseanna cainte a chruthú do na daltaí, scileanna léitheoireachta a mhúineadh go córasach agus an scríbhneoireacht phearsanta a fhorbairt a thuilleadh. *In Irish, it is advised that extra speaking opportunities are created for the pupils, reading skills are taught systematically and personal writing is developed further.*
- The current practice regarding the teaching of Drama should be reviewed to ensure that the aims and objectives of the drama curriculum are fully addressed in an integrated manner and that pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

## 3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management is commended for its commitment to the school and for the provision and maintenance of good quality accommodation. It is recommended that the board consider issuing an annual report on the operation of the school to ensure that parents are kept informed of its good work.

- The quality of in-school management is commendable and a strong sense of cooperation permeates the work. The principal fulfils her duties with dedication and is committed to ensuring that the pupils receive a broad and rich educational experience. She is ably supported by the special-duties teacher who carries out his role successfully.
- The school is well presented and a positive learning environment is provided for the pupils. A wide range of resources is available to the teachers and they are used effectively to support teaching and learning. Commendable use is made of the available information and communication technology to enhance learning. There is a good sense of team amongst all staff members and they are committed to the holistic development of the pupils.
- The school is characterised by its welcoming atmosphere and there is regular communication with parents. The parents, along with the parents' association, provide valuable practical and financial support to the school. They are encouraged to participate in many school events and activities. The results of the parent questionnaires demonstrate that almost all parents feel welcomed in the school and all are happy with the school.
- The pupils are managed effectively and are cooperative and courteous. They are confident and positive in their learning. The questionnaires administered to pupils demonstrate that most pupils are happy in their school and all feel that it is a good school.

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

- The quality of school planning is satisfactory. A range of curricular plans and organisational policies has been devised collaboratively by the staff and some of these policies provide useful direction and guidance. Curricular plans should now be reviewed to ensure that there is a greater focus on the intended learning outcomes for pupils in all subject areas, in a manner that reflects the context of the school more closely.
- The school has begun to look at school self-evaluation and has made initial steps in the areas of literacy and numeracy. To augment this process, specific targets for improvement should be developed and suitable action plans generated to address these priorities.
- Overall, the quality of individual teacher planning is good.
- 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*.

#### **5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement**

- Overall, the quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is commendable. Lessons are resourced appropriately and presented well. Pupils' efforts are encouraged and affirmed and lessons are aptly structured to ensure the engagement of the various class levels. All parents reported that teaching in the school is good and that their child is doing well in school.

- A range of strategies is used to assess pupil progress, including teacher-designed tests and the maintenance of work samples. However, it is recommended that existing assessment practices be further developed to include agreed systematic monitoring of pupil attainment across all curriculum areas.
- Ar an iomlán, tá teagasc agus foghlaim na Gaeilge sásúil. Is léir go bhfuil iarracht dáiríre á dhéanamh dearcadh dearfach a chothú i leith na Gaeilge. Úsáideann na hoidí modhanna múinte gníomhacha don fhorhór ina n-áirítear cluichí, rólghlacadh agus amhráin. I ranganna áirithe, moltar a thuilleadh deiseanna cainte a chruthú do na daltaí agus an foclóir agus na frásaí nua a cheangailt le réamhfhoghlaim na ndaltaí. Léann cuid de na daltaí téacsanna éagsúla le muinín ach ba chóir a thuilleadh béime a leagadh ar scileanna léitheoireachta a mhúineadh go córasach. Cé go bhfuil caighdeán na scríbhneoireachta sásúil, moltar an scríbhneoireacht phearsanta a fhorbairt agus a chothú a thuilleadh.
- *In general, teaching and learning in Irish is satisfactory. It is evident that an honest effort is being made to create a positive attitude to Irish. The teachers generally use active teaching methodologies which include the use of games, role play and songs. In some classes, it is advised that extra speaking opportunities are created for the pupils and the new vocabulary and phrases should be linked with the pupils' previous learning. Some of the pupils read various texts with confidence but extra emphasis should be placed on the systematic teaching of reading skills. While the standard of writing is satisfactory, personal writing should be further developed and encouraged.*
- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in English is commendable. Due attention is given to oral language and the pupils are confident in talking about their work and in expressing their opinions. They recite poetry articulately and with great expression. All pupils reported that they think they are doing well at reading. They are given regular opportunities to engage with a wide variety of reading materials, with appropriate emphasis on the development of fluency for emergent readers. The current focus on the development of comprehension skills is commended. The pupils are enabled to write in a variety of genres. To enhance the quality of their work, it is recommended that the writing process be further developed along with the systematic teaching of the various writing genres. The current approach to handwriting should be reviewed.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is good. Well structured lessons are undertaken with suitable emphasis on the use of concrete materials and the making of links with the pupils' environment in the exploration of mathematical concepts. As a means of further developing good practice, the teachers are advised to engage in more mental mathematics activities and to continue to prioritise the area of problem solving.
- The school employs an external tutor to deliver weekly drama lessons to the pupils and consequently, the teachers have transferred the responsibility for the teaching of Drama to this tutor. This practice should be reviewed by the school. It should be ensured that pupils have access to a broad and balanced drama curriculum and that the aims and objectives of the drama curriculum are fully addressed in an integrated manner. During the lessons observed, the pupils demonstrated a commendable ability to cooperate and communicate in making drama, with some laudable capacity to engage in improvisation.

## 6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- Praiseworthy support is provided for pupils with special educational needs. Appropriate programmes are planned carefully to take account of the pupils' individual learning needs

and to ensure that they are participating in their learning. There is close consultation between the support teachers and class teachers. Effective teaching approaches are utilised in the support settings and the pupils are progressing well. To develop provision further, opportunities for additional and purposeful in-class support should be exploited. While some early intervention and prevention programmes are being implemented, the current models should be developed.

*Published September 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 of Kilbrien N.S. wishes to thank the inspector for the very thorough, courteous and professional manner in which she carried out the WSE and for making it a very pleasant and positive experience for pupils, staff and management. We welcome and are encouraged by the findings and have already implemented some of the recommendations, the remaining recommendations will be addressed over the coming years in conjunction with the school evaluation process.

