Cogaula National School
Westport, Co. Mayo
Uimhir rolla: I7682A

Date of inspection: 9 June 2011
1. Introduction

Cogaula NS is a rural co-educational school in the parish of Islandeady situated 6 km east of Westport. There are 36 pupils attending this school which is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam. The building, which has recently been extended and refurbished, is very attractively presented and very well maintained.

The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

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 provides generous voluntary support to the school and is commended for the provision of high quality accommodation and facilities.
- The principal provides strong leadership and is clear in his vision for ongoing school development and improvement.
- The teachers work diligently and collaborate effectively for the benefit of the pupils.
- The pupils are hardworking and enthusiastic learners.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the school is very good.
- Very good standards are achieved in English and Mathematics.
- Very effective systems for self-evaluation and review have been established in the school.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- The board should consider issuing an annual report on the operation of the school.
- In the teaching of Irish, sustained opportunities for the pupils to converse in pairs and groups should be a central feature of lessons.
- More frequent use of diagnostic testing is recommended to enhance the service being provided for pupils with special educational needs.
3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management is commended for its commitment to the school and for the provision and maintenance of high quality accommodation and facilities. 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 principal is highly commended for his dedication to the school. He provides strong leadership to the whole school community and is clear in his vision for ongoing school improvement and development. He is ably and willingly supported by the deputy principal.

- The quality of the management of resources is very good. Very effective use is made of the available communication technology to enhance teaching and learning.

- The management of pupils is very good. Pupils are hardworking and enthusiastic about their learning and are courteous and polite in their interactions with each other and with adults. Their responses in the pupil questionnaires administered as part of the evaluation indicate a very high level of pupil satisfaction.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The quality of the school planning and school self-evaluation process is very good. The school engages in a systematic review of the evidence gathered to evaluate the effectiveness of current practice and to plan for change where necessary. This good practice is highly commended.

- The implementation and impact of school planning and self-evaluation is good. Some very high quality classroom plans were observed. To further enhance the good practice observed the school is advised to use the monthly progress records as a tool to ensure there is continuity and progression in the delivery of the curriculum.

- 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 very good. The teaching styles employed communicate high expectations to the pupils with regard to positive behaviour and active participation. Pupil learning across the curriculum is of a very good standard, with the pupils demonstrating a very good ability to discuss and explain what they have learnt.

- Tá cáilíocht mhaith bainte amach i nGaeilge. Tá Gaeilge den scoth ag cuid den thoireann agus múineann gach oide ceachtanna le fuinneamh. Léirionn na daltaí caighdeán maith i
A good standard is achieved in Irish. Some staff members speak Irish at an exceptionally high standard and all teachers teach lessons enthusiastically. The pupils demonstrate a good standard in understanding and reading Irish. It is advised that sustained opportunities for the pupils to converse in pairs and groups should be a central feature of lessons.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is very good. Pupils demonstrate a high standard of competence in oral communication and this is reflected in very good quality work in written English, which is very attractively presented. Very good standards have been achieved in the standardised tests of reading and pupils speak knowledgably and enthusiastically about their favourite authors.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is very good. Teaching in Mathematics is characterised by clear explanations, good questioning and appropriate activities in line with curriculum objectives. An agreed whole-school approach to problem solving should be devised and implemented.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Social and Personal Health Education is good. Cross-curricular approaches are used effectively and they provide the pupils with an appropriate understanding and awareness of social and safety issues. A greater variety of teaching methodologies could be used in the delivery of this aspect of the curriculum.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- This is an inclusive school. It welcomes pupils with special educational needs and ensures their participation in learning is appropriate to their needs.

- The quality of teaching approaches and interventions for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans are of a good standard and are shared with parents. It is commendable that a start has been made in developing approaches other than withdrawal. It is advised that the use of in-class support now be developed.

- The quality of outcomes and progression of pupils with special educational needs is good. More frequent use of diagnostic testing is recommended to enhance the good work currently taking place.

- The quality of home-school partnership is very good. Cogaula NS is an integral part of the local community and the school is very well supported by parents. Evidence from the questionnaires administered as part of the evaluation indicates that the school is very well regarded by parents.

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