

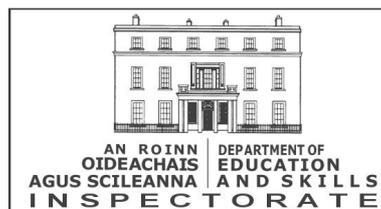
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills**

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

REPORT

**Scoil Naomh Muire,
Donore, Drogheda, Co Louth
Uimhir rolla: 17856H**

Date of inspection: 19 September 2014



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE-MLL) was undertaken in Scoil Naomh Muire in September 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.

Scoil Naomh Muire, situated in Donore, Co Meath, is a Catholic primary school operating under the patronage of the Bishop of Meath. The attendance of the 217 pupils enrolled is very good. The school employs eight mainstream teachers and three teachers who work with pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

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

- Overall pupils' learning attainments are high and their application to learning is commendable.
- The principal, together with the in-school management team, demonstrate very effective leadership and management skills.
- Staff works diligently and competently to provide positive learning experiences for pupils.
- The board of management and the parents' association actively support the development of the school.
- School facilities and learning environments are maintained to a high standard.
- Ancillary staff contributes to the effective functioning of the school.
- Creditable progress has been made in the development of school self-evaluation practices.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Moltar clár céimniúil a chur i bhfeidhm chun scileanna na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge a fhorbairt. *An incremental programme should be implemented to develop pupils' language skills in Irish.*
- Additional use of differentiated strategies and reading resources is recommended to ensure that pupil progress is commensurate with their abilities
- In-class support models should be reviewed to ensure all interventions are purposefully planned and focused on the needs of identified pupils.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning outcomes of pupils are high. An appropriate focus is placed on the development of knowledge, understanding and skills through the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning and engage enthusiastically in all activities.
- Pupils' learning outcomes in Mathematics are high as a result of a whole-school focused intervention. Greater emphasis on differentiated, collaborative, problem-solving activities would further benefit pupil progress.

- Pupils' listening skills are well-developed and they engage eagerly in class discourse. There remains scope to enhance their expressive oral skills. Pupils demonstrate positive dispositions toward reading and their phonological awareness is suitably developed. In some instances, however, pupils' reading fluency and comprehension skills need to be further improved. The provision of suitable instructional reading materials more closely aligned to pupils' abilities is recommended. Presentation of pupils' written work is of a good standard overall. More extensive engagement with the writing process across a range of genres would further enhance the content and quality of pupils' writing.
- Is inmholta mar atá straitéisí á gcur i bhfeidhm chun úsáid neamhfhoirmiúil na Gaeilge a chur chun cinn sa scoil. Tá sé ar chumas roinnt daltaí abairtí simplí a chumadh agus tuairisciú ar ábhar cainte áirithe. Tá gá lena gcumas teanga a leathnú, áfach. Cé go léann siad téacsanna le cruinneas áirithe ní mór a scileanna fóineolaíochta agus tuisceana a fhorbairt a thuilleadh. Tá cuid mhaith den scríbhneoireacht bunaithe ar leabhair shaothair. Ní foláir tuilleadh deiseanna a thabhairt dóibh a gcumas saorscríbhneoireachta a chleachtadh. Moltar scrúduithe caighdeánaithe a úsáid chun dul chun cinn na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge a mheas.
- *It is commendable that strategies are being implemented to promote the incidental use of Irish. Some pupils are capable of constructing simple sentences and reporting on certain subject matter in Irish. It is necessary to expand their language capacity, however. While pupils read some texts with a certain accuracy there is need to further develop their phonological and comprehension skills. Much of pupils' writing is based on workbooks. Further opportunities should be afforded pupils to practise creative writing. Standardised assessment should be conducted to monitor pupil progress in Irish.*
- Pupils' abilities and interests are nurtured successfully across all subject areas. High standards of pupil achievement are in evidence particularly in Science and in Music.
- Pupils with SEN engage confidently in learning and are making progress commensurate with their ability.

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is high with very effective practice in evidence in a number of classes. An affirming, child-centred and visually stimulating learning environment is created for pupils. Lessons are well-structured with judicious use of questioning and explicit explanations of various concepts. More purposeful collaborative group work is recommended to optimise pupil engagement. Additional use of differentiated strategies is recommended to ensure that pupil progress is commensurate with their abilities.
- Moltar scileanna labhartha, léitheoireachta agus scríbhneoireachta na ndaltaí a fhorbairt a thuilleadh i nGaeilge agus clár teanga níos dúshláine a mhúineadh go céimniúil ar bhonn uile-scoile. *Pupils' oral, reading and writing skills in Irish should be further developed and a more challenging language programme systematically implemented on a whole-school basis.*
- The provision for pupils with SEN is good. While the quality of planning is good, overall there is need to ensure that learning targets are more closely linked to pupils' identified learning needs. There is need, also, to clearly document the continuum of support provided for these pupils. Effective, structured teaching was observed in withdrawal settings. As the in-class support model is embedded, further development of purposeful planned collaborative team teaching is advised.
- A range of assessment approaches is used by teachers, particularly in literacy and numeracy. A commendable practice of collating and maintaining the annual formal assessment data for each pupil is in place. Assessment outcomes could be used

more directly to inform more targeted differentiated teaching. There is potential for the further development of pupil self and peer evaluation practices within differentiated learning contexts.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- The quality of pupil management is very good. The school is characterised by its warm, welcoming atmosphere and has successfully established a range of systems to promote good behaviour and to nurture an affirming, inclusive culture. It has a strong sense of community and provides very good quality care and support for its pupils. Pupils are well behaved and engage very respectfully with their teachers and with one another. The establishment of a pupils' council is a praiseworthy initiative. Pupil questionnaire responses indicate very positive findings with regard to pupils' experiences of school life and their attitudes to learning.
- 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 quality of school management is very good. The board of management functions effectively and performs its duties in a purposeful manner. It has overseen considerable improvements to the school building and provides a very broad range of resources for teaching and learning. It successfully engages in policy development and review. Strong collaboration exists between the board, the parents' association and the principal and staff.
- The principal demonstrates very effective leadership and management skills. She has successfully managed considerable change during the school's development while maintaining a strong focus on high standards in teaching and learning. The keen monitoring of pupils' progress and the implementation of valuable improvement initiatives are praiseworthy.
- A very competent and diligent in-school management team undertakes a balanced remit of duties and contributes to the strong culture of collegiality and ongoing improvement in the school. The members' curricular leadership is impacting positively on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The parent body and the parents' association are very supportive of the school and questionnaire responses indicate high levels of satisfaction with the school, the quality of education and the care provided for their children.

5. School Self-evaluation

- The school has successfully engaged in the self-evaluation process (SSE) to determine priorities for improvement in the teaching and learning of Mathematics. Suitable strategies have been implemented, as identified in the school improvement plan, which have impacted positively on pupils' learning. It is now timely to issue a report to parents.
- To facilitate and monitor the implementation of the school's identified priorities a review of existing approaches to the maintenance of the monthly progress records should be considered.

Conclusion

Given the commitment of staff to school improvement and their initial success with the SSE process 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 Board of Management is very pleased that the positive aspects of the school received due recognition. The Board welcomes the affirmation of everyone involved in the school community who strive to make the educational experience a fruitful, positive and nurturing one for all pupils.

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 Board of Management accepts in their entirety the recommendations as outlined and will support the Principal and Staff wholeheartedly in the implementation of same.