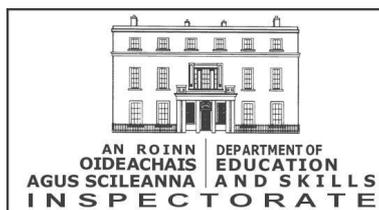


**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills**

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

**Mullaghroe National School  
Gurteen, County Sligo  
Uimhir rolla: 17967Q**

**Date of inspection: 19 March 2015**



## Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

### Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Mullaghroe National School in March 2015. 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 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.

Mullaghroe National School is a small, rural, co-educational school with a current enrolment of 26 pupils. The patron of the school is the Catholic bishop of Achonry. An incidental inspection was undertaken in this school in September 2013.

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

- Classrooms are organised as attractive, stimulating learning environments.
- A strong culture of reading is cultivated in the school.
- Pupils' spoken Irish is of a high quality.
- Very good quality interventions are in place for pupils who are withdrawn for learning support.
- The school has engaged effectively in the school self-evaluation process.
- The board of management meets regularly and is kept informed of the workings of the school.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Teachers' planning should be compliant with *Rules for National Schools*. Short-term plans should also clearly document differentiation of content for different classes and for individual pupils with learning needs.
- There is a need for a systematic approach to assessment and to the tracking of individual pupils' progress.
- In Mathematics, teachers should enable pupils to use mathematical language accurately and should develop a whole-school approach to problem-solving.
- In-class support provided by the learning-support teacher should be centred on a collaboratively prepared plan with class teachers and which documents specific learning outcomes.
- Moltar léitheoireacht agus scríbhneoireacht na Gaeilge a fhorbairt. *It is recommended that reading and writing in Irish be developed.*
- It is timely for the principal to provide strong curriculum leadership to maintain the recent positive developments in literacy and numeracy; this should encompass the formulation of informative, user-friendly and context-based curriculum plans.

### Findings

#### 1. The learning achievements of pupils

- Overall learning achievements of pupils across the curriculum are good. During the evaluation most pupils were engaged in their work, with high levels of participation. However, systematic pupil progress was difficult to evaluate. Therefore, a more efficient system of tracking individual pupils' progress should be implemented.
- The overall learning outcomes of pupils in literacy are good. Pupils' oral language skills are well developed. Pupils in the junior room have a very broad repertoire of poems which they recite with outstanding diction and expression. Most pupils read

fluently. A highly commendable reading culture has been cultivated. The quality of handwriting and presentation of work requires attention, for which a whole-school approach should be devised and implemented.

- Tá gnothachtáil na ndaltaí go maith sa Ghaeilge. Tá fíor-fhorbairt le sonrú ón mheasúnú teagmhasach. Tá foclóir leathan ag formhór na ndaltaí agus tá na daltaí sinsireacha in ann iad féin a chur in iúl go han-éifeachtach. Moltar modh an aistriúcháin a sheachaint, áfach. Moltar chomh maith, cruinneas a chur chun cinn sa léitheoireacht, agus deiseanna rialta a thabhairt do na daltaí scríbhneoireacht chruthaíoch a dhéanamh.

*Pupil achievement in Irish is good. A significant development has been noted since the incidental inspection. Most pupils have a broad vocabulary and senior pupils can express themselves very effectively. However, translation approaches should be avoided. It is also recommended that accuracy in reading be promoted, and regular opportunities be given to pupils to engage with creative writing.*

- Achievements in Mathematics are good. Pupils demonstrated very good knowledge of number facts. There is scope to develop pupils' mathematical language and strategies for problem-solving.

## **2. Quality of teaching**

- While the quality of teaching varies between classrooms, the overall quality of teaching in the school is good. Teachers made very effective use of collaborative approaches during the evaluation, although the majority of pupils indicated, through a questionnaire distributed during the evaluation that they did not work in groups most days. Where very good quality teaching was observed, it encompassed clear lesson structure, use of visual aids, and effective pacing. There is a need for teacher planning to be reviewed to ensure compliance with Rule 126 of *Rules for National Schools*. Greater differentiation of learning outcomes for different classes and for individual pupils is required.
- The quality of teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs is good, with very good quality interventions for pupils who are withdrawn for support. In-class support should be planned between class teachers and support teacher to ensure this valuable resource is maximised.

## **3. Support for pupils' well-being**

- Pupils are managed in exemplary fashion in one classroom. There is a need for greater consistency in the implementation of classroom rules in the other classroom.
- All pupils are included in classroom work although greater differentiation would benefit some pupils.
- Appropriate evidence was provided to show the school's compliance with child protection requirements.

## **4. Leadership and Management**

- The quality of the work of the board of management is very good. The board meets regularly and is clearly informed of the day-to-day workings of the school. Detailed minutes are maintained and accounts have recently been audited. Discussion and ratification of policies should be included at each meeting.
- The in-school management team has developed its role since the incidental inspection in September 2013. A wider range of school policies has been devised since that time. In a questionnaire issued to parents as part of the evaluation, all agreed that the school is well run and that their child is doing well. It is now timely for the principal to provide curriculum leadership to maintain the recent positive developments in literacy and numeracy. This should encompass the formulation of informative, user-friendly and context-based curriculum plans

## **5. School Self-evaluation**

- The school has engaged effectively in the school self-evaluation process and has set targets in literacy and numeracy which impact advantageously on teaching methodologies. A more systematic process of tracking individual pupils' progress is needed to provide an appropriate evidence base.

**Conclusion**

The school's capacity to develop further is good if it continues to use the school self-evaluation process to manage school improvement. Strong leadership will be essential to ensure that the positive aspects of the school described in this report are maintained, especially with the expected changes in staffing in the next school year.

# **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 welcomes this positive report, which acknowledges the strengths of the school. We intend to add to those strengths in the coming years for the benefit of the whole school community.

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

Since the inspection report, the staff has started to develop reading and writing in Irish.

We have decided to place problem-solving in Mathematics at the core of our school self – evaluation plan in mathematics for the academic year 2015/16, with a review to be carried out on our progress at the end of the forthcoming academic year.

Since the inspection we have already put in place an alternative system of assessment, whereby all children are assessed through standardised tests on an annual basis rather than on a bi-annual basis and these scores will be compared with the NRIT assessment which we will carry out on all children at three stages in their primary school education.

We intend to implement the recommendations on planning with immediate effect.