

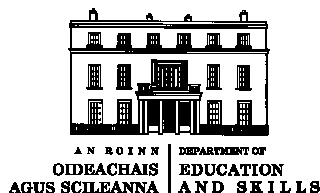
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation  
REPORT**

**Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Parthalan  
Kinsalebeg, Co Waterford  
Uimhir rolla: 18318H**

**Date of inspection: 18 September 2013**



## 1. Introduction

Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Parthalan is a co-educational, rural primary school in west County Waterford. It is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Waterford and Lismore. There are currently 56 pupils enrolled and attendance rates are 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, the parents and the parents' association are strongly committed to supporting the work of the school.
- The principal is commended for the successful promotion of a culture of teamwork and partnership amongst all members of the school community.
- A positive school climate permeates the work of the school and the staff is dedicated to supporting the needs of the pupils.
- The pupils are managed effectively and are confident and positive in their learning.
- The overall quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is good, with some highly commendable practice observed.
- Praiseworthy support is provided for pupils with special educational needs.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Moltar anois an Ghaeilge labhartha a chur chun cinn go struchtúrtha ar bhonn scoile uile agus deiseanna breise a thabhairt do na daltaí an Ghaeilge a labhairt le linn an scoil lae. *It is now advised that spoken Irish is promoted in a structured way throughout the school and that opportunities to speak in Irish are provided to pupils throughout the school day.*
- A more structured implementation of the staged approach to assessment, identification and programme planning for pupils with special educational needs, as outlined in DES Circular 02/05, is recommended, placing a greater emphasis on support for pupils within the mainstream classroom setting.

## 3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management is very supportive of the work of the school. Regular meetings are convened and minutes are maintained. It discharges its duties effectively and the school building and environs are maintained to a high standard.

- The school is led capably by the principal who has created a very positive and collaborative school environment. She provides effective leadership and carries out her duties in a capable and conscientious manner. She is ably supported by the in-school management team whose members demonstrate a strong spirit of commitment. Their duties are carried out competently.
- Classrooms are well equipped with material resources to support curriculum implementation and these are used to good effect. Emphasis is placed on teachers' professional development and the teachers have undertaken courses resulting in increased capacity to enhance pupils' learning in various curricular areas. The staff of the school is committed and dedicated to supporting the needs of the pupils. The ancillary staff also makes a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school.
- The parents, along with the active parents' association, give very good support to the school through involvement in a wide range of fundraising and school events. The parent questionnaires demonstrate that almost all parents are happy with the school, feel welcomed and believe that their children are doing well at school.
- The management of pupils and their participation in learning is very good. The pupils interact with their teachers and peers in a respectful and courteous manner. Responses to the pupil questionnaires indicate that all pupils get on well with the other children in their class and the majority feel safe in school.

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

- The quality of whole-school planning is good. Administrative policies effectively guide organisational matters in the school and the school is commended for the drafting of a wide range of curriculum plans. Where specific curriculum plans have been updated, the review process engaged in by the teachers has provided greater guidance to them on implementing individual subject areas. It is advised that this practice of review be continued and developed for other subject areas.
- The school has begun to engage constructively in school self-evaluation with an initial focus on numeracy. Targets for improvement have been developed and actions implemented to address priority areas.
- The quality of individual teacher planning is generally good. Where this planning is particularly effective, it focuses primarily on learning objectives and intended learning outcomes. Progress records are maintained dutifully.
- 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**

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is good, with some highly commendable practice observed. Well-structured lessons, a successful blend of methodologies, active-learning approaches and high levels of pupil engagement are features of effective practice observed. There is laudable emphasis on environment-based learning throughout the school. The *Aistear* programme in the infant and junior classroom is very successful in promoting learning through structured play activities.

- The pupils' learning is monitored carefully using an appropriate variety of assessment strategies. Analysis of standardised test results is used beneficially to inform development needs in the areas of literacy and numeracy. There is some praiseworthy use of formative assessment techniques which could be extended further throughout the school.
- Tá cáilíocht an teagaisc agus na foghlama sa Ghaeilge sásúil. Déanann na hoidí an-iarracht dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge a chothú. Baineann siad úsáid as straitéisí fiúntacha agus as acmhainní cuí chun suim na ndaltaí a mhúscailt agus chun a bhfoclóir a leathnú. Moltar anois an Ghaeilge labhartha a chur chun cinn go struchtúrtha ar bhonn scoile uile agus deiseanna breise a thabhairt do na daltaí an Ghaeilge a labhairt le linn an scoillae. Léann formhór na ndaltaí le cruinneas agus le líofacht. Cleachtar scríbhneoireacht fheidhmiúil don chuid is mó agus tugtar roinnt deiseanna oiriúnacha dóibh scríbhneoireacht phearsanta a chumadh.

*The quality of teaching and learning of Irish is satisfactory. The teachers make very good efforts to develop a positive attitude to Irish. They use effective strategies and appropriate materials to enhance pupils' interest and to extend their vocabulary. It is now advised that spoken Irish is promoted in a structured way throughout the school and that opportunities to speak in Irish are provided to pupils throughout the school day. The majority of pupils read with accuracy and fluency. In the main, the pupils practise functional writing, with some appropriate opportunities for engagement in personal writing activities.*

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is good. The pupils are confident in communicating orally. To further enhance pupils' learning, discrete oral language lessons should focus more explicitly on the development of specific language skills. Attainment levels in reading for the majority of pupils are very good and a variety of successful structured approaches to the development of reading skills are in evidence. Models of existing good practice should be extended, including further use of novels and differentiated reading activities. Regular writing opportunities are provided for pupils and they produce interesting work in variety of genres. A whole-school approach to process writing would further enhance pupils' competencies.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Mathematics is very good. Most pupils demonstrate an appropriate knowledge and understanding of number concepts. Lessons are well structured and the pupils are given regular opportunities to use appropriate manipulatives in the exploration of new concepts. Suitable emphasis is placed on mental arithmetic and on the development of number facts. The school is commended on the approaches being used to develop problem-solving skills throughout the school and this should enhance provision in this area further. The questionnaires administered to pupils demonstrate that most pupils feel they are doing well in Mathematics.
- Teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Geography is commendable. The pupils engage in lessons with enthusiasm and curiosity. There is an appropriate focus on skills development and the local environment is used beneficially to facilitate local and natural environment exploration. The school's participation in the Green Schools' programme enhances pupils' understanding of environmental awareness and care.

## **6. Quality of Support for Pupils**

- Commendable support is provided for pupils with special educational needs. All teachers have established very positive, open relationships with their pupils and there is close consultation between the support teachers and class teachers. Lessons are structured and paced to maximise pupil outcomes and are characterised by the use of active-learning

approaches. Individual learning plans and programmes of work have been drafted in collaboration with parents. Currently, a proportion of the learning-support allocation is deployed to deliver Mathematics lessons to whole-class groups. It is advised that this practice be kept under review to ensure that time is also available for further development of the areas of prevention and early intervention. A more structured implementation of the staged approach to assessment, identification and programme planning, as outlined in DES Circular 02/05, is recommended, placing a greater emphasis on support for pupils within the mainstream classroom setting.

## **Appendix**

**School response to the report**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

**Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The school will continue to build on its strengths and will strive to implement the recommendations of the WSE

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

We have begun to use a more formal approach to supporting pupils within the mainstream classroom setting, as outlined in DES circular 02/05.

A greater emphasis is now being placed on using informal Irish throughout the school and the school day. As part of our ongoing SSE, we plan to develop a more structured plan to promote spoken Irish throughout the school.