An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Kilmacanogue NS
Kilmacanogue, County Wicklow
Uimhir rolla: 18365Q

Date of inspection: 25 November 2010
1. Introduction

Kilmacanogue NS, Wicklow, is a vertical co-educational school operating under Catholic patronage. The vast majority of pupils are drawn from the village of Kilmacanogue and its rural hinterland. Attendance levels among the 218 pupils are excellent. The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix to this report.

2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Strengthsocumentary</th>
<th>Main Recommendations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The quality of teaching and learning is very good.</td>
<td>A review of policy and provision for Irish is necessary in order to ensure the incremental development of the pupils’ communicative skills.</td>
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<td>There is a positive and purposeful learning environment in the school.</td>
<td>In Mathematics, further development of pupils’ problem-solving capacities is required.</td>
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<td>Strong leadership is provided by the principal and a laudable sense of collaboration and teamwork is evident.</td>
<td>The school’s policy for Special Education Needs should be reviewed to provide clarity regarding roles and responsibilities of all staff members.</td>
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<td>The pupils demonstrate commendable enthusiasm for their work and are very well behaved.</td>
<td>Very good practice relating to assessment of pupils which is evident in some classes should be extended across the school. An agreed approach to the use of available data in guiding provision for the breadth of pupil ability levels should be employed.</td>
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<td>The range and use of resources in the school is very good.</td>
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<td>The school’s action planning process is commendable and there is good awareness of current priorities.</td>
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3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management is properly constituted, meets regularly and individual members are very committed to the development of the school. The board’s main priorities include retention of enrolments at current levels and improvements in the physical plant. Commendable work is evident in the development of policies which underpin practice in the school. It is recommended that these are signed and dated when agreed. A significant minority of parents indicated in questionnaires that they were unsure as to the work of the board. In that regard, consideration should be given to improving communications with the parent body.
• The principal offers strong and effective leadership. She has played a key role in developing a purposeful school climate and demonstrates good awareness of the quality of teaching in the school. A reduction in numbers among the in-school management team has necessitated a review of assigned roles and responsibilities. In continuing to review these roles, it is recommended that opportunities for instructional leadership be explored and developed.

• There are excellent resources in the school. The support of the Parents' Association in their provision is highly commended. Resources are well managed and used. The school has invested significantly in the provision of ICTs in particular and these are used innovatively. There is a strong sense of community and collegiality evident at all levels in the school. This was strongly endorsed by parents and pupils in questionnaires.

• Pupils are very well managed. They engage enthusiastically and purposefully in learning activities.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

• The action planning process works effectively in the school. Current priorities are clearly identified and these are being addressed in classes. The school has identified aspects of Gaeilge, Mathematics and provision for special education that require attention. The evaluation confirmed these areas as being key priorities for the school.

• In continuing the good work undertaken on whole school planning, it is recommended that consideration be given to the potential role of parents in the process. The school also needs to develop policies and practice which lead to systematic analyses of standardised test results and other assessment data.

• The quality of individual teacher planning is very good. Long-term and short-term schemes and plans underpin practice in classrooms. Consideration now needs to be given to agreeing monthly reporting templates and to examining their use in planning future programmes of work.

Child protection policy and procedures

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 teaching in the school is very good. Teachers work diligently, conscientiously and purposefully. Learning outcomes achieved are very good and the pupils clearly enjoy coming to school.

• Tá múineadh na Gaeilge ar chaighdeán sásúil i dtromlach na ranganna. Tá sé ar sár-chaighdeán, áfach, i ranganna áirithe sa scoil. Léirítear sa phlean scoile go bhfuil gá le
The standard of teaching in Irish in most of the classes is satisfactory. In some classes, however, the standard is exceptional. The school plan indicates a need to develop the pupils’ oral language skills. In this process, it is recommended that further opportunities are given to the pupils to speak through the use of phrases developed by the teachers. Standards achieved in reading and, for the most part, in writing are satisfactory. It is recommended that the pupils be given further opportunities to engage in creative writing. It is evident that pupils enjoy their lessons.

- The standard of planning for English at whole-school and individual teacher level is very good. Excellent resources are used and the pupils work in a print-rich environment. Standards achieved by many pupils in reading are very high. Pupils read competently and with good understanding. Senior pupils use novels effectively and it is recommended that this practice be extended. While teacher inputs into oral language development are generally very good, the pupils need further opportunities to present to peers, to elaborate and to argue their points. Some excellent practice was observed in the teaching of writing and the pupils’ efforts were highly commendable.

- The school plan for Mathematics provides useful guidance for teachers and the quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well structured and a broad range of resources, including useful displays in most classes, are employed effectively. In almost all classes, there is a suitable balance between teacher-directed work and group and individual activities. Learning outcomes are very positive. As a means of enhancing the pupils’ abilities to apply their knowledge and understanding, more structured opportunities for linkage across the strands and further development of their problem-solving capacities are recommended. This should include the pupils’ involvement in problem construction and the resolution of multi-stage problems during problem-solving activities. All of these activities should be suitably differentiated.

- There is very good evidence of the implementation of the whole-school plan for History. Very good use of project work, technology and resources was observed. Pupils worked purposefully and productively as historians and there are very good learning outcomes evident. To build on this very good practice, it is recommended that pupil self-assessment be explored as a means of ensuring achievement of desired outcomes.

- Some very good assessment practices are evident in the school and the results of standardised tests in English and Mathematics are used to assist in the identification of pupils in need of additional support. It is recommended that existing assessment practice be further developed. This should include the implementation of agreed whole-school approaches to assessment across each curriculum area and the systematic analysis of standardised test results. Assessment data should be used to guide specific provision for the breadth of pupils’ abilities at each class level, to inform the selection of pupils with additional learning needs in both literacy and Mathematics and to guide the school’s self-evaluation processes.
6. **Quality of Support for Pupils**

- The school’s inclusive learning environment and its collegial approach to supporting pupils are commended, as is the promotion of constructive relationships with relevant support personnel.
- Support for pupils is provided primarily on a withdrawal basis with some in-class provision. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good. A variety of effective teaching methodologies and a good range of resources, including ICTs, are employed successfully. Pupil progress is evident, including the development of their self confidence.
- Education plans are in place for all special needs pupils. These are formulated in consultation with class teachers, parents and relevant personnel. The involvement of senior pupils in the development of their learning targets could be considered. Education programmes have, in the main, suitable learning objectives. In devising specific learning targets, it is advised that the outcomes of school-based diagnostic assessment and the particular recommendations of externally-produced assessment reports should be duly reflected.
- The proposed review of the whole-school policy to guide provision for pupils with SEN is noted. This review should seek to provide clarity in relation to the roles and responsibilities of all staff members, procedures for the selection and the discontinuance of pupils, further use of team-teaching interventions and increased levels of support for Mathematics. In the context of recent changes in the SEN team, the organisation of formal, collaborative planning opportunities to enable support staff to share good practice is welcomed.

*Published April 2011*
Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report

• The school would like to thank the inspectors for their courtesy during the WSE process. They were encouraging and helpful to all staff.

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

• A full review of special needs education has taken place which provided clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of all staff.

• Various assessment techniques used through the school are being studied in order that an agreed approach may be used which will be of benefit to pupils.

• Work is continuing on the following curricular areas:
  1. Incremental development of pupils’ communicative skills in Irish
  2. Development of pupils’ problem solving capacities in Maths.