

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation  
REPORT**

**St Teresa's National School  
Corrigeenroe, Co. Roscommon  
Uimhir rolla: 18454P**

**Date of inspection: 19 September 2013**



## 1. Introduction

St Teresa's NS is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Elphin. It is a four-teacher school with a base for a learning support teacher. It is located approximately five kilometres from Ballinacorney in Co. Sligo and eight kilometres from Boyle in Co. Roscommon. The school has been extended over the years and presents very well. It currently has 108 pupils on the rolls. The attendance levels for most pupils are good.

The whole-school evaluation focused on the quality of teaching and learning in English, Irish, Mathematics and Social, Personal and Health Education. 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.

## 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 and parents' association are very supportive of the work of the school.
- The principal and in-school management team work collaboratively.
- The teachers are committed and dedicated to their work and implement a range of methodologies in their teaching.
- Pupils participate in a range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities.
- The promotion of independent reading within the school is commendable.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Some pupils are unable to be present for the full twenty minutes' assembly time which is part of the school day due to current transport arrangements. The board, in consultation with the relevant partners should address this to ensure that all pupils can access the full school day as required by *Time in school*, Circular 11/95.
- The school's policy regarding supervision of the playground should be reviewed placing a particular focus on ensuring that all pupils are visible at all times to the staff member supervising.
- The Irish, English and Mathematics policies should be updated to include whole-school approaches for the teaching of each subject.
- Station teaching should be implemented throughout the school to cater for the wide range of abilities in the different classes.

### 3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management is very supportive of the work of the school. Roles are delegated and it discharges its duties diligently. School accounts are audited annually. Its management of structural improvements to the school buildings in recent years is commendable. The board, in consultation with the relevant partners should ensure that all pupils can access the full school day as required by *Time in school*, Circular 11/95. The board should consider issuing an annual report on the operation and work of the school.
- The principal, appointed in 2011, provides effective leadership within the school community. She works collaboratively with her staff. She promotes co-curricular and extracurricular activities. Her development of whole-school planning and the school's website is commendable. She is ably assisted by an in-school management team comprising of a deputy principal and one post holder. The secretary and caretaker make a considerable contribution to the efficient organisation of the school.
- The management of school resources is good. The school buildings and grounds are well-maintained. Interactive whiteboards are used regularly. Classroom libraries are well-stocked. Pupils access desktop computers in the computer room. It is recommended that information and communications technology (ICT) be used more extensively, where possible, in pupils' learning. To ensure that teachers experience a greater range of teaching contexts, a policy on teacher rotation should be formulated. People from the community share their expertise with pupils through projects organised by the school.
- The quality of the management of relationships with the community is good. The response from the questionnaires distributed to parents during the evaluation indicates high levels of satisfaction with discipline within the school. External coaches provide tuition in a range of activities such as computers, tennis, dance, music, soccer and Gaelic football under the direction of the class teachers. Communication with parents is through newsletters and the school website in the main. The parents' association assist the school very beneficially. It is very active and is involved in funding a range of activities and resources.
- The management of pupils is good. Pupils are courteous and co-operate with their teachers. Supervision is undertaken consistently. However, it is recommended that the school's policy regarding supervision of the playground be reviewed placing a particular focus on ensuring that all pupils are visible at all times to the staff member supervising. The pupils, in their responses to questionnaires administered during the evaluation, confirm that they know the school rules and they feel safe in school. The pupils participate in a range of co-curricular activities such as the *Hallelujah Concert*, *Music in the Classroom* and the *Discover Primary Science* project. They represent their school in various competitions across a variety of curricular areas with success.

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

- The quality of school planning is good. Administrative and organisational policies in a wide range of areas have been developed over the years. The work undertaken in reviewing policies in recent times is commendable. However, parental views need to be considered in the planning process as less than half of parents surveyed during the

evaluation noted that their views are sought in relation to school matters. The recent establishment of a parents' association should facilitate the engagement of parents in the consultation process.

- The code of behaviour and anti-bullying policies needs review to bring it into line with *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools* issued by the National Educational Welfare Board in 2008. The Irish, Mathematics and English policies need to be reviewed to include whole-school approaches to the teaching of aspects of these subjects. In Irish, there needs to be an outline of the whole-school approach to the teaching of verbs, grammar, creative writing and vocabulary. In English, a delineation of the school's approach to creative writing, skill development and oral language is required. In Mathematics an outline of the school's approach to problem solving, linkage, use of ICT and differentiation needs to be documented.
- The quality of classroom planning is good. All teachers provide long-term plans, short-term plans and records of monthly progress.
- The quality of school self-evaluation is good. An improvement plan was formulated which outlines the development of specific actions to improve pupils' learning in literacy.
- 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 quality of overall teaching and learning is good. The lessons observed were purposeful, skilful, well-structured and paced appropriately. Classrooms environments are print-rich, number-rich and celebrate pupils' work. Whole-class teaching was the principal teaching method used during the evaluation. It is recommended that station teaching be implemented throughout the school to cater for the wide range of abilities presenting at each class level.
- Tá caighdeán an teagaisc agus na foghlama sa Ghaeilge go maith. Stiúrtar na ceachtanna go héifeachtach. Úsáidtear ábhair léirithe, obair bheirte, filíocht, cluichí, rólimirt, tascanna éisteachta agus scéalaíocht go hábailta sa teagasc. Moltar obair bheirte a úsáid níos minicí chun cumas labhartha na ndaltaí a fhorbairt níos mó. Léann na daltaí le brí. Cuirtear béim ar na briathra agus ar an ngramadach. Tá dánta agus amhráin ar eolas ag na daltaí. Tugtar cleachtaí scríbhneoireachta rialta do na daltaí. Moltar deiseanna breise a thabhairt do na daltaí scríobh go cruthaitheach mar tá forbairt ag teastáil sa ghné seo.
- *The quality of teaching and learning in Irish is good. Lessons are managed effectively. Visual resources, pair work, poetry, games, role play, listening tasks and storytelling are used ably in the teaching. It is recommended that pair work be developed more often to further develop pupils' spoken Irish. Pupils read with understanding. Emphasis is placed on the verbs and grammar. Pupils are knowledgeable of poems and songs. Regular writing opportunities are given to pupils. Additional opportunities should be provided for pupils to write creatively as this is an area where development is needed.*
- The overall quality of teaching and learning in English is good. Early literacy work is commendable through the teaching of phonics, pre-reading and the use of large format books. There is a very good reading culture within the school. The promotion of

independent reading is very successful. Comprehension skills need further development. Pupils write in a variety of genres but there needs to be a whole-school approach to support the development of creative writing. Spelling and grammar are both given due emphasis. The quality of penmanship is very good. Nursery rhymes and poetry are recited with expression. Oral language has been prioritised to be taught in a systematic manner in the school's improvement plan.

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in Mathematics is good. The focus on oral work, games, the learning of tables, the use of concrete materials and the use of the interactive whiteboard are all commendable practices in the teaching of the subject. Pupils proved knowledgeable on tables, problems and concepts. It is recommended that pupils use ICT more frequently in their learning. Teachers need to plan for differentiation, maths trails and for linkage within the strands of the curriculum. The commencement of work on the development of problem-solving skills is commendable.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is good. The establishment of a buddy system and the positive interactions between staff and pupils support teaching and learning in this subject. Appropriate methodologies are employed such as circle time and drama. It is integrated successfully with other subjects. Pupils engage enthusiastically during lessons. All three strands are covered. The Stay Safe programme is implemented effectively. An external tutor facilitates provision for part of the programme in the senior classes.
- Standardised tests are administered in English reading and Mathematics and the results are shared with parents. These results are compared to national norms. Non-Reading Intelligence Tests (NRITs) have been administered to a number of classes but the completion of this work would facilitate greater data analysis at school level. It is recommended that a tracking sheet for individual pupils be introduced. All teachers maintain samples of work, conduct regular spelling tests and monitor pupils' progress effectively.

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

- The quality of the teaching and learning for pupils with learning needs and special educational needs (SEN) is good. Support is provided by two support teachers, one based in the school and the other based in a neighbouring school. Suitable planning is in place for all pupils in receipt of support. Pupils' progress is monitored carefully. Both teachers have a good rapport with the pupils in their care. A range of teaching strategies is employed to support pupils' learning. The updated learning support policy is commendable.
- Support is provided on a withdrawal basis in the main. The in-class lessons observed were delivered competently. It is recommended that support teachers work collaboratively with mainstream class teachers on a much more regular basis. Planning for and the implementation of collaborative teaching needs to be prioritised. An inventory of suitable resources and materials for supporting pupils' learning has been compiled.

# **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 and staff welcome the Whole School Evaluation report. It affirms the quality of teaching and learning in our school and it is an acknowledgement of the commitment and dedication shown by all within the whole school community. 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.**

The Board of Management acknowledges the recommendations of the report.

Discussion has taken place since the WSE with the transport provider to ensure that all pupils are present for the full twenty minutes assembly time

Yard supervision is being reviewed and the recommendation will be fully implemented

The Irish, English & Mathematics policies are currently under review

Station teaching has being implemented throughout the school to cater for the wide range of abilities in the different classes