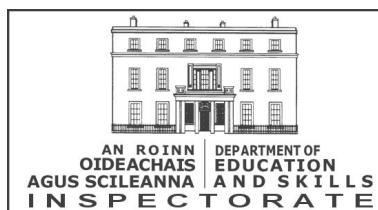


An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning
REPORT

Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Brighid
Kilnagross, County Leitrim
Uimhir rolla: 18492A

Date of inspection: 4 December 2013



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Brigid in December, 2013. 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.

Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Brigid is a rural, co-educational school under the patronage of the Catholic bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois. There are five teachers on staff; three mainstream teachers, including the teaching principal, and two support teachers. Current enrolment stands at sixty-six and overall attendance patterns 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.

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

- The contribution of the board of management to the organisation and maintenance of the school is very effective.
- The principal demonstrates excellent school leadership.
- Whole-school planning and school self-evaluation processes are effective and extensive.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is good with some excellent individual practices observed.
- The teachers are deeply committed to their pupils' well being and education and manifest a very strong work ethic.
- Pupils demonstrate high levels of engagement in learning activities and their overall attainment in Irish, English and Mathematics is commendable.
- Whole-school assessment of learning is very good overall.
- The management of relationships with the school community is very good.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Whole-school implementation of Music and Drama should be more closely aligned to the *Primary School Curriculum* (1999).
- Financial contributions from parents towards tuition for co-curricular activities during school hours in Music and information and communications technologies should be discontinued.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning achievements of pupils are good. Pupils demonstrated high levels of engagement and co-operation in the observed lessons.
- The pupils' overall attainment in English, Irish and Mathematics is commendable. In the junior classes, the pupils' emergent literacy and numeracy skills are very good. Guided by a school improvement plan for literacy, the development of the pupils' comprehension skills receives particular attention and progress so far, particularly in the senior classes, is highly commended. Most pupils pay careful attention to handwriting and the presentation of work. In oral Irish, learning outcomes are good. To enhance pupils' learning, further incidental use of Irish is recommended. While reading and writing standards in Irish are satisfactory overall, a more systematic approach to both strands should be implemented across the school.

- Pupils are making very good progress in Mathematics supported by the use of worthwhile concrete resources. Most pupils have appropriate knowledge of tables, number facts, computation and mathematical language. Further focus on *Measures* would be beneficial in some classes.
- Lessons in Physical Education, Drama and Music were observed. In all cases, pupils were co-operative and engaged well in activities. In Music and Drama, in particular, it is recommended that the various curricular strands are addressed more systematically. To assist with this, teachers should explore further opportunities to share their talents and expertise for the benefit of pupils' learning across the curriculum.
- Pupils have access to a range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities including the Green-Schools programme. Additional tutors are employed to provide tuition in tin whistle and information and communications technologies (ICT). Financial contributions from parents towards tuition for co-curricular activities during school hours in Music and ICT should be discontinued.
- Pupils in receipt of additional support for literacy and numeracy are making very good progress. Their learning is monitored carefully and supported by both in-class and withdrawal interventions.

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching is good, with some excellent individual practice observed. Teaching in emergent literacy is of a very high quality. Classrooms provide attractive and well-organised learning environments. Parents, in questionnaires administered as part of the evaluation, agree that teaching is good and their children are making good progress.
- The teachers are deeply committed to their pupils' well-being and education and manifest a very strong work ethic. Additionally, they display very good commitment to continuing professional development (CPD).
- All teachers provide effective individual classroom planning and monthly progress records. Greater use should be made of monthly progress records to track whole-school curriculum coverage.
- Whole-school assessment of learning is very good. Pupils' progression is tracked carefully and, on an ongoing basis, results are shared with parents. While some *assessment for learning* activities are undertaken, this is an area where further focus would be beneficial.
- The quality of teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is commendable. The two teachers, with specific responsibility in this area, undertake regular CPD; currently, one is undertaking a post-graduate diploma in SEN. Overall, there is purposeful target setting and monitoring of progress. Teacher-pupil rapport is excellent. Going forward, a number of areas should be addressed the provision of written progress reports in respect of individual educational plans; practice regarding the maintenance of historical progress reports; and updating of professional assessments. Additionally, group sizes should be re-examined so as to maximize pupils' access to learning support.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- During the evaluation, the management of pupils was very effective overall. Pupils presented as co-operative and well behaved. In their questionnaires responses, most pupils indicated that they are doing well in school and receive good support from their teachers. However, response patterns also indicate the need to consider further opportunities for pupils to access ICT. Pupils feel safe in their classrooms but a small number indicated that they did not feel safe on the yard. In light of this, further discussion about yard-time activities should be undertaken.
- In questionnaires, all parents agree that school discipline is good and that their children feel safe in school. Almost all agree that their child likes school.
- 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 contribution of the board of management to the organisation and maintenance of the school is very effective. The school presents very well and facilities for teaching and learning are good. The board's role in supporting policy review is commended. The chairperson is a frequent and supportive school visitor. In order to support the school self-evaluation process, the board should be apprised of the pupils' overall attainments in literacy and numeracy.
- The principal demonstrates excellent school leadership characterised by high levels of commitment, earnestness and approachability. She is supported very ably and willingly by the teaching staff, in particular by the deputy principal. There are very high levels of collegiality and collaboration among the teaching team.
- The management of relationships with the school community is very good. Parental questionnaires indicate an overall positive disposition towards the school. For example, all parents agree that the school is well run and is welcoming of them.
- The parents' association supports the work of the school and undertakes various fundraising activities on its behalf. There are, however, opportunities for greater parental engagement in policy review.

5. School Self-evaluation

- Whole-school administrative and curriculum planning is extensive and effective, guiding school practice to very good effect.
- Commendable progress has been made in respect of school self-evaluation in literacy. Currently, comprehension and reading for pleasure are being targeted for improvement and a number of effective initiatives are underway to support this.

Conclusion

The school's capacity to develop further is very good given the commitment of the principal, teachers and board of management to continuous school improvement.

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 of SN Naomh Brighid welcomes the WSE MLL report. The Board is happy with the findings which, it believes, acknowledges and affirms the work being carried out in the school.

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 welcomes and accepts the recommendations made in the report. The implementation of the recommendations has been prioritised as part of the school's development plan.