

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

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

**REPORT**

**Scoil Cholmcille,  
Duleek, Co. Meath.  
Uimhir rolla: 18500T**

**Date of inspection: 20 November 2013**



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

### Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Scoil Cholmcille, Duleek in November 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 Cholmcille is a co-educational, vertical primary school within the parish of Duleek. It has an enrolment of 102 pupils. Enrolment figures remain steady and attendance levels 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 strong sense of collaboration between the management, teachers and the parents of pupils in Scoil Cholmcille is effective in identifying and realising worthwhile opportunities for enriching pupils' learning.
- Pupils are being provided with a broad range of interesting learning experiences which span the full range of the primary curriculum.
- Lessons are purposeful, well-structured and well-paced while interactions between teachers and pupils are affirming and respectful.
- Pupils are achieving well in many areas of the curriculum.
- There is evidence that additional support being provided to pupils with particular learning needs is effective in helping these pupils achieve their potential in the mainstream classrooms.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Moltar go gcuirfí béim bhreise ar scríbhneoireacht neamhspleách na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge agus níos mo Gaelige a úsáid go neamhfhoirmúil le linn an lae scoile. It is advised that additional emphasis be placed on developing pupils' independent writing in Irish and that more Irish is used informally during the school-day.
- Letter-formation and the development of independent writing skills requires further attention.

### Findings

#### 1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The learning achievements of pupils in English are good. Pupils have well-developed oral language skills. The opportunities for developing oral language skills through inter-class presentations and assembly are worthwhile. Pupils read well. Attainment levels are good and the current emphasis on developing comprehension skills will enhance attainment levels further. While there is evidence of progression in pupils' independent writing skills as they proceed through the school, there is a need to provide further for the development of these skills both in terms of letter-formation and increasing the opportunity to write independently. In terms of letter-formation, an initiative put in place by teachers to encourage pupils to improve their handwriting is worthwhile. Closer attention should be paid to pencil-grip in the younger classes. The possibilities in other curriculum areas to develop independent writing skills should be explored further.
- The learning achievements of pupils in Mathematics are very good. Pupils are attaining very well. Levels of attainment are maintained as pupils progress through the school. A particular focus on encouraging pupils to see the application of mathematical concepts in the world around them and on encouraging a more confident attitude to problem-solving is having a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Tá cáilíocht an teagaisc agus na foghlama sa Ghaeilge go maith. Tá scileanna éisteachta agus tuisceana na ndaltaí forbartha go breá. Tá raon leathan foclóra agus abairtí ar eolas ag na daltaí. Chun tabhairt leis an dea-cleachtas seo, moltar níos mó béime a chur ar labhairt na

Gaeilge go nádúrtha le linn an lae. Léann na daltaí le tuiscint agus líofacht ach níl siad chomh maith ag tabhairt achoimre ar atá léite acu. B'fhiú níos mó béime a chur ar an scil seo a fhorbairt chun deis sa bhreis a thabhairt do na daltaí labhairt go neamhspleách. Déantar cúram maith den scríbhneoireacht. Cé go n-eagraítear gníomhaíochtaí scríbhneoireachta go rialta, moltar go gcuirfí béim bhreise ar scríbhneoireacht neamhspleách na ndaltaí a fhorbairt. *[The quality of teaching and learning in Irish is good. Listening skills and pupils' understanding are developed well. Pupils have a wide range of vocabulary and sentences at their disposal. To extend this good practice, it is suggested that further emphasis needs to be placed on speaking Irish naturally during the day. Pupils read with understanding and fluency but they are not so able to summarise what they have read. It would be worthwhile placing further emphasis on developing this skill as a means of providing pupils with a further opportunity to speak independently. Good attention is paid to writing. While writing activities are provided for on a regular basis, it is advised that further emphasis be placed on developing pupils' abilities to write independently.]*

- A range of worthwhile learning experiences is being provided for pupils across the breadth of the curriculum. The quality of the pupils' work in the Visual Arts is very good and is very effectively displayed. The attention paid to developing pupils' familiarity with the work of famous artists is very commendable. Pupils' skills in Music are being very well developed with pupils demonstrating a very good ability to sing and play music tunefully. Despite the absence of a suitable indoor space, good provision is made for addressing the full range of the Physical Education curriculum. In terms of Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE), many interesting and worthwhile learning experiences for pupils have been generated from the development and on-going observation of the school garden. Indeed, the process of observing and recording change over time is used very effectively to learn about a range of human and geographical phenomena. However, there is scope to develop further pupils' abilities to draw conclusions from facts they have learned.
- There is evidence that additional support being provided to pupils with particular learning needs is effective in helping these pupils achieve their potential in the mainstream classroom.

## 2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching skill in the school is very good. Lessons are purposeful, effectively structured and well-paced with pupils engaging enthusiastically. A broad range of rich learning experiences is being provided for pupils. The quality of teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils' particular learning needs are identified clearly and are central to lesson content. The practice of making the purpose of learning activities explicit to pupils is worthwhile in helping these pupils feel a sense of mastery over their own learning. For pupils with social learning needs, the potential of further interaction with their mainstream peers in structured group activities as part of their support provision should be explored further.

## 3. Support for pupils' well-being

- A positive, ordered learning environment has been created for pupils with interactions between teachers and pupils being of a mutually respectful nature.
- Teachers have a very good knowledge of their pupils and any particular needs they may have. The genuine interest of the teachers in their pupils results in a learning environment where all pupils are valued.
- 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*.
- In questionnaires completed by pupils and parents as part of the WSE-MLL evaluation process, the majority of pupils and parents expressed strong levels of satisfaction with the quality of education being provided in the school and the extent to which the welfare of pupils is nurtured. However, there appears to be a lack of certainty among some parents as to the school's provision for Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE). There are some aspects of learning where pupils feel unsure as to their level of progress. Further feedback from teachers and the very worthwhile initiative already being undertaken to develop pupils' capacity to engage in self-assessment will help in this regard.

#### **4. Leadership and Management**

- The board of management is correctly constituted and undertakes its work conscientiously and effectively. There is a strong sense of commitment to providing the pupils in Scoil Cholmcille with a good quality education. The board is currently reviewing its enrolment policy. It is also the intention of the board that a copy of the treasurer's report is appended to the minutes from each board meeting. The in-school management team, which is led effectively by the principal, functions through adopting a collaborative approach to identifying learning needs and implementing measures to address them. In this the in-school management team, together with the support of all teachers, is very successful in enriching learning for pupils.

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

- The school is effective in monitoring pupils' progress through appropriate checklists, teacher-designed tests, standardised tests and reviewing pupils' written work. There is scope for teachers, in the monitoring of pupils' written work, to provide more written commentary.
- An effective approach to self-evaluation has been put in place and there is evidence of good quality reflection by teachers in order to identify areas of priority and actions to address them. The resulting plans are clearly focused and are having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

#### **Conclusion**

The school has a very good capacity to engage in school-improvement as it has a strong commitment to pupil learning and a collaborative way of working that ensures good quality reflection and action on a whole-school basis.

## **Appendix**

**School response to the report**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

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

The evaluation was a comprehensive inspection of the work carried out in the school. The Board welcomes the affirmation of the good work being done 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 of Management notes the recommendations in the report and the following actions are being undertaken.

- Gaeltóg na Míosa certificate presented at the monthly assembly to encourage children to use Irish in class and in the playground. This is already having a positive impact on oral Irish and on Irish reading and writing.
- Classes are doing more free writing in both languages
- Emphasis is being placed on pencil grip and penmanship