

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation  
REPORT**

**Anacarty NS,  
County Tipperary  
Uimhir rolla: 18528S**

**Date of inspection: 7 October 2013**



## 1. Introduction

Anacarty National School in County Tipperary is under the patronage of the Roman Catholic archbishop of Cashel and Emly. Currently, eighty-two are pupils enrolled. The school has witnessed a decline in enrolment in recent years. The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

## 2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

The following are the **main strengths** of the work of the school:

- A pleasant atmosphere permeates school activities.
- Pupils achieve very high standards in reading and Mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Pupils are well-behaved and enthusiastic in their learning.
- Good quality supports are in place for pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

The following **main recommendations** are made:

It is recommended that.

- An annual report on the work of the school is prepared for parents.
- Members of the in-school management team are given the opportunity to give an account of their work to the board from time to time.
- Chun tabhairt faoi na dea-chleachtais i múineadh na Gaeilge a fhorbairt, moltar níos mó leanúnachais a chothú sa Ghaeilge labhartha agus scríofa.  
*To advance the good practice in the teaching of Irish further, it is recommended that greater continuity in spoken and in written Irish, be fostered.*
- The board should review the present arrangements for the organisation of swimming.

## 3. Quality of School Management

- Admirable leadership is provided by the board of management. Board members and staff share a common sense of commitment to making provision of the highest quality.
- The in-school management team is made up of principal, deputy principal and special duties teacher. The principal shows total dedication to the school and she is highly efficient. She is aware of the instructional leadership dimension of her role and in addition to her administrative duties she takes responsibility for teaching the infant classes.
- Each member of the in-school management team takes responsibility for aspects of administration, curricular development and pastoral care of pupils. The deputy principal and special duties teacher use considerable initiative in their work.
- As each member of the team makes a significant contribution to school management it is recommended that they are given the opportunity to give an account of their work to the board from time to time.

- Accommodation is of very good quality, tastefully decorated and well maintained. The school secretary is highly efficient. Computer technology has been provided in all classrooms. Resources for SEN are extensive.
- Teachers have availed of extensive continuing professional development. The school should conduct an audit of training taken by teachers and identify priorities for the future.
- Home-school links are maintained by a variety of means. There is an active parents' association and parents are involved in fund-raising, school events and after-school activities. Responses to parents' questionnaires indicate that overall parents are happy with the school. The majority indicated that they were happy with the education being provided and considered the school to be a welcoming place. The board should now examine ways in which its work can be communicated more effectively to the parents. It is recommended that an annual report on the work of the school be prepared for parents.
- The teachers' approach to the management of pupils is encouraging and successful. The results of pupils' questionnaires indicate that the majority enjoy their lessons and the vast majority believe that it is a good school.

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

- The school has engaged in substantial self-evaluation with a particular emphasis on numeracy. A well developed school plan sets out the main policies which guide the operation of the school. Action planning features strongly and curriculum programmes are detailed.
- All teachers provide appropriate long and short-term planning and they set clear learning objectives. Monthly progress reports are maintained although some of these provide more detail than others.
- 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, learning and pupil achievement is very good. Teachers approach their work with enthusiasm and confidence.
- Tá cáilíocht an teagaisc agus na foghlama go maith sa Ghaeilge. Sna ceachtanna a breathnaíodh bhí cuspóirí agus struchtúr cinnte ag baint leo. Sna ranganna uile, baintear úsáid as réimse leathan de mhodhanna múinte éifeachtúla.
- Sonraíodh samplaí de chleachtais mhaithe idir obair bheirte, rólimirt agus amhráin san áireamh. Tá an úsáid a bhaintear as teicneolaíocht an eolais agus cumarsáide agus as cluichí a spreagann na daltaí chun rannpháirtíochta le moladh.
- Leagtar béim inmholta sa phlean ar úsáid neamhfhoirmiúil na Gaeilge mar theanga chumarsáide sa scoil. Tá sé ar chumas roinnt mhaith daltaí abairtí simplí a chumadh ach ní mór, áfach, a chinntiú go bhfuil forbairt chórasach ag teacht ar an ábhar teanga atá á mhúineadh ó rang go rang.

- Cuirtear ábhair léitheoireachta oiriúnacha ar fáil agus léann formhór na ndaltaí le cruinneas agus le tuiscint. Déantar monatóireacht chuí ar scríbhneoireacht na ndaltaí ach moltar anois deiseanna breise saor-chumadóireachta a sholáthar dóibh ó rang go rang.
- *The quality of teaching and learning in Irish is good. Lessons observed had clear and appropriate objectives and structure. In all classes, a broad range of effective teaching methodologies are employed.*
- *Good examples of practice were evident including pair work, role play and songs. The use of the ICT is commendable as are various games which motivate pupils to participate in lessons.*
- *In the school plan, commendable emphasis is put on the informal use of Irish as the language of communication throughout the school. The majority of pupils are able to form simple sentences but there is need to ensure that there is a systematic development of the language content taught from class to class.*
- *Appropriate reading material is provided and the majority of pupils read with understanding and accuracy. A good number of pupils read with correct pronunciation and good understanding. Appropriate monitoring of pupils' writing occurs but it is now recommended that additional opportunities for free writing be provided from class to class.*
- The quality of teaching and learning in English is highly praiseworthy. Standardised tests indicate that pupils' overall attainment is very good. Libraries are well stocked with a suitable range of fiction and non-fiction books.
- Discrete oral language activities are taught successfully. Pupils recite a range of suitable poems with clarity and expression. Pupils' reading competence is developed effectively through the use of suitable reading programmes. The teachers' success is rooted in effective development of phonological awareness, coupled with the acquisition of a suitable sight vocabulary. Good use of information and communication technology was observed.
- Team teaching arrangement with special education teachers allow for maximum individual involvement in group discussions. Throughout the school there is a good focus on the development of comprehension skills using the most up-to-date approaches.
- Handwriting skills are developed systematically and, as the pupils progress through the school, they produce high-quality writing for functional and creative purposes in a variety of genres.
- The teaching of Mathematics is of very high quality and very good standards are achieved. Classrooms are well-presented as mathematics-rich environments. There is a consistent emphasis on the development of the language of Mathematics. ICT is used effectively.
- A notable feature in the teachers' short-term planning is the attention that is given to defining and sharing of learning objectives. In the best examples observed, the expected learning outcomes were explained to the pupils. Team teaching approaches have been applied successfully.
- The focus on oral and mental mathematical work, manipulation of concrete resources and collaborative learning activities are commendable. Across the school there is an

emphasis on encouraging estimation. Learning tasks are differentiated so that the pupils' learning needs are addressed. While textbooks are used there is not an over reliance on them. Pupils' written work is carefully monitored and learning is checked through skilful questioning.

- In Physical Education, the teachers possess good subject knowledge and approach the work with confidence. The programme comprises basic gymnastics, games, dance and outdoor adventure activities. Resources for Physical Education are very good. The range of facilities includes a school hall, playing field, basketball court and play areas with an impressive range of equipment.
- Teachers ensure that there is a balanced implementation of the physical education curriculum. Boys and girls are given equal access to the wide range of activities. Pupils demonstrate clear understanding of tasks set and they are developing a sound range of physical skills.
- Teachers' written documentation and planning for Physical Education vary in quality. Some of the schemes give detailed guidance to the teacher while others are too general. More systematic monitoring and evaluation of the work in Physical Education would help with the assessment and recording of pupils' progress. With the support of funding from the parents association, specialist coaching is offered in gymnastics and in outdoor adventure activities.
- The parents' association organises swimming after school and their generosity in this is acknowledged. Notwithstanding the efforts of the parents, the board of management is now advised that the existing arrangements for swimming be reviewed. The board should assume direct responsibility for the implementation of this strand of the physical education curriculum to ensure provision is in accordance with the relevant whole-school curricular and administrative policies.

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

- It is evident from adult-pupil interactions that the school promotes a climate of support and there is sensitivity to individual needs. At whole-school level, class teachers accept first-line responsibility for the progress of all pupils and procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are clear. Two full-time and one part-time shared special education teachers (SET) are assigned to provide support to pupils. The teachers cater for pupils who require learning support and for children who present with a number of low incidence disabilities. Very good collaboration between support teachers and class teachers was in evidence.
- A significant amount of SET time is devoted to providing in-class support. The SETs were observed to approach their work in a proficient manner both within classrooms and in withdrawal settings. Individual Education Plans are carefully constructed for the most part. Many learning targets relate to specific learning objectives. The role of parents in developing IEP targets and in achieving the various learning goals should be reviewed with the aim of achieving greater involvement of parents.
- The school has effective arrangements for assessing pupils' progress and teachers use assessment information to guide programme planning. The practice of involving pupils in self assessment of learning which is already a feature of practice in some classes should be extended.

- The principal reports that the school supports disadvantaged pupils if necessary through the careful and sensitive management of resources.

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