

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

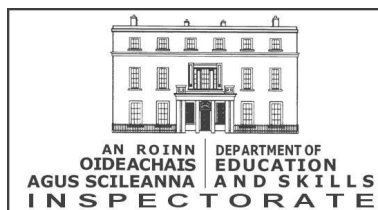
Department of Education and Skills

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

REPORT

**Doora National School
Doora, Clarecastle, Co. Clare
Uimhir rolla: 18696Q**

Date of inspection: 16 October 2013



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Doora National School in October 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. 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.

This is a rural, co-educational school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Killaloe. The attendance levels of the majority of the 91 pupils enrolled are very good.

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

- The work ethic, collaborative spirit and range of skills displayed by the teachers are of a high order.
- The school is effectively managed by the board of management and the in-school management team.
- Overall standards of attainment of pupils in numeracy, literacy and science are particularly noteworthy.
- The pupils are very well managed and display highly positive attitudes to work and behaviour.
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) receive excellent support in a very inclusive environment.
- The school has benefitted significantly from the voluntary support of parents.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Worthwhile efforts have been made to broaden the range of assessment methods in use to include assessment for learning and this work merits further development.
- Moltar scileanna cumarsáide na ndaltaí a fhorbairt a thuilleadh. (*Further development of pupils' communicative skills is advised.*)
- A greater focus on emergent writing in English is recommended.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- Overall learning achievements are very good. The majority of pupils achieve high standards in literacy and numeracy, as evidenced by standardised test outcomes and interactions with pupils during the evaluation. Pupils' oral language skills are carefully nurtured. The depth and breadth of science knowledge displayed by senior pupils during the evaluation was impressive. Pupils demonstrated an admirable capacity to solve word problems in Mathematics.
- Sa Ghaeilge léiríonn formhór na ndaltaí go bhfuil dul chun cinn maith á dhéanamh acu i bhforbairt a scileanna cumarsáide. Sna meánranganna agus sna hardranganna léann siad le tuiscint agus le cruinneas ó na téacsanna ranga. (*In Irish the majority of pupils are making good progress in developing their conversational skills. In the middle and senior classes they read from class texts with understanding and accuracy.*)
- Evidence indicates that pupils with SEN are making good progress commensurate with their ability.

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching in the school ranges from good to very good. A variety of methodologies, including station teaching, co-operative group work and purposeful use of information and communications technology is utilised to maximise pupils' engagement. Very effective practice was observed in the teaching of literacy, particularly in oral work, phonics and aspects of writing. A greater emphasis on emergent writing should provide further gains for pupils. Worthwhile efforts have been made to broaden the range of assessment methods in use to include assessment for learning, and this work merits further development.
- The teaching provided for pupils with SEN needs is of a very high quality. Interventions by the support teachers are carefully planned and progress is recorded on an ongoing basis. Class teachers are commended for their efforts to differentiate the curriculum to meet the needs of these pupils.
- Chonacthas dea-chleachtas i múineadh na Gaeilge tríd an scoil, go háirithe in úsáid cluichí teanga, múineadh na rann agus na n-amhrán agus i leathnú foclóra. Moltar scileanna cumarsáide na ndaltaí a fhorbairt a thuilleadh agus sa chomhthéacs sin b'fhiú breis béime a leagan ar scileanna éisteachta agus ar an scríbhneoireacht, idir éiritheach agus phearsanta. *(Good practice in the teaching of Irish was noted throughout the school, particularly in the use of language games, the teaching of rhymes and songs and in vocabulary extension. Further development of pupils' communicative skills is advised and in this context more emphasis on listening skills and on writing, both emergent and personal, would be of benefit)*

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- Pupils are very well managed. During the evaluation they were well behaved and courteous. The extent to which they assumed responsibility for routine tasks during the school day was noted.
- Highly commendable efforts are made by staff and pupils to include pupils with SEN in all facets of school life. Outside agencies provide valuable support for pupils with particular needs.
- 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 board of management operates effectively and works in a highly dedicated manner to support the work of the school. The present and previous boards have developed the school infrastructure and resources to a high standard. The board is proactive in addressing policy review, school self-evaluation and planning for improvement.
- Analysis of parents' questionnaires indicates that the vast majority of parents feel that their child is doing well at school. This analysis also indicates that there is scope for a strengthening of ties with the general parent body. The board should consider, therefore, efforts at enhanced communication with and involvement of parents in the life of the school.
- The school is effectively led by an experienced and committed principal. Two hard-working post holders capably carry out extensive duties. Non post holders are also diligent in using their energy and particular skills in the service of the school.

5. School Self-evaluation

- To date the school has engaged enthusiastically and thoroughly with the process of school self-evaluation. In choosing numeracy as a key focus the teachers were anxious to explore school self-evaluation in an area in which they could comfortably and confidently hone their evaluative and planning skills. The detailed analysis of test outcomes, the comprehensive consultation with teachers, pupils and parents and the setting of specific targets were particular strengths of the process.

Conclusion

- The school's capacity to develop further is very good. There was strong evidence during the evaluation of the commitment of the teachers to innovation, to their own professional development and to the pursuit of high standards of attainment.