

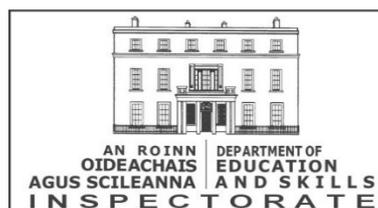
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills**

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

**REPORT**

**Ballyboghil NS,  
Ballyboughal, Co. Dublin  
Uimhir rolla: 19001G**

**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 Ballyboghill NS 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.

Enrolment levels in Ballyboghill NS have been rising strongly in recent years and the school has grown as a result. The current enrolment is 197 pupils. 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 quality of leadership provided by the board of management is very good.
- The principal and deputy principal give strong curriculum and instructional leadership to the school.
- School management and staff display a commendable commitment to the school self-evaluation process.
- The commitment of the teachers to the education and well-being of the pupils is admirable.
- The management of pupils' behaviour is very good and pupils engage respectfully with their teachers and with one another.
- Teachers' long-term planning is very good, with best practice being evident in several instances.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Tá scóip chun forbartha i ngnéithe de mhúineadh na Gaeilge. B'fhiú clár córasach a leagadh amach don scoil a chuirfeadh le muintín agus le cumas na ndaltaí sa teanga labhartha. There is scope for development in aspects of the teaching of Irish. A systematic programme should be devised for the school to develop pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language.
- An agreed approach to short-term planning and the maintenance of progress records should be developed.

### Findings

#### 1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning achievements of pupils are commendable. Pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum and they display enthusiasm for learning through their participation in lessons. The quality of pupils' work on display throughout the school is admirable. Pupils' visual art works using a range of techniques and media are displayed in a very stimulating manner in the school.
- Learning outcomes are very good in numeracy and literacy. Standardised test results indicate that pupils are doing well in both areas. Through the writing process, pupils in most classes draft, edit and re-write, and this leads to high quality in their completed work. Pupils display an enthusiasm for reading and they read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts with fluency and understanding.
- Forbraítear foclóir na ndaltaí go córasach i gceachtanna sa Ghaeilge. I ranganna áirithe, tugtar deiseanna rialta dóibh an teanga a úsáid go cumarsáideach i suímh réalaíocha. Is fiú plé a dhéanamh agus teacht ar chomhthuiscint scoile maidir leis an dul chun cinn cuí i dteanga labhartha na ndaltaí ó rang go rang. B'fhiú clár a leagadh

amach a léireodh an stór teanga agus an cumas a mbítear ag súil leis sna ranganna éagsúla. Léann na daltaí sleachta ó théacsleabhair Gaeilge agus déanann siad na cleachtaí scríbhneoireachta sna leabhair sin.

- *Pupils' vocabulary is developed systematically in Irish lessons. In some classrooms, pupils are given regular opportunities to use the language with an emphasis on communication in realistic settings. There should be whole-school discussion and agreement on the progress that is expected in spoken language from class to class. It would be worthwhile to lay out a programme which would show the language store and proficiency expected in different classes. Pupils read extracts from Irish textbooks and complete written exercises in these books.*
- Teachers in support roles make comprehensive preparation, in both their written schemes and resources, to support the learning progression of their pupils. Extensive assessment documentation is maintained.

## 2. Quality of teaching

- Contextually, at the time of the evaluation, a significant minority of the mainstream teachers were substitute teachers who had been teaching in the school for a short period.
- Overall, the teaching evaluated was commendable, with examples of high quality practice in evidence in different curriculum areas. Where best practice was in evidence teachers used resources, including interactive whiteboards, reflectively and with purpose, the presentation and explanation of new content was very clear, lessons were very carefully structured and teacher questioning was thorough. Teachers are commended for the manner in which they engage pupils' interest through stimulating demonstration and questioning during lessons. Pupil questionnaire responses indicate, however, that there is scope for pupils to experience group work and to manipulate computers or the interactive whiteboard more often.
- Teachers' long-term planning is very good, with best practice being evident in several instances. Approaches to short-term planning vary considerably. An agreed approach to short-term planning and the maintenance of progress records should be developed.
- Breathnaíodh cleachtais mhaithe le linn ceachtanna Gaeilge a spreag na daltaí chun rannpháirtíochta. Moltar go hard úsáid neamhfhoirmiúil na Gaeilge i suímh éagsúla sa scoil go mórmhór sna rimeanna agus beannachtaí laethúla atá ag na ndaltaí. Tugann an scoil go héifeachtach faoi mhúineadh foclóra, frásaí beaga agus ainmfhocal, le linn ceachtanna. Déantar cúram de chleachtaí gramadaí a chuimsiú san obair. Sonraíodh easpa muiníne sna daltaí sa scoil mar iomlán i gcruthú abairtí agus comhrá atá cuí dá rangleibhéil. B'fhiú tabhairt faoin mhuinín agus cumas sa teanga labhartha a fhorbairt trí dhírú ar thaithí cuimsitheach ar úsáid raon briathra in aimsirí éagsúla a thabhairt go lárnach do dhaltaí sna ceachtanna. Tugann na daltaí faoin léitheoireacht ar shleachta sna saothairleabhair go breá. B'fhiú anois tabhairt faoi fhíorleabhair agus foinsí eile atá ar fáil go leictreonach agus ar líne a úsáid a spreagfadh suim na ndaltaí a thuilleadh agus a chuirfeadh le sásamh san obair. Déantar cúram den scríbhneoireacht fheidhmiúil ach moltar dul ar thóir tuilleadh *genres* san obair chruthaitheach.
- *Good practices were observed during Irish lessons that encouraged pupils' participation. The informal use of Irish in different settings in the school, including rhymes and daily blessings that pupils use with confidence, is greatly commended. The school effectively engages in the teaching of new vocabulary, short phrases and nouns, during lessons. Care is taken to cover grammar exercises in the work. A lack of confidence was noted among the pupils across the school in forming sentences and engaging in Irish conversation appropriate to their class level. Confidence and ability in spoken Irish should be developed through focusing on comprehensive experience of using a range of verbs in the different tenses during lessons. Pupils read extracts from workbooks well in Irish reading. Authentic books and sources available electronically and online should be used to further grasp pupils' interest and to add to their personal satisfaction in the work. Care is taken with functional writing but more genres could be pursued in creative works.*
- Provision for teaching in Mathematics is effective in the school. All observed lessons were carefully structured, explanation of concepts was clear and the development of lessons provided effectively for advancing pupils' understanding of concepts incrementally. Where best practice was observed information and communications

technology and physical resources were used during explanation and in supporting lesser-achieving pupils. The introduction of in-class support for Mathematics is having an observable beneficial effect on learning.

- Provision for the development of pupils' aesthetic development through Music, Visual Arts and Drama is commendable. Lessons evaluated in these subjects were well-structured and well-prepared and encouraged very good levels and quality of participation.
- Commendable use of investigative approaches, incorporating the use of teacher-generated resources, was seen in provision for Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE).
- The quality of teaching methodologies for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Very good preparation and use of a range of resources, including ICT, was observed in different settings. Commendably, teachers focus on developing fundamental reading skills in a sequential and thorough manner, informed by an understanding of pupils' needs from good-quality baseline assessment data. Provision is made for support in both literacy and numeracy. The provision of support in a balanced way through withdrawal and through in-class work is commendable. In order to further support the quality of provision, targets in individualized plans for pupils should be more measurable and timed and seek to include success criteria.

### **3. Support for pupils' well-being**

- The quality of the management of pupils observed during the evaluation was very good overall. Pupils engaged respectfully with their teachers and with each other. Almost all pupil questionnaire responses agreed that relationships among pupils were good in the school, with high percentages of respondents feeling safe both in class and in the playground. A few respondents did not agree, though, that pupils in their class behaved well. Most of the pupils who completed a questionnaire judged their school to be a good 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 board of management functions effectively. It has identified priorities for the further development of the school and is working towards the achievement of its goals in a focused manner. Communication with parents and with the broader school community is regular. Newsletters are issued to ensure that parents are informed of events in the life of the school. However, in responses to a questionnaire issued to parents, while a majority felt that the school regularly seeks parents' views on school matters, a significant minority were either unsure or disagreed.
- Positive relationships with local community organisations are nurtured. The board's finances are managed prudently, ensuring that a commendable supply of resources is available in the school.
- The principal and deputy principal lead the work of the school very effectively. They display strong leadership skills and are committed to the development of teaching and learning in the school. They work closely with the board of management and staff in order to ensure that resources are used to best effect.

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

- The school uses a variety of formal and informal assessment approaches to evaluate pupils' learning. This information is communicated to parents formally at parent-teacher meetings and in annual written reports.
- The school's analysis of assessment evidence has led to the identification of targets for improvement. The development of spelling has been identified as the priority in the school's self-evaluation report. A range of strategies has been developed for each classroom, and procedures have been put in place to enable the ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the school improvement plan. Future priorities have been identified and an action plan is in place to address these priorities.

## **Conclusion**

The school's capacity to develop further is very good. The school is well placed to address the significant changes it has experienced in recent years and is on a clear trajectory of continued development.

## **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 Ballyboughill National School welcomes the very positive account of the work of the school contained in the report of the WSE-MLL. We wish to thank the staff, the parents and the whole school community for their contribution to the ongoing development of our 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 acknowledges the recommendations for further development outlined in the report. These recommendations are being considered by the staff as part of the School Self-Evaluation process and their implementation will be included in the School Improvement Plan.