An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Scoil Chruimín Naofa
Multyfarnham, Co. Westmeath
Uimhir rolla: 19350l

Date of inspection: 4 April 2011
1. Introduction

St Cremin’s NS is a co-educational primary school situated in the village of Multyfarnham, serving the educational needs of the village and surrounding rural area. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Meath. 145 pupils attend the school and attendance levels are very good. The views of all parents and the opinions of pupils in middle and senior classes were collected and analysed and form part of the evidence for this report. The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

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

- The board of management is committed and well-informed, and discharges its role conscientiously.
- The principal and the in-school management team provide strong leadership for the school.
- All staff members discharge their duties competently and conscientiously.
- An active parents’ association provides valuable support to the school and communication between the school and parents is very effective.
- The management of pupils is very good and a positive learning atmosphere was observed throughout the school during the evaluation.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English, Mathematics and Visual Arts is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

The following main recommendations are made:

- The school should revise its enrolment policy to reflect its compliance with relevant equality legislation.
- Specific, measurable targets should be set and reviewed annually as part of the school self-evaluation process.

3. Quality of School Management

- The work of the board of management is very good. The board is committed, well-informed and correctly constituted. Meetings are convened regularly and conducted according to correct procedures. The board discharges its policy-development role conscientiously. Financial accounts are certified by an independent professional. The board is commended on the development of the school building and the parking area.
- The work of the in-school management team is very good. The principal provides strong leadership and articulates a shared vision for the school with a focus on holistic education.
and achievement of pupils’ full potential. He is ably assisted by the deputy principal and the two special-duties teachers who fulfil a range of important delegated roles very effectively.

- There is very good management and use of school accommodation and equipment. The school’s special-needs assistant, secretary, caretaker and cleaning staff all contribute to the smooth operation of the school.

- An active parents’ association provides valuable support to the school through its input into school policy, advocacy on particular issues and its provision of funding for additional curricular and extra-curricular programmes. Communication between the school and parents has been enhanced through the use of the school website, newsletters and a text service. Almost all parents stated that the school welcomes parents.

- The management of pupils is very good and all pupils report feeling safe in school. Most pupils stated that they like coming to school and this concurs with the positive learning atmosphere observed throughout the school during the evaluation.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The quality of the school planning process is good. Mechanisms are in place to facilitate consultation with parents, teachers and the board of management in relation to policy development and review. Priorities for action planning have been identified.

- The process of school self-evaluation is developing. Valuable longitudinal tracking of standardised assessment data has been undertaken and has assisted in the identification of targets for support teaching. Further analysis of school data should be conducted to identify targets for future improvement and to compare the pupils’ performance to national norms. To advance the self-evaluation process, it is recommended that specific, measurable targets be agreed for incremental school improvement and that these be reviewed regularly.

- Classroom planning is good and is in accordance with the Primary School Curriculum and school policies. The most effective classroom planning identifies clear learning outcomes and specific approaches to differentiating content for pupils with special educational needs.

- School authorities provided evidence that, in compliance with Primary Circular 0061/2006, the board of management has formally adopted the Department’s Child Protection Guidelines for Primary Schools. Evidence was provided to show that these child protection procedures have been brought to the attention of management, school staff and parents; that a copy of the procedures has been provided to all staff (including all new staff); and that management has ensured that all staff are familiar with the procedures to be followed. A designated liaison person (DLP) and a deputy DLP have been appointed in line with the requirements of the guidelines.

5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning and pupil achievement is good. A broad and balanced programme is delivered for each of the subjects evaluated. Lessons are presented effectively through a range of suitable and collaborative methodologies, supported by illustrative resources. Most pupils report that they enjoy their lessons and
almost all pupils comment positively about the clarity of teachers’ explanations and the interesting nature of their lessons.


- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Irish is good. Objectives are outlined clearly. Listening opportunities are provided formally and informally and pupils have a positive attitude to Irish. Most pupils speak confidently and with accuracy. The communicative method is used beneficially, for the most part, to give worthwhile speaking opportunities to pupils. This good practice could be extended throughout the school. Writing skills are developed incrementally in various genres. Pupils read with understanding and correct pronunciation. Pupils derive benefit and enjoyment from activities in music and poetry.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is very good. There is praiseworthy focus on oral-language development and most pupils express their ideas articulately and confidently. Commendable emphasis on phonological awareness, environmental print, silent reading and sight vocabulary contributes to pupils’ competence in reading. Writing skills are developed purposefully and pupils engage well with the writing process in a variety of genres. The school promotes a neat cursive style of handwriting. Poetry is explored very enjoyably.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is very good. The use of collaborative teaching methodologies and frequent exploration of concrete materials enhances pupil engagement and understanding. The skills of estimation and measurement are emphasised and an agreed approach to mathematical language is implemented. Most pupils recall number facts and complete relevant computational tasks with speed and accuracy. While many pupils display very good ability in problem solving, it is recommended that agreed problem-solving strategies be taught throughout the school.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Visual Arts is very good. There is commendable breadth, balance and progression in the programme implemented. Pupils’ work in all strands is presented attractively and celebrated in classroom and school displays. Artistic tasks are explained clearly, with appropriate emphasis on both technique and individual creativity. Pupils enjoy responding to other pupils’ work and to the work of famous artists.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- Pupils with special educational needs are educated in an inclusive atmosphere. To align school policy more closely with existing practice, it is recommended that the enrolment policy be revised to reflect the school’s compliance with relevant equality legislation.
• Prudent use of observational, diagnostic and screening assessment data enables early identification and support of pupils with special educational needs through the staged-approach model.

• Support teaching for literacy and numeracy is provided through a range of intervention models, including withdrawal and in-class approaches. Targets in individual profile and learning programmes (IPLPs) and individual education plans (IEPs) are devised collaboratively and reviewed regularly.

• The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Support lessons are presented very effectively through skilful use of appropriate methodologies and stimulating resources. Good communication between class teachers and support teachers contributes to the effectiveness of support. The quality of outcomes for pupils with special educational needs is laudable.

• Arrangements for supporting disadvantaged pupils have been developed and implemented proactively and with sensitivity.

• The quality of home-school partnership is very good. Communication is enhanced through the school’s website, which has been developed in co-operation with parents. Almost all parents commented positively about the arrangements for parent/teacher meetings and the accuracy of information disseminated in school reports. All parents reported that the school has a good reputation in the locality.