

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning
REPORT

Scoil Naomh Colmán Mac Duaigh,
Tierneevin, Gort, Co. Galway
Uimhir rolla: 19377F

Date of inspection: 17 October 2013



AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS

Introduction

In October 2013, a Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was carried out in Scoil Naomh Colmán Mac Duaigh, in Tierneevin, which is located close to Gort town in south county Galway. This report is based on a selection of lessons observed, interaction with pupils, review of pupils' work, completed parent and pupil questionnaires, a selection of school documents, and meetings with representatives of the board of management, the principal, deputy principal and special-duties teacher. In recent years, school enrolment has increased steadily; currently there are sixty-four pupils enrolled. Their school-attendance rates are good. The board of management of the school 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:

- Very effective school leadership is provided by the board of management and in-school management team.
- Parents and community members are very supportive of the school.
- The work of the teachers is highly commendable and on the whole, the quality of teaching is very good.
- Overall, pupils' learning achievements are very good.
- The school has a well-embedded culture of regular and thorough self-evaluation. This has enabled the school to make significant improvements in teaching and learning in curriculum areas.
- The pupils are well behaved and confident.

The following **recommendations** are made:

- Additional emphasis should be placed on improving the standard of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work.
- In English, more progressive and systematic work needs to be undertaken to develop pupils' vocabulary and oral language skills.
- In Mathematics, the school should explore strategies to provide further challenge for pupils who achieve very good results.
- The school should review its approach to setting targets for pupils with low-incidence needs and ensure that support is provided in a manner which is flexible and responsive to pupils' levels of receptiveness.
- To ensure that priority is given to the pupils with the most significant high-incidence learning needs, the school needs to continuously review and monitor the effectiveness of the arrangements which are in place for the provision of learning support.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- Overall, pupils' learning achievements are very good. In English and Irish, the majority of pupils achieve creditable standards in reading and writing. In Mathematics,

pupils are confident and the majority achieve good to very good results. It is evident from classroom displays and discussions with the pupils that a broad range of interesting work is undertaken in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education. The presentation of pupils' work ranges from satisfactory to good.

Quality of teaching

- On the whole, the quality of teaching is very good. Teachers provide clear plans, lessons are well presented and a good balance is achieved between whole-class instruction, pair work and group work. The classroom environments are attractive and supportive.
- Overall, English is well taught. Worthwhile approaches are used to teach reading. Writing is taught in a range of genres. While good outcomes are achieved in this work, additional emphasis should be placed on improving the standard of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work. In oral language, more progressive and systematic work needs to be undertaken to develop pupils' vocabulary and oral language skills. It is recommended that stronger links be established between assessment, planning, teaching and learning in oral language.
- Mathematics is very well taught. Discovery-based approaches, together with some effective programmes are incorporated into lessons and mathematical language is continuously reinforced. The school should explore strategies to provide further challenge for pupils whose attainment is high.
- *Sonraítear caighdeán an-mhaith i dteagasc na Gaeilge. Leagtar béim ar an gcumarsáid agus úsáidtear an Ghaeilge trasna an churaclam. Forbraítear scileanna léitheoireachta agus scríbhneoireachta go coinsiasach. B'fhiú béim sa bhreis a leagan ar fhorbairt na scileanna éisteachta. A very good standard is noted in the teaching of Irish. Communication is emphasised and Irish is used on an informal basis across the curriculum. Reading and writing skills are developed conscientiously. Placing additional emphasis on developing listening skills would be a worthwhile enhancement in this area.*
- Pupils' self-esteem and social development are well supported through regular lessons in Social, Personal and Health Education. They engage actively in lessons in the Visual Arts and Physical Education. Across the curriculum, a good emphasis is placed on developing pupils' skills.
- Two teachers provide good quality support to pupils with special educational needs. Their interactions with pupils are affirming and beneficial resources and programmes are used successfully. While clear, overarching targets are outlined in pupils' plans, there is scope for more specific content to be included. In devising plans for pupils with low-incidence needs, additional consideration should be given to targeting the broad spectrum of their needs and to providing support in a manner which is flexible and responsive to their levels of receptiveness. To ensure that the pupils with the most significant high-incidence learning needs are prioritised, the school needs to continuously review and monitor the effectiveness of the arrangements which are in place for the provision of learning support.

3. Support for pupils' wellbeing

- The school supports pupils' wellbeing through reward systems, whole-school assemblies and through the consistent implementation of a clear code of behaviour. Responses to questionnaires issued to parents and pupils during the evaluation indicate that pupils feel safe in school and enjoy their learning experiences.
- 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 quality of leadership and management is very good. The board of management functions very effectively. It is proactive in managing school accounts, in engaging in the school self-evaluation (SSE) and planning processes and in developing the school building and facilities. A considerable emphasis is placed on establishing positive relations with parents and members of the local community through school-based activities. The work of the parents' association is highly commendable.
- The principal provides strong leadership and demonstrates very good administration and organisational skills. She has cultivated a robust learning culture in the school and cohesive approaches to planning and decision making are in evidence. The deputy principal and special duties teacher are conscientious. Their work contributes greatly to the overall high standards in teaching and learning.

5. School Self-evaluation

- A well-embedded culture of regular and thorough evaluation of practices in curriculum areas is in evidence. Assessment data are used to good effect in this work
- The school is commended for its comprehensive work in SSE. Through this work, carefully considered, time-bound actions and targets have been outlined in Mathematics. Agreed strategies are implemented consistently to support pupils' attainment. Analyses of recent assessment data indicate that these strategies are yielding very good results.

Conclusion

- Arising from the dedication and competence of the various stakeholders, the school's capacity for further development is very good. The school leaders demonstrate a clear vision for the school's development and for raising overall standards. The teachers are very committed to continuously improving their practices through on-going professional development and collaboration with their colleagues. Parents and members of the local community are very supportive of the school.

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 and staff of Scoil Naomh Colmán Mac Duaigh value this very positive report.

The Board of Management reiterates the points made in the report that our pupils are well behaved, confident and enjoy their learning experiences, which is manifested in their very good learning achievements.

This report affirms that there is a highly commendable quality of teaching, learning and leadership by our team of committed and dedicated teachers.

The Board of Management agree with the inspectorate in their recognition of our very supportive parents and local community as one of our strengths.

In conclusion we, the Board of Management remain committed to maintaining a very good quality of leadership and management for the pupils 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 and staff are working closely together to implement the recommendations in this report.