

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Whole School Evaluation
REPORT**

**Kilross and Knockarron NS
Kilross,
Co. Tipperary
Uimhir rolla: 19421F**

Date of inspection: 1 October 2013



1. Introduction

Kilross & Knockcarron NS is a rural primary school situated in the village of Kilross in Co. Tipperary. The present school opened in 1976 following the amalgamation of Kilross and Knockcarron national schools. This two teacher school is under the patronage of the Archbishop of Cashel and Emly. In recent years the enrolment has declined steadily and current enrolment is fourteen pupils. This number puts the school below the retention figure for two teachers. 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.

2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

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

- The board members and parents are very supportive of the school.
- The principal succeeds in creating a warm and productive learning environment for both staff and pupils.
- The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good and very good in many cases.
- The teaching of English writing is commendable.
- The pupils are diligent learners and demonstrate a praiseworthy empathy with their peers.
- Déantar sáriarracht an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn sa scoil agus sa cheantar mórthimpeall. (*A very worthwhile effort is made to promote Irish in the school and in the community*).

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- The board is advised to consider how best to respond to the continuing fall in enrolments.
- Staff is advised to develop a greater linkage between the school plan, teachers' individual planning and the monthly progress records.
- A whole-school plan for mathematical language should be developed.
- A consistent engagement in oral mathematics' activity is recommended.
- A review of support provision in special educational needs (SEN) is advised.

3. Quality of School Management

- The members of the board of management are proactive in addressing school issues and show a great willingness to contribute to ongoing school development. Members are allocated specific tasks and have undertaken diocesan training to equip them for their roles. Financial accounts are presented routinely and these accounts are certified externally. Policies presented to the board are discussed and ratified. The board is reminded to ensure all policies are signed and dated. The board is advised to consider how best to respond to the continuing fall in enrolments and to the associated impact this may have on educational provision and on day-to-day school administration.
- The principal displays good leadership qualities and addresses school issues with a noted degree of empathy and professionalism. He succeeds in creating a warm and welcoming environment for staff, parents and pupils. He is an integral part of the community in Kilross and is proactive in supporting school and local initiatives.
- The school is maintained in good decorative order. Classrooms are decorated attractively with samples of pupils' work and curricular displays. The Board has invested generously in a wide range of educational material and this is utilised to good effect by staff in the support of pupils' learning. School administration is addressed in a competent and efficient manner by the school's secretary. The school grounds are maintained to a commendable standard. The teaching staff is deployed in accordance with the changing needs of the school.
- Parents are commended on the level of support they provide to the school. The development of the school library facilities is a worthy initiative. This is a welcoming school and communication with parents is good. Parents are routinely kept informed of the progress of their children. The results from parent questionnaires demonstrate a clear endorsement of teaching and learning in the school.
- The pupils in this school are happy and contented. During the evaluation it was noted how well pupils support each other. They are managed effectively by teachers in a caring and empathetic manner. The results from pupil questionnaires indicate a very high level of satisfaction with school life.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The school has devised a suite of organisational and curricular policies. These are informative and serve as a useful guide for staff. Clear relevant detail is recorded in teachers' short-term plans. Monthly progress of curriculum areas covered is recorded by means of a ticking system. Staff is advised to develop a greater linkage between the school plan, teachers' individual planning and the monthly progress records, to ensure a consistency and continuity in curriculum delivery. The language of Mathematics should be documented for each class level. The school is well placed to develop further through a worthy engagement in school self evaluation processes. Staff has undertaken an assessment of pupil achievement in numeracy. Following careful deliberation a praiseworthy school improvement plan was produced that sets out clear and measurable targets.
- 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 teaching and learning in this school is good and very good in many instances. Teachers work cooperatively at the various levels throughout the school. Team/station-teaching should be given careful consideration. Staff is advised to graph the standardised test results with a view to identifying trends and to inform further targeted interventions. Results should be subsequently presented to the board. Overall, results from standardised testing in literacy and in numeracy are very good and good respectively. All teachers maintain assessment folders documenting pupil progress in a variety of curricular areas.
- Moltar an sáirarracht a dhéantar an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn sa scoil agus sa cheantar mórthimpeall. Tá suímh Ghaelacha cruthaithe sna rangsheomraí. Baintear leas fóna as cluichí agus as obair bheirte san fhoghlaim. Tá sé ar chumas ag na daltaí ceisteanna a chur agus a fhreagairt. Tá mór chuid rannata is amhrán ar eolas ag na daltaí agus aithrisíonn siad go taitneamhach iad. Cuirtear ábhar foghlama in oiriúint do shuim na ndaltaí agus treisítear a gcuid foghlama le húsáid thairbheach a bhaint as athrá. Úsáidtear an teicneolaíocht eolais agus cumarsáide go torthúil le linn na foghlama.
- Léann na daltaí go cumasach. Leabhair oibre is mó a úsáidtear chun scileanna na ndaltaí a chur chun cinn sa léitheoireacht. Moltar ábhar léitheoireachta sa bhreis, ar nós fíor leabhair agus iriseáin a aimsiú chun suim na ndaltaí a chothú.
- Tugtar ócáidí rialta do na daltaí an scríbhneoireacht a chur chun cinn idir fheidhmiúil is chruthaitheach sa scoil. Aithnítear samplaí deasa de scríbhneoireacht ordúil sna cóipleabhair. Moltar saorscríbhneoireacht a chleachtadh chun dul chun cinn sa bhreis a dhéanamh.

A very worthwhile effort is made to promote Irish in the school and in the community. Irish is developed competently through a productive use of visual aids. Pupils' conversational Irish is developed effectively through game and pair activity. Pupils recite a wide range of verse and song pleasantly. Classroom learning is linked to pupils' interests and language is consolidated effectively. Information communication technology (ICT) is used productively.

The pupils read competently. Staff is advised to source a greater range of reading material to develop the pupils' interests and skills.

Pupils engage in a variety of writing activity, both functional and creative. They record neatly in copybooks. Free writing is encouraged to develop the pupils' skills further.

- The quality of teaching and learning In English is good. The pupils' skills in oral language development are taught effectively through a regular engagement in poetry and in discreet oral language activity. Pupils' skills are carefully nurtured through their engagement in the Jolly Phonics programme. Their reading skills are developed progressively through the use of a published text and the novel. Big books, together with a wide range of library books are available to pupils to promote reading for pleasure. Teachers read to pupils to further promote a love of and an interest in reading. A shared reading initiative at home is well established. Comprehension, vocabulary development, grammar and spelling activity receive careful attention. An increased range in reading initiatives should be introduced on a whole-school basis. The teaching of writing from an early age is most commendable. Pupils are regularly encouraged to discuss, to recite and to write their own verse. Pupils are also encouraged to write in a variety of genres and

work presented in copybooks is recorded neatly. Pupils' work is celebrated by teachers with displays of quality work in selected areas of the classroom.

- The quality of teaching and learning in Maths is good. Resources are utilised productively to complement learning activity. Concepts are linked regularly to the pupils' own environment to develop their understanding. Active learning methodologies are promoted and there is a regular engagement in hands-on activity. A consistent engagement in oral mathematics' activity is recommended for revision and consolidation purposes. Problem-solving, questioning and discussion are very positive features of classroom practice. The pupils' work is presented neatly in copybooks.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Physical Education (PE) is very good. Activities incorporate all strands of the curriculum. Lessons are well organised with an appropriate emphasis on warm-up and on cool-down activities. Team-teaching is utilised to good effect in PE with all pupils in the school participating in combined sessions. A noted feature of PE activity is how supportive the pupils are of one another. The pupils' participate in dance with the worthy aim of creating and sustaining a contemporary dance culture. The school enjoys the services of an external GAA coach and his contribution to skill development is much appreciated by staff and the community.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- The school enjoys the services of two learning support teachers who are shared with two adjoining schools. Both teachers are professional practitioners and demonstrate a clear commitment to addressing the learning needs of pupils. Planning documents are good. Detailed learning profiles are compiled and specific measurable learning targets are set. Learning activities are varied, well organised and matched to the priority learning needs of pupils. Interventions include elements of withdrawal and in-class support. In the further development of supportive structures, staff should consider further in-class supports such as station-teaching to address pupils' learning needs. The cohort of pupils in receipt of additional support should be reviewed. Pre-teaching in selected curricular areas should be considered as a further aid to pupils. Assessment processes are effective and include a selection of initial and diagnostic assessments that readily inform programme and practice. The staged approach to addressing the learning needs of pupils should be documented in the school's policy on the enrolment of pupils with special educational needs. (SP. Ed. Circular 02/05)

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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 Kilross & Knockcarron National School welcomes the recent WSE report and finds it to be affirming of the high quality of teaching and learning that takes place in our school.

We thank the Inspector for the manner in which he interacted with the whole school community. We also wish to take this opportunity to thank the whole school community for their hard work and commitment in striving to provide high quality learning opportunities to our pupils.

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 recommendations in this report are being implemented and will be phased in on a continuous basis. The board look forward to an opportunity to continue this process which has already begun.