

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

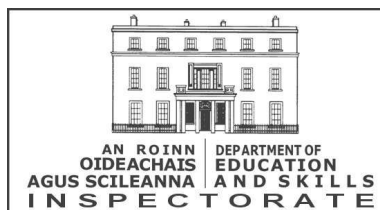
Department of Education and Skills

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

REPORT

**Ballybay Central National School
Kiltoom, County Roscommon
Uimhir rolla: 19534S**

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 Ballybay Central National School 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. 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 is located in Kiltoom, approximately eight kilometres from Athlone in South Roscommon. It is a co-educational school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Elphin. The school has an enrolment of 247 pupils. Attendance levels for the majority of pupils are good.

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

- All of the partners in education support the school with exemplary commitment.
- The principal and staff are highly committed to the pupils in their care.
- The school grounds and buildings are extremely well presented and maintained.
- The pupils are exceptionally well behaved and highly respectful of their teachers and their peers.
- The overall attainments of pupils in literacy and numeracy are particularly noteworthy.
- Pupils benefit significantly from the provision of a wide range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- The deployment of a special education teacher as a mainstream classroom teacher should be discontinued as current practice is not in compliance with Circular SP ED 02/05.
- To further develop in-class models of support for pupils, the school should consider introducing programmes such as Literacy Lift Off and Ready Set Go Maths and also, *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum framework*.
- B'fhiú athbhreithniú ar an bpolasaí Gaeilge chun clár leanúnach a leagan síos don ghramadach, don fhoclóir, don scríbhneoireacht chruthaitheach agus do mhúineadh na mbriathra. (*The Irish policy needs to be revised so that it provides for a continuous programme for grammar, vocabulary, creative writing and the teaching of the verbs.*)
- The board of management should consider issuing an annual report to inform parents of matters relating to the operation and performance of the school.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning achievements of the pupils are very successful. Pupils' attainments in literacy and numeracy are particularly noteworthy. In English, very good reading standards are achieved by the pupils. The development of pupils' comprehension skills and their writing across a range of genres is highly commendable. The presentation of pupils' written work is praiseworthy.
- In Mathematics, the gains in pupils' attainment in problem-solving are noteworthy. There is a commendable emphasis on the development of mathematical language.

- Sa Ghaeilge, baineann caighdeán maith le foghlaim na ndaltaí. Léann mórchuid de na daltaí le cruinneas agus le tuiscint áirithe. Tá an scríbhneoireacht ar chaighdeán maith. Forbraítear scileanna labhartha na ndaltaí le cluichí agus le hobair bheirte. B'fhiú, áfach, athbhreithniú ar an bpolasaí Gaeilge chun clár leanúnach a leagan síos don ghramadach, don fhoclóir, don scríbhneoireacht chruthaitheach agus do mhúineadh na mbriathra.

(The learning in Irish is of a good standard. The majority of the pupils read with a certain accuracy and understanding. The standard of written work is good. Pupils' speaking skills are developed through games and pair work. However, the Irish policy needs to be revised so that it provides for a continuous programme for grammar, vocabulary, creative writing and the teaching of the verbs.)

- The pupils' outcomes in the Visual Arts are impressive. The learning achievements of the pupils in the performing strands of the Music curriculum are excellent. Pupils displayed a broad knowledge in other subject areas. The school garden and the *Green-Schools Programme* all support pupils' learning successfully. The further use of information and communication technology as a regular tool for pupils' learning should be considered.
- The pupils with additional learning and special educational needs are making progress in accordance with their abilities. Programmes such as Reading Recovery and the various in-class initiatives have resulted in considerable gains in literacy for these pupils.

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is very good. Teachers approach their work with professionalism and are open to new methodologies. They are committed to continuing professional development and are willing to share their expertise with colleagues. The collaborative teaching observed was highly effective. To further develop in-class models of support for pupils, the school should consider introducing approaches such as Literacy Lift Off and Ready Set Go Maths as well as *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum framework*.
- The standard of teaching provided for pupils in receipt of additional support is of a very high quality.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- The management of pupils is very effective. Pupils are exceptionally courteous. Mutual respect and kindness permeates the school. The pupils support charitable organisations and the school community enthusiastically. They represent their school in various competitions and performances with success.
- The layout of the building and the grounds, in particular, the school garden and the attractive learning environments facilitate the high quality of care for the pupils' well-being. Pupils with additional learning needs are supported in an inclusive manner.
- Responses to pupils' questionnaires distributed during the evaluation indicate that they all know the school rules and that they feel safe in class.
- Confirmation was provided that the board of management has formally adopted the *Child Protection 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 has been proactive in managing the extensions to the school over the years. All members are highly committed to their role and generous

with their time. The parents' association supports the school with commendable commitment. The ancillary staff contributes enormously to the smooth operation of the school. The deployment of a special education teacher as a mainstream classroom teacher should be discontinued as current practice is not in compliance with Circular SP ED 02/05.

- Policy development is of high quality though parents' views need to be given greater consideration during review of school policies. Fewer than half of parents surveyed during the evaluation noted that their views are sought in relation to school matters. It is recommended that the board consider issuing an annual report to parents.
- The principal, appointed in 1987 has given tremendous service to the school. He is highly regarded by all the partners. He promotes a caring ethos, has overseen many successful developments in teaching and learning and in the general infrastructure of the school. The principal has developed a collegial atmosphere within the school. The in-school management team support him diligently. They lead various educational projects with great skill and commitment.

5. School Self-evaluation

- The staff have prioritised problem-solving in numeracy as an area for development. The teachers have analysed test results, reflected on their own practice and have formulated an improvement plan. As a next step, they need to seek the views of parents and pupils to inform the process.

Conclusion

The school's capacity to **engage in school improvement** is very good.

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 Ballybay Central N.S. Roll No. 19534S have noted the findings of W.S.E. M.L.L.

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 school staff have discussed the recommendations and will incorporate them in future school policy.