

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

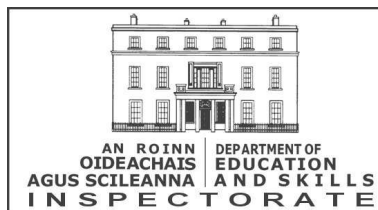
**Department of Education and Skills**

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

**REPORT**

**St Brendan's NS  
Fenit, Tralee,  
Co Kerry  
Uimhir rolla: 19659P**

**Date of inspection: 18-11-2013**



## Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

### Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in St Brendan's primary 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 Fenit village which is thirteen kilometres west of Tralee in Co Kerry. It has an enrolment of 109 pupils and attendance levels are excellent. The school has a teaching principal, four mainstream class teachers, a learning-support and resource teacher shared with other schools in the area and a full-time teacher working on the JobBridge-National Internship Scheme.

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

- The board of management functions in an effective manner and is very supportive of the work of the school.
- A hardworking and highly effective principal provides quality leadership to a very effective staff team.
- The parents association engages in an extensive range of initiatives to support the work of the school.
- There are high levels of parental involvement in the school.
- The pupils are motivated, enthusiastic and very well behaved.
- Very high standards of teaching and learning were noted in the lessons observed.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- The deployment of special educational needs (SEN) resources should be reviewed in accordance with the allocation of resource hours to pupils and the provisions of circular 02/05.
- The broad range of child protection procedures in place in the school should be extended to ensure that a report from the DLP on child protection is included in the minutes of every board meeting.
- Targets in some individual education plans should be defined in more specific and measurable terms.
- Expressing targets in the school improvement plan in terms of specific learning outcomes for pupils would enhance the very effective work that has been completed in the school self-evaluation process.
- Mechanisms to further embed information and communication technology (ICT) in the learning process should be explored.

### Findings

#### 1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning achievements of the pupils are very good. Pupil progress is closely tracked and monitored and formative use of assessment data to target areas for development in pupil learning is highly commendable.
- In English, pupils read materials from a wide variety of genres with fluency and expression. Oral language standards are generally very good and high quality

samples of pupils' written work in a variety of genres were noted in both copybooks and classroom compilations.

- Ta caighdeán ard sroichte ag na daltaí sa Ghaeilge. Tá foclóir leathan acu agus tá siad in ann labhairt go leanúnach ar thopaicí áirithe. Léann said le brí agus le tuiscint. Chun cur leis an dea-chleachtas seo, moltar réimse níos leithne abhar léitheoireachta a chothú sa scoil. *High standards are achieved by pupils in Irish. They possess a broad range of vocabulary. They answer questions confidently and display an ability to speak in a sustained manner on specific topics. They read with expression and understanding. The provision of a broader range of reading material would further enrich provision in this area.*
- Pupils have high levels of understanding of key mathematical concepts. They display commendable ability to apply their mathematical knowledge to the process of multi-stage problem solving.
- Lessons observed in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education indicate pupils have well developed research and investigative skills and have a good knowledge and understanding of key features of the physical and human environments of both the local area and other countries.
- Attractive displays and compilations of pupils' visual art work are a testament to the high quality of pupils' learning in this subject area. In Music, pupils possess an extensive repertoire of songs in both Irish and English, display a well-developed sense of rhythm and perform a range of tunes melodiously on the tin-whistle.
- Pupils engage very positively with provision for special educational needs and pupil progress is carefully tracked and monitored.

## **2. Quality of teaching**

- The overall quality of teaching in the lessons observed was very good. Teacher preparation is systematic and focussed and clearly informs an integrated approach to curriculum implementation. Pupils actively engage in all activities and group, paired and project work were hallmarks of the provision observed. Learning environments are very well organised and contain a combination of stimulating learning resources and displays of pupils' work.
- Pupils' written work is regularly monitored and very effective practices are in place involving the collation, tracking and analysis of assessment data both on an individual pupil and whole-school basis.
- Teaching observed in special education settings was very good. A variety of resources and methodologies were skilfully employed to address pupils' learning needs. Refining learning targets in some individual plans is recommended. It is recommended that designating responsibility to learning support personnel for the delivery of curriculum areas be reviewed and consideration given to the delivery of time-bound support interventions based on specifically assessed areas of need. Reviewing the deployment of resource hours in accordance with allocations to pupils is also recommended.

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

- Very positive, inclusive, good humoured, pupil-pupil and pupil-teacher relationships characterised the provision observed. Pupils' efforts were acknowledged positively at all times and work is valued by means of displays and compilations. Teachers demonstrate very good insights into the needs and abilities of the pupils and very effective examples of differentiated provision in classrooms were noted.
- Pupils' responses to questionnaires administered as part of the evaluation indicate that they are very happy in their 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 generally compliant with the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. However, a report from the DLP on child protection should be included in the minutes of every board meeting.

#### **4. Leadership and Management**

- There is very effective leadership in this school. The board of management addresses issues in a professional and effective manner and is committed to supporting and overseeing the effective functioning of all aspects of the school. It is advised that the existing vacancy on the board be filled at the earliest opportunity.
- The principal is a highly effective and reflective practitioner who articulates a clear and strategic vision for the school and the pupils. She is ably supported by the deputy principal who attends to a broad range of duties in a very professional and effective manner.
- The parents' association works assiduously to support the work of the school. Very positive levels of parental involvement in a range of school initiatives were noted during the evaluation. Parental responses to a questionnaire issued as part of the evaluation reveal very positive attitudes to the school.

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

- The school has engaged in a systematic process of self-evaluation which involved analysis of assessment data and collaboration with parents' and pupils. A self-evaluation report has been issued and a three-year improvement plan focussing on aspects of literacy provision has been formulated. The whole school strategies contained in this plan are clearly in evidence in classrooms. It is advised that the school revisit the targets in the school improvement plan with a view to expressing them in terms of learning outcomes for the pupils.

#### **Conclusion**

This school's capacity to develop further is very good. The staff and management are motivated, capable and highly committed to the school. The collective engagement in the school self-evaluation process is evidence of the staff's commitment to the concept of strategic planning and reflective practice.

# **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 St. Brendan's National School accepts the report as an accurate reflection of the high standards of teaching and learning in our school and it congratulates our teachers and pupils. The Board acknowledges the very high levels of satisfaction indicated by parents in their questionnaire responses.

**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 accepts the recommendations by the Inspector and has included a Child Protection report at every meeting.