

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills**

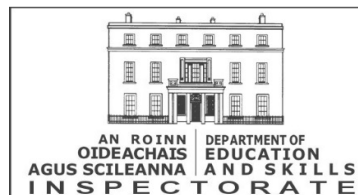
**Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning**

REPORT

**Clonoulty Central NS,
Goolds Cross,
Cashel,
Co. Tipperary**

Uimhir rolla: 19690J

Date of inspection: 28 January 2016



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Clonoulty Central National School in January 2016. 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.

This three -teacher school is in a rural setting, situated in the parish of Clonoulty Rossmore.

The evaluation has found:

- The overall achievements of pupils in literacy and in numeracy are good and very good respectively.
- The pupils' problem-solving skills are developed effectively through a productive use of group-work/team-teaching.
- During the evaluation the pupils were well-mannered and courteous.
- Staff is commended in developing the pupils' interests in and enjoyment of Music.
- Aistear activity was very well organised and developed.
- The development of self-assessment learning folders (SALF) is praiseworthy practice.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Moltar an teanga labhartha agus an scríbhneoireacht chruthaitheach a chur chun cinn sa Ghaeilge. (*A greater emphasis on the development of pupils' oral responses and creative writing in Irish is recommended*).
- Current deployment of learning support hours should be reviewed and the time allocated to those pupils who present with the greatest need.
- A process to ensure the parent-voice is incorporated in school policy development should be considered.
- A review of whole-school planning is recommended that will effect a greater consistency and continuity in curriculum delivery.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning achievements of pupils in this school are good. The results from standardised tests in literacy indicate that pupils are making good progress. The pupils engage enthusiastically in Aistear activities in the infant classroom and benefit considerably from the many themes explored. Many pupils recite poetry and verse with enthusiasm. A whole-school approach to the selection and recitation of poetry at each class level is recommended. The pupils' reading skills are developed consistently from an early age. They are exposed to a variety of reading material and they show a keen interest in reading as a pleasurable pastime. Their reading skills are supported further through a shared reading initiative. Writing skills are nurtured throughout the school, with pupils encouraged to write in a variety of genre. The quality of their written work on display in many classrooms and in copybooks is praiseworthy. However, standards in penmanship vary throughout the school. Staff should implement a whole-school approach to handwriting to raise standards.

- Standardised tests in numeracy indicate that pupils are making very good progress. The pupils benefit gainfully through their engagement in productive game and counting activities at the commencement of lessons. The quality of recording in copybooks in Mathematics is variable. The written work in the middle and senior classes, in particular, is of a high standard. A whole-school approach to developing consistent good practice is necessary.
- Tá réimsí éagsúla le sonrú i gcaighdeán foghlama na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge. Aithrisíonn roinnt áirithe daltaí rainn is filíocht go cumasach láidir agus canann siad go ceolmhar. Is féidir leo ceisteanna a chur is a fhreagairt. Sroichtear caighdeán sásúil sa léitheoireacht. Aithnítear caighdeán ordúil sa scríbhneoirecht i gcóipleabhair na ndaltaí. Scríbhneoireacht fheidhmiúil is mó a chleachtar agus is dúshlán anois é d'fhoireann na scoile an scríbhneoireacht chruthaitheach a chur chun cinn.
- *The standard of pupils' learning in Irish varies. Some pupils recite poetry and verse energetically and they sing competently. They can ask and answer questions. Reading standards are satisfactory. Pupils' writing is recorded neatly. The challenge now for staff is to develop their creative writing skills.*
- The pupils' performance in Drama and in song was most accomplished.
- They displayed a good understanding of the concepts explored in Science. Appropriate scientific language was used throughout the experiment. The concept of fair testing should be explored during these experiments.
- Pupils who present with special educational needs are exposed to a variety of productive learning experiences and are making good progress commensurate with age and ability.

2. Quality of teaching

- Staff is committed to improving teaching and learning in the school. Pupil-teacher relationships were observed to be very positive and pupils were motivated to learn. The quality of teaching across a number of curricular areas ranged from satisfactory, to good, to very good, in some instances. Some teaching approaches are in need of review and further development. Teacher questioning, discussion and group-work are features of good classroom practices. Aistear activity in the infant classroom was very well organised. Staff should develop comprehension skills systematically, through selected initiatives.
- Mental/oral mathematical activity is a feature of good classroom practice. Pupils' learning is supported with a regular use of concrete material and with supportive mathematics' displays. Their problem-solving skills are developed through a productive use of group work/team-teaching. A whole-school approach to the acquisition of the language of Mathematics is implemented consistently throughout the school.
- Déanann na hoidí iarracht chreidiúnach an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn sa scoil. Cruthaítear suíomh ghaelach torthúil in an-chuid de na rangsheomraí. Múintear frása na seachtaine go rianúil. I gcásanna áirithe baineann na h-oidí leas fóna as athrá chun bunfhoclóir an cheachta a mhúineadh. Moltar béim sa bhreis a dhíriú ar chumas freagartha na ndaltaí chun an teanga labhartha a threisiú tríd an scoil.
- *The teachers make a creditable attempt to promote Irish. Productive print environments are created in many classrooms. The Irish phrase of the week is taught routinely. In some cases teachers utilise regular repetition to teach basic vocabulary. An increased emphasis on pupil responses is necessary to improve language skills.*
- The hard work and commitment of staff is noted in developing the pupils' interests in and enjoyment of Music.
- Staff demonstrate a clear commitment to addressing the needs of pupils who present with special educational needs (SEN). Individual education plans include specific targets, together with clearly identified strategies and criteria for target achievement. A review of practice in short-term planning is recommended that will inform current and future target setting and review. Staff has identified some opportunities for in-class support and this good practice will be developed further with the introduction of Literacy Lift-Off. A considerable portion of the SEN tuition time is allocated to whole-class teaching in Mathematics. This practice should be reviewed and the time should be

allocated to those pupils who present with the greatest need. The graphing of standardised test results is recommended that will more readily identify trends in pupils' additional learning needs.

- The special needs assistants attend to a variety of cognitive and care needs with a noted diligence and commitment.
- The teaching staff has developed a suite of organisational and curricular plans. It is now timely to review current curricular planning and develop a greater linkage between the school plan, teachers' individual planning and the monthly progress records. Practice in assessment is good in the school. The use of self-assessment learning folders (SALF), in particular, is praiseworthy practice.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- During the evaluation the pupils were well-mannered and courteous. Pupils' educational and social needs are addressed effectively through a wide range of activities provided during and after school time. The results from pupil questionnaires are very positive.
- The parents are active in supporting school initiatives. They are informed routinely on the progress of their children. A process to ensure the parent-voice is incorporated in school policy development should now be considered. The results from the questionnaires indicate that the vast majority of parents are very satisfied with the quality of teaching and care that their children receive.
- Confirmation was provided that the board of management has formally adopted the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* without modification.

4. Leadership and Management

- The Board of management is properly constituted and supports the staff and school organisation consistently. The board is reminded to submit a financial report at each meeting.
- The principal promotes a positive learning environment and has, with the support of colleagues, introduced a number of worthy initiatives to progress learning. He is ably supported by the deputy principal who fulfils her duties in a diligent manner. A short end of year report on the completion of these duties should be compiled and presented to the board of management.
- The school's secretary's diligence and commitment ensures an efficiency in school administration.

5. School Self-evaluation

- Staff has engaged conscientiously with school self-evaluation processes (SSE). Initiatives introduced in literacy and in numeracy have advanced the learning of pupils. A summary of the SSE reports and the school improvement plans should now be issued to parents.

Conclusion

The school's capacity to engage in school improvement is good. A closer alignment of good whole-school planning processes will ensure a consistent development of teaching and learning in 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 of Clonoulty National School has read and is satisfied with the published report of the recent W.S.E. We now commit to putting the inspector's recommendations into practice.

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 undertakes to implement the following action to address each of the recommendations in the report:

- The school will place a greater emphasis on pupil's oral responses and creative writing in Irish. We plan to do this by focusing on this specific area in School Self Evaluation in the 2016-2017 school year.
- We have already altered learning support arrangements so that those pupils with the greatest need get maximum learning support time.
- The Board of Management has already decided to give a twice yearly report to parents on the workings of the board. Also, any school plans for review or change will be put on the school website for parents' comments.
- The school will review the curricular element of the whole school plan to effect greater consistency and continuity in curriculum delivery.
- A school bank of poetry and songs will be created for each class level and detailed in the school plan.
- Pupils from infants upwards will record their Mathematics in copies.
- In order to develop comprehension skills, we will implement the "Building Bridges" programme for September 2016.
- Clonoulty N.S. will review curricular planning and develop greater links between the school plan, teachers' planning and monthly progress reports. A common "cuntas míosúil" template will be used by all teachers from September 2016.
- The principal and deputy principal will report on the completion of their duties to the Board of Management at the end of the school year.
- Since the inspection, the school has begun to implement a "Literacy Lift-Off" programme in the middle class in a bid to raise overall literacy levels even further in the school. It is hoped to extend this programme into the senior classes in the 2016-2017 school year.