

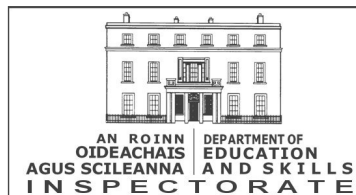
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

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

**REPORT**

**Mary Queen of Ireland National School**  
**Toberburr, County Dublin**  
**Roll number: 19693P**

**Date of inspection: 30 November 2015**



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

### Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Mary Queen of Ireland National School, in November 2015. 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 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.

Mary Queen of Ireland National School operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. Seventy-six pupils are enrolled across three mainstream classes. The school participates in the Department of Education and Skills' action plan for educational inclusion, Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS).

The evaluation has found:

- The school community effectively supports highly motivated pupils.
- The learning environment is welcoming and inclusive.
- Teaching and learning are of a high quality. The development of team teaching would enhance this provision.
- Pupils achieve consistently well in literacy and numeracy.
- Sroichtear caighdeán sásúil i labhairt na Gaeilge. (*A satisfactory standard is achieved in spoken Irish.*)
- The quality of leadership in the school is excellent.
- A committed board of management supports the staff effectively.
- Parents play a very positive role in supporting the school.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- The school should revise its planning processes, linking the skills to be developed for each class level with the most suitable teaching and assessment strategies.
- The English-language programme should be further developed to support pupils' communication and independent learning skills.
- The board of management should establish more regular and focused communication with the school community.
- There is a need to advance collaborative team teaching to support pupils with special educational needs.

### Findings

#### 1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The learning achievements of pupils are good overall. Almost all pupils are keen and eager to learn. In general, pupils with additional learning needs learn well.
- Pupils achieve very well in the area of literacy. Most pupils read different types of texts fluently, confidently and with understanding. They write and speak competently. Next steps in language development should include more opportunities for all pupils to articulate their thoughts and opinions independently and as part of collaborative activities. Further attention should be given to utilising pupils' ideas and creative thoughts as a basis for their expressive language development. An English-language programme should be developed to further support pupils' communication and independent learning skills. Numeracy and scientific skills are well developed. A minority of pupils finds problem-solving activities challenging. They should now be afforded further discussion opportunities to explore solutions and test hypotheses.

- Tá na daltaí tiomanta d'fhoghlaim na Gaeilge agus tá caighdeán sásuil á bhaint amach acu i nGaeilge. Ba chóir úsáid níos córasaí a bhaint as an nGaeilge neamhghoirmiúil ar bhonn scoile-uile chun a gcuid Gaeilge labhartha a fheabhsú. *(Pupils are committed to learning Irish and they are achieving a satisfactory standard in Irish. To improve their oral skills, incidental Irish should be used more systematically on a whole-school basis.)*
- Most pupils are making highly commendable progress in areas such as Social, Personal and Health Education, local History and Geography, Music and Drama. Pupils with additional needs generally make very good progress in withdrawal settings. However, there is need for a greater link between the work these pupils engage in, with support teachers and their learning activities in the classroom setting.

## 2. Quality of teaching

- The quality of teaching is highly commendable. Teachers use a range of methodologies effectively. Lessons are well paced and appropriate to the needs of the different class levels. Resources are very well used to consolidate concepts. Occasionally, when teachers work with whole-class groups, there is need to give specific and appropriate support to pupils with additional educational needs. Further use of information and communication technology and opportunities for discussion would support high-attaining pupils to learn more independently.
- Written plans provided by class teachers are adequately detailed. Learning objectives in short-term planning are in line with the expectations for different class levels. However, closer attention to the identification of specific skill-based objectives is recommended.
- Whole-school assessment policies and practices are good. The quality of questioning is good overall. Pupils evaluate their own work in a variety of settings and their feedback informs further teaching and learning. For further improvement, the assessment of pupils' skills and application should be considered.
- Preparation and planning for pupils with additional needs are good overall, and very effective in some instances. Clear alignment between the pupils' needs and the work in class and at home would enhance pupils' learning. To this end, the role of mainstream and support teacher, special needs assistant, parent and pupils themselves should be clearly defined in learning plans. Additional team teaching with specific skill-based objectives would further support effective learning.

## 3. Support for pupils' well-being

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is excellent. Pupils are included, nurtured and supported in school. The school community is a safe, positive environment. Pupils also benefit from the worthwhile activities organised through the School Completion Programme. In questionnaires, administered during the evaluation, parents agreed that their children felt safe.
- 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 highly commendable. The board of management is very supportive of the work of the school. Committed members bring significant individual expertise to the work of the board. School facilities are managed to a very high standard and good provision is made for suitable resources. The board

should now establish more formal communication channels with the school community.

- The acting principal is in her second year of leadership in this school. The leadership of teaching and learning, through modelling of best practice, is excellent. The management of staff is exemplary. A highly professional ethos is cultivated among staff. The commitment of the in-school management team to quality teaching and learning is highly commendable. The school community shares a common vision for the inclusion and academic development of pupils. Building on this vision for the school, the implementation of the skills-based approach to all teaching and learning should now be a key priority.
- The parents' association plays an active role in the work of the school. Effective liaison and communication are now firmly established with the staff. Regular communication links should now be established with the board of management.

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

- The quality of school self-evaluation is good overall. The school community engages in reflective practice continuously. With the leadership personnel focused on the quality of teaching and learning, each strategy is planned and acted upon effectively.
- A detailed school improvement plan has been devised with targets clearly set out. Significantly, the continuous review of this plan results in the successful achievement of targets.

#### **Conclusion**

The school's capacity to engage in school improvement in teaching and learning is very good, given the staff's commitment to continuous professional development, the support of the whole-school community and the skilful leadership of school management.

## **Appendix**

**School response to the report**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

**Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The board of management (B.O.M.) of Mary Queen of Ireland N.S. welcomes the report which confirms the effective teaching standards being implemented in our school. We are pleased that the many strengths of our school have been identified. We readily welcome advice and recommendations for future implementation as well as the affirmation of best practices already in existence in our school.

The B.O.M. would like to commend the commitment and enthusiasm of our staff and pupils and the valuable support of our parents and wider community. We are extremely proud of the report we have received and look forward to implementing the recommendations set out therein to ensure that our school continues striving to achieve the excellent standards that are already firmly in place.

**Part B: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection**

The B.O.M. acknowledges the recommendations of the report and is fully committed to working towards their implementation in the future.