

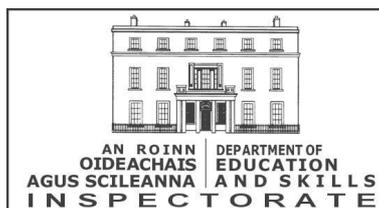
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills**

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

**REPORT**

**Our Lady of the Wayside National School,  
Bluebell Road,  
Dublin 12  
Uimhir rolla: 19764M**

**Date of inspection: 4th December 2014**



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

### Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Our Lady of the Wayside National School in December 2014. 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.

Our Lady of the Wayside National School operating under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin is a co-educational school catering for pupils from junior infants to sixth class. The school receives funding from the Department of Education and Skills under DEIS Band 1. At the time of the evaluation the school had an enrolment of 125 pupils. The school works proactively to promote regular attendance and punctuality.

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

- The commitment of the principal, staff and board of management to the welfare and holistic development of all pupils is praised.
- There is a positive atmosphere in the school based on mutual respect.
- The principal leads the school capably, provides very good curriculum leadership and cultivates positive relationships across the school community.
- There is high quality teaching in the school.
- Pupils display positive attitudes to their lessons and are achieving good learning outcomes across a range of curriculum areas.
- The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The school has a supportive board of management and parent body.
- There is very good capacity among the school staff to secure ongoing school improvement.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- To exploit fully the potential of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) for enhancing teaching and learning, teachers should create further opportunities for pupils to use ICT during lessons.
- To extend and strengthen parental involvement with the school, it is recommended that the board of management renew its efforts to establish a parents' association.
- The board of management should issue an annual report on the operation of the school.

### Findings

#### 1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The pupils are cooperative and courteous, and positively disposed to their lessons and learning. They are achieving good learning outcomes across a range of curriculum areas particularly in, literacy, numeracy, Physical Education and the Arts with impressive displays of their work in classrooms and around the school. In the pupil questionnaires most pupils responded that they enjoy their lessons and learning.

## 2. Quality of teaching

- Overall the quality of teaching is very good. Teachers ensure that lessons are well structured and suitable resources, strategies and active methodologies are employed to engage the pupils meaningfully in their learning. Information and communications technology (ICT) is used creatively by teachers in many classroom settings. In the pupil questionnaires a significant number of pupils responded that they did not use computers during lessons. To exploit fully the potential of ICT for enhancing teaching and learning, further opportunities should be created across the school for pupils to use ICT during lessons. Responses in the parent questionnaires indicate very high levels of satisfaction among parents about the quality of the teaching in the school. There is a strong culture of team-work and collegiality among all staff members. Teachers regularly engage in on-going reflection, continuing professional development and sharing of good practice. The level of professional development undertaken by staff is praiseworthy.
- There is commendable assessment of pupil progress. Teachers use a wide range of assessment approaches including summative, formative and self-assessment.

## 3. Support for pupils' well-being

The quality of support for pupils' well-being and the relations between pupils and staff are very good. A range of supports is in place including, breakfast club, after schools club, Rainbows and Art therapy. Pupils are well managed by teachers and they engage very well in lessons. The school is a learning environment where efforts as well as achievements are acknowledged and the pupils' successes in a wide range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities are recorded and celebrated. The voice of pupils is included in the decision-making process of the school through the students' council.

- There are very good supports in place for pupils with special educational needs. Support teachers effectively use a variety of approaches based on identified need either offering in-class support or through the withdrawal of pupils in groups or individually as appropriate. Five special needs assistants (SNAs) work closely with the teachers and make a valuable contribution to the welfare and inclusion of pupils with additional needs in all school activities.
- A welcoming and inclusive school environment is in evidence. School management and staff have actively promoted and continue to encourage high quality relationships with parents and the wider community through regular communication, newsletter, formal and informal parent-teacher meetings and the school website. Parents are supportive of the school and are involved in a range of in-school activities. Almost all parents surveyed responded that the school is welcoming of them. To extend and strengthen parental involvement in the school it is recommended that the board of management renew its efforts to establish a parents' association.
- 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 board of management conducts its business effectively and ensures that it discusses developments around teaching and learning in the school regularly. It is recommended that the board issue an annual report on the operation of the school.
- The principal has been highly successful in creating a climate of care and promoting a culture of team-work and collaborative decision-making that allows for the distribution of duties and responsibilities amongst all members of staff and ensures that the skills of all are valued and utilised. The principal and the in-school management team are praised for the quality of the administrative and curriculum leadership provided to the school. In the parent questionnaires almost all parents say that they are happy with the school.

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

- The school has engaged well in School Self-Evaluation (SSE) using evidence collected from pupils and parents, analysis of standardised tests as well as on teacher reflections and observations. A school improvement plan (SIP) has been developed and disseminated to the school community. A number of whole-school approaches have been agreed and it is evident that they are being implemented consistently on a whole-school basis and are having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

## **Conclusion**

- Given the commitment by school staff to the provision of a high quality programme of learning and their engagement in continuing professional development the school's capacity to secure ongoing 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 welcomes the findings of the WSE/MLL report particularly in terms of a positive atmosphere in the school based on mutual respect, the learning achievements of pupils, the quality of teaching and the support for pupils' wellbeing.

The board welcomes the acknowledgement of professional development of teachers in literacy through Write To Read as this has been intense and demanding from the school's and individual teacher's perspective. However, the school affirms an ongoing commitment to this project because of its positive outcomes for children and the whole school community.

## **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 of the WSE/MLL and has taken the following steps; Pupils should be afforded more opportunity to use ICT during lessons. To this end the school has:

- Undertaken a reconstruction of the school's website.
- Developed a plan to involve pupils in teaching senior members of the Bluebell community ICT skills through the Silver Surfers project.
- Set a target of at least one literacy/numeracy lessons in computer room each month for each class.
- Improved classroom facilities, replacement of stylus, upgrade of laptops and PCs.

The school has held a planned meeting with parents with a view to establishing a parents' council and at time of writing (March 2015) has commitment from at least 6 parents to establish parents' association.

The board will issue a report on its work to parents at the end of school year 2014/15 and in all subsequent years.