

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

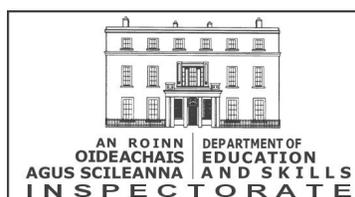
**Department of Education and Skills**

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

**REPORT**

**Kildalkey Central National School,  
Kildalkey, Navan, County Meath  
Uimhir rolla: 19813W**

**Date of inspection: 27 January 2016**



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

### Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation - Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Kildalkey 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.

Kildalkey Central National School is a co-educational vertical school which operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Meath. While attendance levels are very good for most pupils, the attendance of a significant minority gives cause for concern. The school should devise a range of strategies to encourage attendance as required under Section 22 of the Education Welfare Act (2000).

The evaluation has found:

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is good. Teachers create stimulating learning environments and undertake their work enthusiastically.
- While the principal and the in-school management team are highly committed to the school, there is scope to develop their respective curricular leadership roles.
- The board of management is supportive of the work of the school. However, it should devise a strategic plan to manage the very necessary review and development of curricular and organisational policies.
- The school has access to a broad range of assessment data. This data should underpin differentiated programme planning in learning settings, and should be integral to target setting in the school self-evaluation process.
- Pupils are courteous and enthusiastic learners, and their recall of previous learning is highly competent.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- As a priority, a strategic plan should be devised to guide the board of management's work. In addition, the retention of pupils in the same class grade, and the granting of exemptions from the learning of Irish should be in line with Department circulars.
- The curricular leadership role of post-holders should be developed.
- Further co-ordination of supports for pupils with additional learning needs is recommended.
- A record of discussion on the subject of child protection should be formally recorded in the minutes of board meetings. School policy should also clarify for teachers the timing for the delivery of the full Stay Safe programme.
- Assessment data should underpin differentiated programme planning in learning settings, and should be integral to target setting in the school self-evaluation process.

## Findings

### 1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning achievements of the pupils are commendable. Pupils demonstrate a high level of sustained engagement in their learning tasks. Their recall of previous learning is highly competent overall.
- Pupils' achievements in Mathematics are good. All teachers place an explicit focus on the development of mathematical language. However, a wider range of oral activities in Mathematics is advised. The provision of more challenging learning experiences is recommended for pupils who demonstrate high levels of ability.
- Pupils' learning in English is of a high quality. Many read with a commendable level of fluency and understanding. In some settings, pupils' access to reading materials could be extended. Pupils demonstrate competent writing skills in a number of genres. There is need overall to develop their appreciation of, and exposure to a wider repertoire of poetry.
- Tá caighdeán na foghlama sa Ghaeilge go maith ar an mórgóir. Tá sé ar chumas na ndaltaí abairtí a struchtúró le misneach, agus briathra a úsáid le tuiscint, ach b'fhiú an fhoghlaim seo a fhorbairt go córasach ó rang go rang. Moltar rannta agus filíocht a mhúineadh trasna na scoile. *The standard of learning in Irish is good overall. Pupils are able to structure sentences confidently, and use verbs with understanding, but it would be worthwhile to systematically develop this learning from class to class. The teaching of rhymes and poetry across the school is advised.*
- Some pupils demonstrate good recall of learning in relation to topics experienced in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE).
- Pupils have opportunities to engage in skills-based co-curricular and extracurricular learning which promotes healthy lifestyles and the development of citizenship skills.
- Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the inclusive and welcoming atmosphere that is created in the school. They engage confidently in their learning activities.

### 2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is good. Teachers create stimulating learning environments and undertake their work enthusiastically. In the majority of settings, concepts are taught explicitly, and pupils' learning is consolidated well. Highly effective approaches to integrated play-based learning were noted in an infant setting.
- Supports for pupils with additional learning needs are adequate. Interactions are highly supportive of pupils' confidence. While most lessons observed were well structured, the use of suitable diagnostic assessment is recommended to guide targeted programme planning. Further co-ordination of additional supports to ensure a more balanced approach to their delivery, the inclusion of early intervention strategies and team teaching approaches, and a review of the special education policy are also recommended.

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

- The management of pupils is good. Pupils are courteous and enthusiastic learners. In their responses to questionnaires administered as part of the evaluation, pupils are positive about many aspects of school life.
- 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*. A report on child protection matters is provided at board of management meetings. However, a record of the discussion should be formally recorded in the minutes. Minutes should also indicate the annual review date of the child protection policy. School policy should also clarify for teachers the timing for the delivery of the full Stay Safe programme.

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

- The board of management is properly constituted and meetings are convened appropriately. The board is actively focusing on the commencement of a new school building. As a priority, members should devise a strategic plan to manage the very necessary review and development of organisational and curriculum policies. The retention of pupils in the same class grade, and the granting of exemptions from the learning of Irish is not in line with Department circulars. In this regard, steps should be taken to ensure that pupils only repeat a year for educational reasons and in exceptional circumstances. The granting of exemptions from the learning of Irish should only arise in rare and exceptional circumstances. The recently appointed board has formally indicated that school accounts will be audited on an annual basis.
- The principal and the in-school management team are highly committed to the school. A strong sense of collaboration is evident in their work. In order to develop this further, formal team meetings should be convened, and a greater focus on curricular leadership is recommended.
- The parents' association actively supports the work of the school. Parental responses to questionnaires administered during the evaluation indicate high levels of satisfaction with the educational provision in the school.

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

- There is scope for development in the implementation of the school self-evaluation process. While the school has engaged in this work enthusiastically, approaches in this area need to be reviewed and refined.
- School improvement planning should be soundly based upon the robust analysis of a wide range of evidence and an indepth analysis of available assessment data. Targets for school improvement should be specific and measurable, and clearly linked to planning and teaching.

### **Conclusion**

- The school's capacity to engage in school improvement is good. Teachers and school management presented as interested and committed practitioners. However, the school should avail of additional support to guide this work.

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

**Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report**

We welcome the findings of the report which affirms the high standards of teaching and learning in our school. In addition, we welcome the recognition of the dedication and commitment of staff, Board of Management and Parents which fosters learning in a happy and safe environment. The Board appreciates the recognition of the high levels of satisfaction expressed by the parents. The Board congratulates the staff, both teaching and ancillary, pupils, parents and the wider community for their co-operation.

**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 B.O.M. acknowledges and accepts the key recommendations of the report, and in keeping with our well established culture of self-evaluation and continuous improvement have incorporated those recommendations into our 3 year plan and will endeavour to address them.