The document contains the title and information about the Whole School Evaluation, the school project, and the date of the inspection. It is a formal report from the Department of Education and Skills, detailing the evaluation of Kilkenny School Project NS at Springfields, Waterford Road, Kilkenny with the roll number 19905E. The date of the inspection is 19 January 2012.
1. Introduction

Kilkenny School Project NS is a multi-denominational, co-educational, vertical primary school under the patronage of the Kilkenny School Project Executive Committee. There are 238 pupils enrolled and the attendance of most pupils is very good. 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.

2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

The following are the **main strengths** of the work of the school:

- The principal successfully promotes a strong sense of common purpose among the school community.
- The teaching staff demonstrates praiseworthy commitment to the school and to continually developing their professional practice.
- The quality of home-school communication and relationships is excellent. Parents and the parent-teacher association play a very productive role in the life of the school.
- The pupils express themselves competently, think critically and apply their learning confidently.
- The overall quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is commendable.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- In the pending review of posts of responsibility, the allocation of discrete subject responsibilities should be prioritised.
- It is advised that effective listener/speaker relationships during whole-class and group-based activities be promoted consistently.
- In order to fully accommodate the range of pupil ability levels, it is recommended that differentiation be a consistent and integral feature of planning, teaching and learning.
- Moltar struchtúr níos éifeachtúla a chur ar na gceachtanna sa Ghaeilge chun scileanna cumarsáide a chothú i measc na ndaltaí. *Irish lessons should be structured more effectively to cultivate the pupils’ communicative skills.*

3. Quality of School Management

- The newly appointed board of management demonstrates praiseworthy dedication to supporting the work of the school. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities are being assigned and a commitment to ensuring effective decision-making procedures is in evidence. The board has traditionally played a considerable role in policy development. It is advised that following the review and updating of existing school policies, they be ratified formally. Very effective channels of communication between the board and the
education partners are present and the proposed publication of an annual report on the work of the school is welcomed.

- The principal successfully promotes a strong sense of common purpose among the school community. She is effective in cultivating a positive school climate that is characterised by constructive working relationships. Almost all parents who completed questionnaires agree that the school is well run. The other members of the in-school management team fulfil their designated responsibilities with great diligence. Their work contributes very positively to the quality of the learning experiences provided. In the pending review of posts of responsibility, it is recommended that the allocation of discrete subject responsibilities be prioritised.

- The school building and grounds are maintained to a very high standard. The pupils' work contributes significantly to the attractiveness of the outdoor and indoor environments. Individual teachers’ skills and abilities are employed to positive effect and the teaching staff is commended for its regular engagement in continuing professional development. A wide range of resources, including ICT, is used creatively to support teaching and learning.

- The quality of home-school communication and relationships is excellent. Through the implementation of a wide range of effective initiatives, parents play a very productive role in the life of the school. Parental talent and expertise are harnessed skilfully and impact positively on the pupils’ learning. All parents report that the school is welcoming of them. The work of the parent-teacher association is commended highly for its creative and innovative approaches to ensuring the centrality of parental input in the day-to-day life of the school.

- The pupils are valued members of the school community and they demonstrate high levels of confidence and self-esteem. They make a significant contribution to the life of the school and participate enthusiastically in the range of learning activities. The promotion of democratic practices and the involvement of pupils in relevant decision-making, including through the work of the student council and the Green Schools committee, are praised highly.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- Overall, school planning is of a good quality. Detailed curriculum plans and a wide array of organisational policies have been devised collaboratively. In order to maximise the impact of this work on learning outcomes for pupils, it is advised that school self-evaluation, including participation in action planning to address identified priorities, be strengthened further. In so doing, explicit attention should be given to ensuring the effective schoolwide implementation of desired changes.

- While individual teachers engage in long-term and short-term planning and report on progress on a monthly basis, a review of existing practices is advised. In so doing, particular attention should be paid to ensuring greater clarity regarding the learning intentions for pupils and the actual outcomes achieved.

- 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.

5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement
The overall quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is commendable. A variety of teaching approaches is employed successfully to generate pupil interest and to build on previous learning. The teachers are praised for their ongoing attention to language learning across the curriculum. They encourage the pupils to ask questions, express views, and share ideas and knowledge. In most instances, the provision of challenging learning experiences is managed well and the pupils display commendable levels of motivation and participation. In order to maximise this potential, it is advised that effective listener/speaker relationships during whole-class and group-based activities be promoted consistently. Almost all parents report that teaching is good in the school and all confirm that their child is doing well.

Individual pupil progress is evaluated regularly using a range of assessment tools, including some opportunities for pupil self-assessment. The teachers demonstrate a praiseworthy understanding of the learning strengths and needs of their pupils. In several instances, assessment outcomes are used purposefully to plan and implement differentiated programmes of learning. In order to fully accommodate the range of pupil ability levels, it is recommended that differentiation be a consistent and integral feature of planning, teaching and learning.

There is scope for development in the teaching and learning of Irish, and in pupil achievement. While all teachers speak Irish fluently and draw on a range of active-learning approaches, more effective structuring of lessons is required in a majority of classes. Substantial attention to lesson stages and to the teaching of new language structures as well as regular revision of previous learning are required to cultivate the pupils’ communicative skills. Some pupils read with appropriate fluency. Greater emphasis on correct pronunciation and the systematic development of reading skills are required. The provision of differentiated reading and writing tasks is advised.

In English, teaching, learning and pupil achievement is of a high quality. The pupils express themselves confidently and competently, demonstrating a well-developed capacity to think critically and to draw on a rich language store. A keen interest in reading is cultivated very successfully. The pupils demonstrate praiseworthy reading standards as they engage with a very wide range of literature. In the pupil questionnaires, most pupils indicate that they think they are doing well at reading. In most classes, the pupils experience regular and successful exposure to writing in a range of genres. This good practice should be extended to all classes and also include the consistent implementation of a whole-school approach to process writing.

The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is good. Laudable features of provision include the exploration of the everyday application of mathematical concepts and the promotion of higher order thinking skills. As a consequence, commendable levels of pupil achievement are in evidence in the main and almost all pupils report that they think they are doing well at Maths. In continuing to promote pupil progress, sustained schoolwide attention to developing mental mathematics competence would be beneficial. It is further advised that additional
provision be made for high-achieving pupils, most particularly in the area of problem solving.

- In Science, the quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is very good. The pupils are provided with highly structured and well-resourced opportunities to work scientifically. They use scientific language fluently and apply their learning confidently, while engaging in active experimentation and in designing and making activities. In implementing the science curriculum, the pupils participate in organised field trips and benefit from the expertise of guest speakers. The school is deserving of particular commendation for its promotion of environmental awareness and care practices, and it is presently working towards the achievement of its sixth green flag.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- The quality of support for pupils with additional learning needs is praiseworthy. Their needs are identified early and appropriate programmes are put in place. Lesson provision is well structured and implemented, and is characterised by affirming teacher-pupil interactions. The pupils are making laudable progress in the achievement of their learning goals. In order to further enhance the quality of provision, it is advised that structured in-class prevention programmes be implemented at infant level and the effectiveness of existing in-class models of intervention be reviewed. The introduction of early-intervention initiatives, including Reading Recovery and Literacy Lift-off, is praised highly.

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Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The school’s Board of Management and staff wish to thank the D.E.S. Inspectors for their courtesy and professionalism during the W.S.E. The Board is encouraged by the Report's recognition of the dedication of the B.O.M., the P.T.A. and the general parent body in supporting the work of the school.

The Board is also encouraged by its recognition of how successfully the Principal and the staff fulfil their roles.

Most importantly, we are pleased with the acknowledgement that the quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in KSP is commendable.

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 of Management and staff have commenced and will continue to consider and implement the recommendations contained in the Report, as part of the school’s ongoing process of self-evaluation and planning.