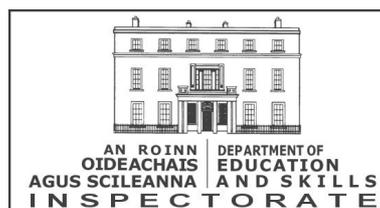


**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills**

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

**St Tiarnach's Primary School
Clones, County Monaghan
Uimhir rolla: 20120V**

Date of inspection: 5 November 2014



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in St Tiarnach's Primary School, Clones in November, 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 on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

St Tiarnach's Primary School operates under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Clogher. The attendance of the majority of the 249 pupils enrolled is very good. There are nine mainstream and six support teachers employed in the school.

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

- An affirming, inclusive school atmosphere, characterised by commendable pastoral care and positive interactions, is in evidence in this school community.
- The overall quality of learning, teaching and pupil achievement is good.
- The commitment of the chairperson and the board of management to the development of the school is commendable.
- The principal demonstrates a high level of commitment to the school and fosters an open, affirming, inclusive learning environment.
- Staff works diligently and collaboratively to provide positive learning experiences for pupils.
- The pupils are commended for their very good behaviour and enthusiastic participation in learning.
- Is inmholta mar atá an Ghaeilge á cur chun cinn mar theanga neamhfhoirmiúil ar bhonn uile-scoile. *The promotion of the use of incidental Irish, on a whole-school basis, is praiseworthy.*
- The parents' association contributes significantly to the work of the school.
- The attractive, well-maintained outdoor and indoor school facilities provide stimulating and aesthetically pleasing learning environments.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Differentiation practices, underpinned by a whole-school approach to assessment for learning, should be developed further.
- In order to establish realistic targets for school improvement and to monitor progress, further analysis of assessment results is required.
- The staged approach to provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) should be adopted.

- Moltar cumas labhartha, scríbhneoireachta agus léitheoireachta na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge a fhorbairt go céimniuil. *Pupils' oral, reading and writing capacities in Irish should be incrementally developed.*
- The quality of pupils' writing should be improved through a more systematic engagement with the writing process.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning achievements of pupils are good. During the evaluation pupils displayed a positive attitude to learning and high levels of engagement during the lessons observed. Pupils' abilities and interests are fostered successfully across all curriculum areas.
- Pupils' learning attainments in literacy are good. Most pupils express themselves articulately and recite poetry with expression. In general, pupils' reading skills are appropriately developed. The quality of pupils' writing should be improved through a more systematic engagement with the writing process.
- Overall learning outcomes in numeracy are good with pupils displaying appropriate conceptual understanding and computational proficiency. Various initiatives have successfully impacted on pupils' learning in Mathematics, the extension of which would benefit all pupils. Further emphasis on differentiated, collaborative, problem-solving activities would enhance pupils' progress.
- Is inmholta mar atá straitéisí á gcur i bhfeidhm chun úsáid neamhfhoirmiúil na Gaeilge a chur chun cinn sa scoil. Tá sé ar chumas roinnt daltaí abairtí simplí a chumadh agus a úsáid i nGaeilge. Tá gá lena gcumas cainte agus cumarsáide a fheabhsú a thuilleadh, áfach. Chuige sin, ní mór a gcuid scileanna labhartha, léitheoireachta agus scríbhneoireachta a fhorbairt go céimniúil. B'fhiú scrúduithe caighdeánaithe a úsáid chun dul chun cinn na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge a mheas. *It is commendable that strategies are being implemented to promote the use of Irish incidentally. Some pupils are capable of constructing and using simple sentences in Irish. It is necessary, however, to further improve their language and communication capacity. To this end, pupils' oral, reading and writing skills should be incrementally developed. The use of standardised tests should be considered to assess pupils' progress in Irish.*
- Pupils with special educational needs engage enthusiastically in learning, and overall they are making progress commensurate with their abilities.

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching is good with very good practice observed in some settings. Effective whole-class teaching with judicious use of questioning and explicit explanations of various concepts was observed in all settings. To ensure that all learners are adequately challenged, the further use of differentiation strategies and of collaborative learning activities should be considered.
- A range of assessment approaches is used to monitor pupils' progress. Assessment results should be analysed carefully to track pupils' progress and to create appropriate developmental learning programmes. A whole-school approach to assessment for learning, including strategies for pupil self-evaluation and for the provision of formative feedback, is recommended.
- In support settings, a positive learning atmosphere is fostered and a range of teaching strategies is implemented effectively. High quality provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is provided. Some effective in-class

interventions has been introduced in the school. Further development of purposeful, planned collaborative team teaching, together with the regular monitoring of its impact, is advised. The special needs assistants provide valuable support to a number of pupils, in enabling them to access the curriculum

- It is recommended that the staged approach to provision for SEN pupils be implemented and documented. There is also scope to review the format of individual education plans (IEPs) to ensure that an appropriate assessment profile and the roles of teachers and parents are clearly outlined. In some instances learning targets need to be more specific and based on pupils' diagnosed needs. Pupils' progress should be monitored and recorded systematically.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- The quality of care for the pupils' holistic well-being is very high with a range of systems to promote good behaviour successfully established. Pupils are very well behaved and engage enthusiastically in all activities. Their learning and achievements are regularly acknowledged and celebrated. The school has been actively involved in several extra-curricular and co-curricular initiatives which have developed pupils' confidence and their sense of citizenship. It is now timely to establish a pupils' council.
- 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, led by a very conscientious chairperson, effectively manages the school in a spirit of collaboration and dedication. A substantial building programme has been completed and school facilities are maintained to a very high standard. The board engages in policy development and is very supportive of school development.
- The principal demonstrates a high level of commitment to the school and fosters an open, affirming, inclusive learning environment. Her work is characterised by effective management skills, the promotion of collaborative staff relationships and a commitment to the pastoral care of pupils. She has progressed a number of initiatives to expand the range of learning experiences provided for pupils.
- The in-school management team undertakes a range of duties diligently. The next review of duties should ensure a stronger alignment with identified school priorities and a greater emphasis on developing the curricular leadership roles of the team. Ancillary staff makes a valuable contribution to the administration and maintenance of the school.
- The management of relationships with the school community is very good. The school promotes and encourages high quality relationships with parents and the wider community. The parents' association contributes significantly to the work of the school. Consideration should now be given to extending the involvement of parents in policy development.

5. School Self-evaluation

- The school has engaged in the school self-evaluation process, identified improvement targets in literacy and has formulated a school improvement report. Going forward, deeper analysis of assessment results should be undertaken to refine the targets set for improvement.

- Some curricular plans need to be reviewed to guide teachers in planning an incremental programme of learning. A review of approaches to teacher planning should be undertaken to facilitate the progressive implementation of the school's identified priorities.

Conclusion

Given the commitment of the board to the development of the school and the dedication of the teaching staff the school's capacity to develop further is very good.