

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

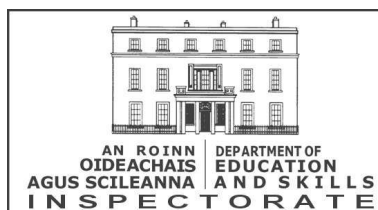
Department of Education and Skills

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

REPORT

**Scoil Chúil Aodha - Barr d'Inse
Cúil Aodha, Co. Chorcaí
Roll number: 20222G**

Date of inspection: 16 October 2013



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

- A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Scoil Náisiúnta Chúil Aodha - Barr d'Inse in October 2013. This is a Gaeltacht school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork.
- Scoil Chúil Aodha and Scoil Barra d'Inse were amalgamated in 2005. There is consistency in enrolment since then, with fifty-seven pupils on roll at present. It is noted that the pupils of the school have a good record of attendance.
- This report is based on observation of a selection of lessons in a range of teaching situations, on interaction with pupils and inspection of their work, on meetings with the principal, the deputy principal, representatives of the board of management and parents' representatives on the board, on questionnaires completed by parents and pupils, as well as inspection of various 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.

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

- The board of management, parents and teaching staff work co-operatively to ensure the promotion of a strong Irish-language ethos in all school activities.
- A welcoming, calm atmosphere is created in the school which supports the holistic development of pupils.
- Teachers' diligence and co-operation are commended. They provide the best of care for all pupils in the school.
- Pupils display loyalty towards the Irish language and enthusiasm for their work.
- The standard of Irish achieved by the majority of pupils is commendable.
- Early immersion education is implemented productively.

The following **recommendations** are made:

- It is recommended that the board of management follow appropriate procedures regarding provision of financial statements and that they take a more central role in the development of teaching and learning in the school.
- It is recommended that the role of the in-school management team in curriculum leadership be further developed.
- It is recommended that school-improvement and subject plans be reviewed.
- It is recommended that a particular emphasis be placed on pupils' achievements in Mathematics and in written composition.
- It is recommended that the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs be reviewed and appropriate changes implemented.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The quality of learning in the school is good. A worthwhile emphasis is placed on the holistic development of pupils and their ability as independent learners is skilfully fostered. They participate eagerly in school activities and display an enthusiasm for their work.
- The school successfully promotes the Irish language and culture. Early immersion education is implemented productively. The majority of pupils display very good

communicative ability and demonstrate a richness of vocabulary in their speech. They read class texts capably, recite a good selection of poems and sing a variety of songs in a lively, competent manner.

- Pupils actively participate in classroom debates in English. However, a structured language programme is required. In general, pupils display good reading ability. It would be helpful if a wider range of attractive books was made available for classroom libraries, particularly at senior level. Some examples of pupils' free writing were noted. It would be of benefit if more frequent opportunities to engage in writing activities in a wider range of genre in both Irish and in English were provided. To this end, it is recommended that process writing be practised on a whole-school basis.
- The results of standardised tests indicate that pupils' achievement levels in Mathematics are fairly good. Teachers recognise that there is scope for development in the teaching of Mathematics and to this end, appropriate targets have been set in the school-improvement plan. Due attention is paid to the teaching of mathematical terms, but it would be helpful to encourage pupils to engage in more in-depth discussion of the various concepts. The initiation of shared teaching is intended to benefit student learning. It is recommended that this practice be developed to facilitate differentiated groups and guided activities.

2. Quality of teaching

- The quality of teaching in the school is good. A stimulating learning environment is created and a happy atmosphere supports positive interaction between pupils and teachers. Good practice was noted in the areas of questioning, pace and structure of lessons, as well as in the promotion of pupil participation. To ensure the effectiveness of the work, it is recommended that book-based teaching be avoided and that a wider range of productive teaching methodologies be practised. Some use is made of technology to support the presentation of lessons. It is now recommended that greater emphasis be placed on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to reinforce pupils' learning.
- Teachers provide appropriate planning to guide their teaching. They maintain accurate monthly records of pupils' learning. It is necessary, however, to review curriculum policies in full, so that they will indicate clearly the subject-matter to be taught at every class-level, as well as progression from class to class.
- The quality of teaching in special education contexts is good. Education plans are collaboratively developed, with clear learning targets included. A record of the achievement of these targets should be kept. Pupil withdrawal, one at a time, is the most common form of support. It is recommended that this approach be reviewed in order to cater for more pupils with particular educational needs, including gifted pupils. It would also be advisable to promote a better balance between withdrawal support and in-class support.
- Pupils' work is suitably monitored. Appropriate use is made of a range of assessment instruments to measure pupils' achievement levels. It is worth developing an assessment policy and promoting assessment as an integral part of the teaching and learning process. A systemic assessment approach would help to guide teachers' planning and identify differentiation strategies.

3. Support for pupils' wellbeing

- The pupils in this school are effectively managed. The code of discipline, based on positive affirmation and on a discerning mutual respect, benefits the personal and social development of pupils. They are well-mannered, courteous and eager to work. They demonstrate loyalty to the Irish language and participate successfully in cultural activities in the community. Parents indicated through questionnaires distributed during the evaluation that they are happy with the teaching and learning in the school.

- Confirmation was provided by the school authorities that the board of management has formally adopted the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, without modification, and that the school practice is compliant with the requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. Leadership and Management

- The board strongly promotes the Irish-language ethos of the school. The work carried out in providing an extra room is commended. The school environment is maintained to a high standard. Board-meetings are regularly held and detailed minutes of the proceedings are kept. It is recommended that a treasurer be appointed and that financial accounts be provided as standard procedure. Policies are submitted to the board for approval. However, it is advised that they take a more active role in the planning process and in developing the school-improvement plan. The board should also establish a parents' committee and issue an annual report on the operation of the school.
- The principal succeeds in promoting a positive Irish atmosphere in the school with the full support of the staff. The in-school management team fulfil their responsibilities capably. In order to develop their leadership role the staff should assume more responsibility for monitoring the operation of the school plan. For that purpose, it is recommended that posts of responsibilities be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are in line with the identified priorities of the school.

5. School Self-evaluation

- A creditable start has been made on the improvement plan and aspects of it are being implemented astutely. The school needs to use further evidence, including parents' and pupils' opinions, in setting out precise targets for improvement in compliance with Circular 0039/2012 *Implementation of school self-evaluation-Primary School*.

Conclusion

All participants indicated their interest in developing the school and their awareness of the areas needing improvement. Teaching staff realise the importance of reflection and development and the school community have demonstrated a clear ability to make further improvements.