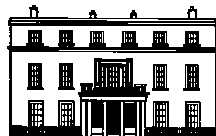


Department Education and Skills

**Whole School Evaluation
REPORT**

**Gaelscoil Eiscir Riada,
Grifteen Road, Lucan, Co. Dublin
Roll number: 202231**

Date of inspection: 16 October 2014



**AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS**

1. Introduction

Gaelscoil Eiscir Riada is an all-Irish primary school under the patronage of An Foras Pátrúnacht. It is located in Lucan, Co. Dublin. There are 480 pupils, twenty two teachers and two special needs assistants in the school. During the whole school evaluation inspectors observed teaching and learning in ten classrooms and in three support teaching settings. 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 conclusions and recommendations for further development

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

- The principal is a very good school leader and the school has very effective leadership.
- A very open atmosphere is promoted in the school and very good relations exist between members of the school community.
- The pupils are courteous and they undertake their learning enthusiastically.
- Whole-school planning and school self-evaluation is of a very high standard.
- There is an effective whole-school approach to many aspects of the curriculum.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is of a high standard.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Teachers are advised to provide more challenging learning activities for the pupils and to make greater use of methods such as guided and discovery learning and high-order questioning.
- In their language teaching, teachers should integrate oral, reading and written activities more closely together.
- In Drama, a richer experience should be provide for the pupils based on the methodologies and content objectives of the curriculum.

3. Quality of school management

- The board provides very good governance to the school. It demonstrates capacity to fulfil the duties of boards of management effectively. It meets regularly and discusses a wide range of topics at its meetings. The board's work in nourishing the school's ethos and in maintaining its resources at a high standard is commended. The board is advised to develop its means of communicating with the school community.
- The school has a very capable in-school management team. The school principal is a very good school leader. She prioritises improvements in teaching and learning and promotes an open atmosphere throughout the school. Each member of the in-school management team has specific responsibilities in the administrative, curricular and pastoral domains. These responsibilities are effectively fulfilled and regularly reviewed.

The practice of establishing teacher committees to develop various aspects of school life is highly commended as it provides leadership opportunities to many teachers.

- Very positive parent-teacher relationships are promoted. At the pre-evaluation meeting, the parents' representative praised the ease with which they can contact teachers. The results of the parent questionnaires, administered during this evaluation, show that the majority of them feel that they are welcome in the school, that the school is well-run and that their children are treated fairly there.
- The school is commended for the very important information that they provide to parents on general education matters and on their children's education. Parents receive very appropriate information before their child comes to school. During their school lives, very valuable information about matters such as the curriculum for the year is shared with parents.
- The school has a very good parents' association. They undertake very useful work including fundraising, projects that benefit the school and involvement in policy development.
- The pupils are managed very effectively and very positive pupil-teacher relationships exist. In the pupil questionnaires completed during the evaluation, the majority of pupils confirmed that they like the school and that they feel safe in it. The questionnaires also show that the pupils are aware of different types of bullying and what to do if they are bullied.
- The school's efforts to develop links with the Irish-language community and with the surrounding community are very worthwhile.

4. The quality of school planning and self-evaluation

- There are very few areas for improvement in the whole-school planning process. There is a strong tradition of strategic planning in the school. The administrative and curricular plans are all of a high standard. The in-school management team is now advised to monitor the implementation of the curricular plans in the individual classrooms.
- Teachers plan well for their teaching. The plans lay out clearly the material to be covered in each class. Teachers could plan more comprehensively for the pupil's language development in Irish and in spoken English. Planning for pupils with special educational needs is of a high standard.
- A very good start has been made to school self-evaluation. The school ensures that it is evidence-based and is focused on improving the pupils' learning and the quality of teaching.
- 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. The quality of teaching, learning and pupils' achievement

- The quality of teaching in the school is good with some aspects for improvement. It is evident that a whole-school approach is in place for many aspects of the curriculum and that teachers cooperate with each other. A very stimulating learning environment is

created in every room. All of the observed lessons were well structured and guided by expected learning outcome. In some lessons these outcomes were shared with the pupils. Appropriate use was made of class-teaching, group work and pair work. The pupils speak confidently about their learning. Teachers are advised to provide more challenging learning activities for the pupils and to make greater use of methods such as guided and discovery based learning and higher order questioning.

- There is effective practice in Irish. A positive atmosphere towards Irish is fostered in the school. The pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of Irish and speak it fluently. The language idioms are contextualised for each class and the pupils use them confidently. Consistent work is done on Irish phonics and the pupils read a variety of texts. There is a whole-school approach to writing in place that ensures pupils have the opportunity to write in a wide range of genres. In order to further improve the pupils' achievements in Irish, teachers are advised to provide specific lessons directed towards enriching and improving the pupils' language competence.
- The quality of teaching and learning in English is good. Teaching is informed by a range of effective whole-school approaches in areas such as reading comprehension and spelling. There is a specific emphasis on oral language in all classes and oral work is an integral feature of in-class support for pupils. Graded-reading materials are used well and pupils read with fluency and understanding. In writing there is a consistent use of drafting and editing and pupils write in a variety of genres. There is scope, however, to improve the quality of their written work, Teachers should include a broader range of poetry in class programmes, especially in middle and senior classes.
- When teachers are teaching languages they should integrate learning activities in oral, reading and writing more closely in order to further improve pupils' language competencies and fluency.
- Competent practice is evident in Mathematic. A positive atmosphere is created for Mathematics and there is clear evidence of a whole-school approach to Mathematics. Pupils' attainments in standardised tests are very good. In all classes the correct emphasis is placed on the language of mathematics, on the use of concrete objects and on oral mathematics. Differentiation is used effectively in some classes and this practice should be developed in every class. Teachers are advised to provide opportunities for the pupils to use their mathematics skills across all the strands of the curriculum. Opportunities should also be provided for pupils to justify and explain their answers.
- There is scope for development in the provision for Drama. The quality of lessons observed during the evaluation ranged from adequate to good. A safe environment was created for pupils in all lessons and they participated in the activities willingly. In the best lessons, pupils' attention was drawn to dramatic elements such as belief, time and place. On an ongoing basis, there is a need to provide a wider and richer experience for the pupils, based on the methodologies and content objectives of the curriculum. Teachers should also ensure progression in the content objectives from class level to class level.
- There is a very good system of assessment in place which begins before the child comes to school. Standardised and diagnostic test are administered to the pupils at appropriate periods in their school lives, and the results of these tests are very well analysed. There is a good emphasis on assessment for learning in each class. Teachers should afford greater attention to providing constructive feedback to the pupils on their written work, and to ensuring that pupils use this feedback to improve their work.

6. Quality of support for pupils

- The standard of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is high. The teaching is focused on the pupils' main learning needs. A wide range of modes of support is used and a positive relationship is fostered with the pupils.
- The school's policy and practice in relation to supporting pupils reflects the Continuum of Support. Support teachers all work effectively as a team and regular contact is maintained between class teachers and support teachers. This practice is highly commended.

Appendix

School Response to the Report Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The board of management, staff and parents' association of Gaelscoil Eiscir Riada welcome this positive WSE report. We are very satisfied that the teachers' hard work and the high standard of work in the school is recognised.

The board is very satisfied that the pupils' good behaviour and good manners, and the strong support that parents provide to Gaelscoil Eiscir Riada are recognised.

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 is focusing on the inspectors' recommendations in the WSE report in partnership with the staff and school partners, to continue with the school's development.