

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

Gaelscoil an Chuilinn,
Powerstown Road, Tyrrelstown, Dublin 15
Roll number: 20394M

Date of Inspection: 4 May 2016



A N R O I N N | D E P A R T M E N T O F
O I D E A C H A I S | E D U C A T I O N
A G U S S C I L E A N N A | A N D S K I L L S
T H E I N S P E C T O R A T E

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Gaelscoil an Chuilinn in May 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 accepts this report as the final inspection report available for publication and wishes to respond formally to the report. The board agrees that the response submitted will be included as an appendix to the published report. The board's response is submitted below.

Gaelscoil an Chuilinn is a co-educational, all-Irish, primary school under the patronage of An Foras Pátrúnachta. The school was established in 2012, and there are currently 134 pupils enrolled. The attendance of pupils is very good.

The evaluation has found:

- The quality of the pupils' learning is of a very high standard.
- The majority of pupils achieve a very good standard in oral, reading and writing skills in Irish.
- The support for pupils' wellbeing is excellent.
- The quality of teaching in the school is good, with excellence in evidence in some lessons.
- Curriculum planning at whole-school level is excellent; teachers' short-term planning should document specific planning for incremental language development.
- The board of management, parents' committee and staff work together to promote the ethos of the school, and are very successful in this regard.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- It is recommended that teachers, in their short-term planning, plan more specifically for incremental language development across the curriculum.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The quality of learning and pupil achievement is of a very high standard. The pupils display an interest in learning through their participation in the tasks provided for them. Their listening and speaking skills are very well developed from class to class, and they have made very good progress in many curricular areas.
- The majority of the pupils achieve a very good standard in oral, reading and writing skills in Irish. It is evident that they are making progress with regard to oral language and that they can express themselves clearly. The pupils read competently and with understanding in Irish and English. Opportunities are provided for them to develop their functional and creative writing skills, and evidence of improvement is to be found in their copybooks.
- The pupils in infant classes benefit from the activities provided for them through the *Aistear* programme, and it is clear that they have already learned a significant amount of language.
- The standard of learning in Mathematics is very good. Pupils use a range of number strategies effectively. They have very good understanding of mathematical concepts. They understand and use mathematical vocabulary during lessons.

- Pupils have memorised a wide repertoire of poetry and songs and it is commendable that music is frequently heard throughout the day.
- Pupils are supported in communicating through the medium of drama. They have achieved very high standards in this area of the curriculum.
- A wide range of pupils' work is attractively displayed throughout the school. This includes extensive samples of the pupils' artwork which are of an excellent standard.
- The progress of pupils with special educational needs is very good. They engage in a wide range of activities appropriate to their needs.
- The pupils actively participate in Physical Education lessons. They listen carefully and they closely follow the teachers' directions.

2. Quality of teaching

- The quality of teaching in the school is good overall, with excellent practice in evidence in some lessons. This diligent staff succeed in promoting Irish and pupils hear excellent Irish from them. It would be worthwhile for teachers to further consolidate learning at the end of each lesson.
- Teachers guide and support pupils' spoken Irish commendably during the *Aistear* programme. It is recommended that target language be specified more clearly in the planning, in order to assess and support pupils' further development of their oral language ability.
- All teachers provide planning for their work. The school has devised excellent curriculum plans, and these give comprehensive guidance for teaching. It is recommended that teachers ensure that learning objectives are clearly stated in their short-term planning and that these are differentiated appropriately.
- Effective teaching was observed in Mathematics' lessons, with excellent practice observed in some lessons. In the best practice observed, a link was created between concepts and the everyday life of the pupils, and attention was paid to differentiation. This good practice should be extended throughout the school.
- A range of number strategies is taught effectively. It is recommended that further use be made of concrete materials during lessons to develop pupils' reasoning skills.
- A very good emphasis is placed on phonological development and on reading comprehension in both languages. Each teacher records pupils' achievements in reading.
- The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is of a very high standard. The continuum of support is utilised appropriately. Pupils receive very good support from the special-needs assistants.
- A wide range of strategies is used to assess pupils' progress. It is recommended that a whole-school assessment policy be created to record these good practices.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- The support for pupils' wellbeing is excellent. They are very well managed. There is a very positive atmosphere in the school and everyone is respected.
- Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to develop their creative and sporting skills through the school's provision of a wide range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities.
- There is regular communication with parents. They are provided with annual reports on the progress of the pupils.
- The school authorities confirmed that the board of management has formally adopted the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* without change or modification.
- The ancillary staff provide excellent support to the work of the school.

4. Leadership and Management

- The board of management is functioning at a high level. They manage, with the cooperation of the parents' committee and the staff, to promote the ethos of the school. They have an input in the designing of administrative and curriculum policies. An

annual report on school matters is issued to the school community. The board provides a safe environment for the pupils.

- The principal provides exemplary leadership to the school. He displays excellent interpersonal skills and ensures that staff have an agreed approach to the development of the school. He receives excellent support from the in-school management team, who engage with their duties in a very effective manner.
- The parents' committee provides very good support to the school. They work effectively with the board in making resources available to the pupils.

5. School Self-evaluation

- Worthwhile improvement targets have been outlined in the school self-evaluation plans, and the activities associated with them are evident in teachers' practice.

Conclusion

The school's capacity for further development is very good.

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 and the parents' association (CAIRDE) of Gaelscoil an Chuilinn welcome this very positive report.

It is a source of pride that recognition has been given to the very high standard of the pupils' learning achievements, the good practice of the teachers, and the excellent support provided for the pupils' well-being.

We praise the high standard of work being achieved by the staff and all the stakeholders in creating a positive atmosphere for learning in Gaelscoil an Chuilinn.

The board of management of the school is very satisfied with the really positive feedback reported through the questionnaires completed by the parents and children of the school.

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 of the school are happy to address the main recommendation given to us in the Whole School Evaluation report; to clarify incremental language development across the strands of the curriculum.

The staff of the school will address this target with the guidance of the new Primary Language Curriculum which is coming on stream soon.