Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Corclough NS
Belmullet, Co. Mayo
Uimhir rolla: 15014S

Date of inspection: 14 October 2010
This is a translation of the original report which was written in Irish.

1. Introduction

Corclough NS is a three-teacher school situated on the Mullet peninsula on the north-west coast of Mayo. It was built in 1966 and was extended and refurbished in 2007. As a Gaeltacht school it receives great support from the community even though the majority of pupils come to school without Irish. This school caters for boys and girls from infants to sixth class. Despite the population drop on the peninsula, school enrolment is increasing. The school operates with grant-aid and a co-ordinator under the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) scheme. The board of management of the school 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The following are the main strengths of the work of the school:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The principal, staff and board of management deserve great praise for the comprehensive education that they provide through the medium of Irish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The quality of resource management is very good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The quality of home-school communication is very good and parents are very satisfied with the workings of the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The quality of pupil management is very good. A positive atmosphere prevails in the school and pupils’ self-esteem is high.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The quality of school self-evaluation is very good. School planning influences the daily workings of the school and the staff regularly assesses its progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A very high standard has been achieved in the school in English reading, Irish and Mathematics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The standard of teaching is very good. Teachers successfully use a wide and effective range of teaching methodologies and resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The school has done great work in promoting anti-bullying awareness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The following main recommendations are made:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• It is recommended that the board of management ensures that parents adhere to the school’s official timetable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It is recommended that the timetables of learning-support and resource teachers are reviewed to provide more effective support for Mathematics and for early-intervention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It is recommended that the work schedule of the DEIS co-ordinator is based on the targets as prioritised by the staff with success criteria for each initiative laid out, that the initiatives are evaluated and the outcomes are recorded.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Quality of School Management

- The quality of the work of the board of management is good. The support which it gives to the staff to create a suitable learning environment is praiseworthy. A positive learning context is promoted collaboratively with the staff. The board engages in regular maintenance work on the school. It ratifies school plans and policies. It is recommended that the board ensures that parents adhere to the school’s official timetable as the punctuality of pupils is interfering with the work of the school.

- The principal is of the highest quality and promotes a positive learning environment. A high standard of teaching and learning is at the heart of her vision. The comprehensive education which she and her staff provide, through the medium of Irish, is praiseworthy. The principal and deputy principal work very successfully together for the benefit of the pupils. Curricular and organisation duties are very effectively divided between them.

- The quality of resource management is very good. In each class a wide range of resources is available for each curricular area and is used very effectively. Technology is used advantageously throughout the school.

- The quality of home-school communication is very good. Parent-teacher meetings are organised annually. Parents are welcome to come into the school at any time to discuss concerns regarding their child’s progress. It was clear from the results of the parent questionnaires distributed during the course of the evaluation that parents are very satisfied with the workings of the school, with the quality of communication from the school and with the progress of their children.

- The quality of pupil management is very good. The pupils were respectful, mannerly and open during the evaluation. They were engaged with their work. It was clear that they were very proud of their local area, of their native language and of the various school projects with which they had engaged. A very positive atmosphere prevailed in the school. The pupils were very understanding of their peers with special educational needs.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The quality of the planning process is good. The staff has developed a wide range of policies in the past number of years. All policies are context-based. They are regularly reviewed and the majority are available in both languages. While the full participation of staff is evident in the planning process it is now recommended that the participation of parents is promoted, particularly at the draft stage of policy development.

- The quality of school self-evaluation is very good. A long-term plan has been devised with different targets relating to literacy, numeracy, attendance and communication with parents. There is progress evident in each of these areas. The targets of the long-term plan also form the basis of individual teacher planning. As a result, the influence of whole-school planning is evident in the daily workings of the school and progress is regularly assessed by the staff.
Child protection policy and procedures

- School authorities provided evidence that, in compliance with Primary Circular 0061/2006, the board of management has formally adopted the Department’s Child Protection Guidelines for Primary Schools. Evidence was provided to show that these child protection procedures have been brought to the attention of management, school staff and parents; that a copy of the procedures has been provided to all staff (including all new staff); and that management has ensured that all staff are familiar with the procedures to be followed. A designated liaison person (DLP) and a deputy DLP have been appointed in line with the requirements of the guidelines.

5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is of a high standard. Pupils’ skills are continually developed through the content taught. The school participates effectively in regional and national initiatives to strengthen pupils’ interests and to promote parental involvement. An appropriate emphasis is placed on language and vocabulary development in each lesson.

- The quality of assessment is very good in the school. Pupil progress is assessed through the use of standardised tests, diagnostic tests and informal tests. Accurate files are maintained on each pupil. An analysis of standardised test results ensures individual pupil progress can be tracked over time and school weaknesses can be identified. It is now recommended that assessment for learning is implemented on a whole-school level.

- The quality of oral Irish is very good in the school. A wide range of teaching methodologies and resources is used to motivate the pupils to speak. Pupils have a wide vocabulary and can speak at length about various topics. Their accuracy and richness of language is commendable. The standard of reading is also very good. Different texts are used to develop pupils’ vocabulary and reading skills. It is recommended that the staff accommodate the pupils’ high standard when preparing written tasks to challenge them more. The books written by the pupils in different curricular areas and for the ‘Write a Book’ project, which promote the writing process, are praiseworthy.

- The quality of teaching and learning in English is very good across the school. Great variety and creativity was noted in the way English was taught in each classroom. An appropriate emphasis is placed on phonics and on rhymes to support early-literacy skills. Use is made of large format books and class novels. Pupils display a great interest in books. Language charts are used very effectively. The whole-school plan for the implementation of English writing, which is followed by each teacher, is commendable. As a result, pupils are enabled to express themselves effectively through a wide range of writing tasks. Teachers ensure that all pupils make satisfactory progress in literacy through formative assessment. Technology is used to great benefit to promote the writing process among pupils.

- The quality of learning in Mathematics is very good. A structured programme is presented with a focus on the regular practice of mental maths, problem-solving and maths language. Commendable use is made of concrete materials, technology and the school environment to consolidate the understanding of mathematical concepts. Team-teaching ensures the full participation of all pupils. It is recommended that regular revision in Mathematics is emphasised.

- The quality of teaching and learning in Social, Personal and Health Education is very good. Each teacher promotes a welcoming, respectful atmosphere in her classroom, with
an emphasis on full participation. It is obvious that pupils have very high levels of self-esteem. They were able to express themselves very effectively during the course of the evaluation and were not reluctant to make guesses when asked questions. Comprehension skills and thinking skills are developed through story-telling, music and drama. The school places a strong emphasis on the prevention of bullying and on self-esteem. An assessment of self-esteem is administered annually to senior pupils.

6. Quality of Supports for Pupils

- The school successfully promotes a policy on equality of access. Individual education plans (IEPs) are prepared for pupils with different needs. Class teachers, learning-support/resource teachers and parents are involved in the process. It is recommended that the completed IEP is shared with parents.

- The quality of teaching methodologies and interventions for pupils with special educational needs is very good in general. Teachers work very diligently to support their pupils. Some teachers have engaged in significant professional development to effectively meet the needs of their pupils. Supplementary teaching is provided in English. It is recommended that the timetables of the learning-support/resource teachers are reviewed to provide ongoing support in Mathematics and to implement a more effective early-intervention programme.

- The quality of learning and progress of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The special education team function effectively in the mainstream classrooms and in the support classrooms.

- The DEIS co-ordinator attends the school one day each week. He has developed strong links with the local community. He has organised Irish classes which are currently running for parents. To further develop the service it is important to base the work programme of the co-ordinator on the targets identified by the staff, particularly those relating to literacy and Mathematics. It is recommended that the ‘Mathematics for Fun’ or ‘Literacy for Fun’ initiatives are organised each term to promote parent participation. It is further recommended that success criteria for current projects are devised and recorded to facilitate the assessment of such projects.

Published, June 2011
Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management
This is a translation of the school response which was submitted in Irish.

Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report

The board of management of Corclough NS welcomes the WSE report. The board is happy that the main strengths of the school were apparent during the evaluation.

The board of management does not agree with the wording ‘ensures’ in the first recommendation. It is the opinion of the board that it is each parent’s duty to adhere to the school’s official timetable. The board of management gives, and will give, full support to the school staff to deal with poor punctuality. It is also the opinion of the board that the following line would be more suitable for the first recommendation:

- It is recommended that the board of management encourages parents more effectively to adhere to the school timetable.

Area 2  Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

Recommendation 1:
The official school timetable is sent to each parent annually. A letter regarding the official school timetable was sent twice to parents from the board of management (November 2010 and June 2011). The next target date is the start of the school year 2011/2012.

Recommendation 2:
A meeting between schools was held in January and June 2011 regarding the timetables of the learning support and resource teachers. The school clusters will remain as they are. From September 2011 onwards extra support for Mathematics and a more effective early-intervention programme will be implemented.

Recommendation 3:
The DEIS co-ordinator will no longer work in Corclough NS from September 2011 as this post has been suppressed.