An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

SN Uileog de Búrca
Claremorris, Co. Mayo
Roll Number: 19972T

Date of inspection: 7 February 2011
This is a translation of the original report which was written in Irish

1. Introduction

SN Uileog de Búrca is a rural gaelscoil, situated in Lochenamon, six kilometres from Claremorris. It is a co-educational school accommodating pupils from infants to sixth class. It is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam. School enrolment is increasing and currently stands at 116 pupils. 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

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

- The school has a staff of the highest quality that works diligently.
- The overall quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is very high.
- The standard of spoken Irish is very good in the school.
- The standard of Irish and English reading is very good.
- The standard of Mathematics is very good in the school.
- The teachers deserve great credit for the inspiring learning environments they have created in their individual classrooms.
- The quality of resource management is very good. A wide range of resources is available in the school and beneficial use is made of technology.
- The quality of home-school communication is very good. The method of distributing school information electronically is particularly praiseworthy.

The following main recommendations are made:

- It is recommended that the curriculum is clearly differentiated for pupils with specific needs.
- It is recommended that the school lays out whole-school strategies for dealing with pupils with challenging behaviour in their code of behaviour.
- It is recommended that the school adopts a whole-school approach to penmanship and to creative writing.
3. **Quality of School Management**

- The quality of the work of the board of management is very good. The board displays a great interest in the growth and development of the school. It does its best to create an appropriate learning environment for the pupils and the school environment is attractively presented.

- The quality of the work of the in-school management team is very good. The principal creates a respectful, open and positive atmosphere among the school community. Irish is promoted very effectively by the principal and the staff. The principal and deputy principal work together purposefully to meet the needs of the pupils.

- The quality of the management of resources is very good. Despite the fact that the school is situated on the site of the old Lochenamon national school, five large, bright prefabs are used as classrooms. A wide range of resources is available in the school which is used very effectively. An appropriate use is made of technology in the school, in particular the interactive whiteboards.

- The quality of home-school communication is very good. Parents give great support to the school. Parent-teacher meetings are organised annually. The school is commended for its approach to disseminating information electronically. Three-quarters of parents receive school letters and newsletters by e-mail. The school's website is informative and attractive. In a questionnaire distributed among parents as part of the whole-school evaluation, a majority of parents agree that they feel welcome in the school and that overall they are satisfied with the school.

- The quality of pupil management is good in the school. There was effective, appropriate, positive discipline evident in a majority of classes. The majority of pupils were respectful and mannerly during the course of the evaluation. A positive atmosphere prevailed in the school. It is recommended that the school devises whole-school strategies to effectively deal with pupils displaying challenging behaviour as part of the code of behaviour.

4. **Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation**

- The quality of the school planning process is good. There is a wide range of policies developed incrementally over the past number of years. All the policies are context-based, are reviewed regularly and some are available bilingually. It is recommended that the school emphasises whole-school approaches to ensure the ongoing development of the curriculum.

- The school has made a good start on self-evaluation and the quality of this self-evaluation is good. Pupil achievement in English and Mathematics has been graphed. A long-term plan is prepared. It is recommended that realistic, specific targets are set out in a planning diary with an emphasis on action planning to further develop the planning process.

- The quality of classroom planning is good. There is evident continuity and progression in the work prepared for the pupils. The quality of the learning environments in each classroom is particularly noteworthy. It is recommended that differentiated learning objectives for pupils with specific needs are explicitly stated in teachers’ plans.
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 quality of overall teaching, learning and pupil achievement is very good. An effective emphasis is placed on the teaching of subject-specific vocabulary in Irish as part of each lesson. Lessons have a definite structure and are effectively paced. Visual aids are used profitably and pupil participation is generally promoted. All classrooms are attractively organised with informative and inspiring displays.

- The quality of spoken Irish is very good in the school. Teachers make use of an effective range of methodologies, including pair work, to inspire the pupils to speak. All teachers use ‘morning talk’ profitably and, as a result, pupils have a wide vocabulary store. Pupils are able to speak at length about a range of topics. They can ask and answer questions accurately. The quality of reading is very good and the quality of writing is very good in some classes. In these classes the teacher presents a range of writing tasks and places an emphasis on neatness. It is recommended that a whole-school approach to penmanship and to creative writing is implemented.


- The quality of teaching and learning in English is very good. Pupils recite poetry with confidence. A very appropriate emphasis is placed on phonological awareness, particularly in the junior classes. Spelling is taught in a holistic manner. The pupils achieve very well in reading. Some teachers promote individual reading programmes which maximise pupil progress. It is recommended that clear differentiation of reading tasks is undertaken on a whole-school basis. The introduction of paired reading in the middle and senior classroom is commendable. The quality of pupils’ writing is highest in classrooms where a variety of writing genres is taught. It is recommended that this is implemented on a whole-school basis.

- The quality of teaching and learning in Mathematics is very good. Mathematics in the environment is emphasised which greatly aids the understanding of mathematical concepts. Mental maths is taught regularly and consistently across the school. The pupils are active in their learning through the use of concrete materials. The pupils have achieved a high standard in Mathematics. It is now recommended that the curriculum is clearly differentiated for pupils with specific needs.
The quality of teaching and learning in Geography is very good. Each teacher effectively promotes environmental awareness. The school has been awarded three green flags. Photographs, maps and visual aids are used very effectively to reinforce pupil understanding. A praiseworthy emphasis is placed on geographical terminology. Productive links are made between the subject matter and pupils’ experiences.

The quality of assessment is good in the school. Pupil progress is assessed using standardised tests, diagnostic tests and informal assessments. The results of the standardised tests are analysed. It is recommended that the Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) is administered at the end of the second term of senior infants and that the Forward Together programme is followed to support pupils who display difficulties with early-literacy skills.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

Two teachers work with pupils with special educational needs: a learning-support teacher and a resource teacher. Individual education plans are prepared for pupils with special educational needs. Parents receive a copy of the plan. Teachers work diligently to provide a suitable learning programme for their pupils.

There is a significant difference in the quality of intervention for pupils with special educational needs. It is recommended that in reviewing the learning-support policy that the school examines the role of class teachers in the pupils’ education plan and that they place emphasis on differentiated learning objectives for such pupils in the mainstream class.

The quality of learning outcomes and progress for pupils with special educational needs in receipt of support is generally very good. It is recommended that an early-intervention programme for infants is implemented at specific times during the year.

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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 school is very satisfied with the Whole School Evaluation and we would like to express our gratitude to the Inspector for the great help and advice given to us.

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

1. A new system to promote clear differentiation for pupils with needs has been implemented in each class and is documented in the fortnightly plan.
2. The staff is working on developing strategies within the code of behaviour for dealing with pupils with challenging behaviour.
3. An approach to handwriting has been started in the school from infants to sixth class and a plan is in place for creative writing.