

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

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

**REPORT**

**St Patrick's National School  
Kylepark, Borrisokane  
County Tipperary  
Uimhir rolla: 17850S**

**Date of inspection: 18 October 2013**



## Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

### Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in St. Patrick's National School in October. 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 a representative of the board, completed parent and pupil questionnaires, and a selection of school documents. 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.

St Patrick's N.S. is a small rural co-educational primary school with twenty-four pupils enrolled on 30 September 2013. Two mainstream class teachers are based in the school and additional support for pupils with special educational needs is provided by a learning support teacher and a resource teacher who are both based in nearby schools. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Killaloe. Attendance levels for most pupils are very good.

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

- The accommodation and resources in the school are of a very good standard reflecting the high level of support provided by the board of management and the local community.
- The newly appointed principal provides very good leadership to the school community and the special duties post-holder contributes effectively to the overall management of school.
- Overall, the quality of learning and teaching in literacy and numeracy is very good.
- The staff is committed to the provision of a high quality educational experience for all the pupils in the school.
- Very positive relationships with pupils are evident in the school and these are founded on a climate of mutual trust and self-respect.
- All parents indicate high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of school life.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- The introduction of a differentiated reading programme in the infant and junior classes should be considered.
- Whole-school approaches to literacy and numeracy instruction should be considered and implemented where appropriate.
- The school should develop a system of record-keeping where individual pupil records are stored centrally.
- The board should encourage the setting up of a parents' association and its affiliation to the National Parents' Council.
- An annual report on the progress of the school self-evaluation process should be published by the school.

### Findings

#### 1. The learning achievements of pupils

Overall, pupil attainment, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy, is of a very good standard. The pupils read with fluency and accuracy. In order to cater for varying ability levels, the school should consider the introduction of a differentiated reading programme in the infant and junior classes. A wide range of reading materials is explored at middle and

senior classes in the school. The school has also introduced a whole-school approach to the teaching of comprehension skills and this practice is commended. Pupils' written work is regularly monitored and is of a high standard. A whole-school approach to the teaching of writing will also be implemented in the school under the school improvement plan. Both class teachers are currently engaged in continuing professional development to facilitate this approach.

The quality of learning outcomes and pupil achievement in Mathematics is of a very high standard. These high standards are evidenced by the very good attainment levels of pupils on standardised test results. During the evaluation period some exemplary practice in the teaching of Mathematics was observed. All teachers are cognisant of the need to address mathematical language, the development of mathematical skills and of the beneficial use of concrete materials to develop and consolidate pupils' mathematical knowledge. The introduction of structured programmes such as *Ready, Set, Go Maths* is recommended in the early years.

Caitear go han-dícheallach le teagasc na Gaeilge ar fud na scoile. Tá an-mholadh tuillte ag na hoidí as a n-iarrachtaí chun an comhrá, an léitheoireacht agus scríobh na teanga a chur chun cinn. Labhraíonn cuid mhaith de na daltaí le líofacht shuntasach ar ábhair ina gcuireann siad féin suim. Aithrisíonn na páistí rainn oiriúnacha go soiléir taitneamhach, agus canann siad stór amhrán go muiníneach. Éiríonn go creidiúnach leis na daltaí sa léitheoireacht agus léann a bhformhór le brí agus le tuiscint. Moltar anois ábhar léitheoireachta níos leithne a chur ar fáil sna bunranganna agus cineálacha éagsúla téacs a sholáthar sna hardranganna chun cur leis an dea-chleachtas atá ar siúl. Déantar dea-chúram den scríbhneoireacht Ghaeilge agus is léir ón obair scríofa go bhfuil caighdeán creidiúnach á shroichint ag formhór na páistí.

*Irish is taught enthusiastically throughout the school. The teachers merit much praise for their efforts in promoting speaking, reading and writing. Many of the pupils achieve significant levels of fluency in topics which are of particular interest to their own lives. Pupils recite suitable rhymes and poems clearly and with enjoyment and sing a variety of songs with confidence. The pupils succeed creditably in their reading and the majority of them read with meaning and understanding. It is recommended that a wider range of reading materials be provided for the junior classes and various types of text supplied for the senior classes to further enhance the good work undertaken. Written work in Irish is attended to and it is evident from the work samples that a creditable standard is reached by the majority of pupils.*

A shared learning support teacher and resource teacher provide a very good range of appropriate support to pupils who are experiencing learning difficulties. Very good individual pupil learning profiles (IPLPs) and individual education plans (IEPs) outline the provision to be made for individuals and groups of pupils with differing abilities. Targets, tasks and activities based on the assessment data available and the programmes recommended by the relevant professionals are carefully implemented. All pupils in receipt of support are making very good progress in their learning. The support teachers track the progress of individual pupils systematically and administer appropriate diagnostic tests to assist in the identification of suitable learning targets. Parents are consulted in the formulation of IEPs and pupils' progress is effectively communicated to parents at regular intervals.

## **2. Quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching and learning in this school is of a very high standard. Teaching approaches, including the use of information and communications technology (ICT), are well matched to pupils' learning needs and preferred styles of learning. A wide range of teaching approaches and strategies is employed across all settings, to ensure the development of content, knowledge and skills and pupil engagement.

### **3. Support for pupils' well-being**

Pupils are very effectively managed and the engagement of pupils in all the lessons observed was at a very high level. All of the pupils were on task at all times and pupils with special educational needs were provided with access to the curriculum through a range of appropriate activities and differentiated programmes.

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*.

### **4. Leadership and Management**

The board of management provides a very high level of support to the school and the chairperson maintains close links with the whole school community. The principal provides democratic and participative leadership to the school community. She communicates very effectively with stakeholders and her vision to improve teaching and learning is commendable. The special duties post-holder contributes effectively to the overall management of school. Currently there is no active parents' association in the school. It is recommended that the board should facilitate the setting up of a parents' association. It is reported that parents are very supportive of the school and parent questionnaires indicate high levels of satisfaction with the school, the quality of education and the care and support provided for their children.

### **5. School Self-evaluation**

The school uses a range of assessment strategies and diagnostic instruments to track the progress of individual pupils. Parents are informed orally of their children's progress in school and parent-teacher meetings are held annually. While the school maintains written records of pupils' progress, no written reports are sent to parents. It is recommended that an annual written report be sent to parents from now on. A centralised system for maintaining pupil records should be formalised and implemented throughout the school.

The school has embraced the school self-evaluation process enthusiastically. All parents have been surveyed in relation to their children's literacy skills. The school has analysed the outcomes of the pupils' work and have targeted the development of children's writing skills this school year. Clearly focused targets have been identified and appropriate action has been carried out to ensure that the desired outcomes will be delivered.

### **Conclusion**

The school's capacity to develop further and engage in school improvement is potentially of a very high level.

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

### **Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board is delighted with the affirmation of current good practice and high standards observed throughout the school, and the recognition of the support of the Board to the school. We welcome the praise given to the work of the teachers resulting in high quality learning outcomes for the children.

We found the recommendations made to be helpful.

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

We have established a Parents' Association and affiliated to the NPC. A central record keeping system has been put in place and will be effective from here on in. Our School Self-Evaluation Report and School Improvement Plan have been issued to all parents and will be updated at the end of each school year. SIP has included whole school approaches to literacy and as and from next school year will do SD in area of numeracy. BOM has sanctioned investment in differentiated reading programme. We are currently researching materials and plan to introduce to SIP in September 2014.