Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Monasterevan Convent N.S.,
Monasterevin, Co. Kildare
Uimhir rolla: 15769C

Date of inspection: 30 May 2016

AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS AGUS SCILEANNA | DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS

1. Introduction

Monasterevan Convent National School is a vertical school located in Monasterevin, Co. Kildare, and operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. Current enrolment is 352 pupils and their attendance is very good. Girls are enrolled from Junior Infants to Sixth Class while boys are enrolled in the infant classes only. This report is based on a sample of the teaching and learning of Irish, English, Mathematics and Visual Arts in eight mainstream and two support settings. The board accepts the 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.

2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

The following are the **key findings:**

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good and pupils present as enthusiastic learners.
- The principal, with very effective support from the board and in-school management team, gives excellent leadership to the school.
- The artistic achievements of pupils are highly commendable.
- Cé go gcothaíonn na múinteoirí dearcadh dearfach i leith foghlaim na Gaeilge, ní mór don scoil athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar an gcóras pleanála don Ghaeilge.

  While teachers foster a positive attitude towards the learning of Irish, the school should review its approach to the planning for Irish.
- While there is high quality provision and comprehensive planning for students with special educational needs (SEN), short-term planning should be done on a weekly rather than a fortnightly basis in line with the *Learning Support Guidelines (2000)*.
- The school provides curriculum plans for all subject areas but should now ensure that each whole-school plan sufficiently guides the incremental teaching and learning of key areas of the curriculum at all class levels.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Moltar go luaitear an sprioctheanga, atá bunaithe ar phlean scoile na Gaeilge, i bpleananna na múinteoirí, agus go múinfear an teanga nua seo go docht daingean, i ngach rang.

  It is recommended that target language, based on the whole-school plan for Irish, be clearly identified in all teachers' planning and that this new language be taught and consolidated at each class level.
- Short-term planning for pupils with SEN should be provided on a weekly rather than a fortnightly basis in line with the *Learning Support Guidelines (2000)*.
- The school should ensure that each whole-school plan sufficiently guides all aspects of teachers' classroom practice at all levels, around the incremental teaching and learning of key areas of the curriculum.

3. Quality of School Management

- The work of the board of management is very good. Current priorities include the projected amalgamation and building project for the school and maintaining a very active role in policy development. The board works collaboratively with the school community and is highly commended for regularly communicating agreed reports to parents and teachers.

- The principal provides very strong leadership skills and promotes positive relationships within the school community. He is very ably assisted by the in-school management (ISM) team, comprising the deputy principal and five teachers. Members carry out their range of duties very effectively. They demonstrate very good curricular leadership and provide regular progress reports to the school community. The further strengthening of the pastoral dimension of their role is now advised.

- The management of resources is excellent. Staff members are deployed and managed very well. Communications within the school community are very good and the school's attractive website is very effectively used to inform the wider school community. Ancillary staff contribute to the smooth running of the school.

- The overall management of pupils is very good. During the evaluation, pupils were courteous and enthusiastic in their learning. Pupil-teacher interactions were observed to be positive and mutually respectful.

- The parents' council actively supports the work of the school through a range of activities. Responses to questionnaires administered during the evaluation indicate that almost all parents are happy with the school and feel welcome there.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The quality of planning is good. The school provides a comprehensive range of organisational planning. Whole-school curriculum plans have been developed for all subject areas. However, some curriculum plans do not give sufficient direction to teachers on all aspects of provision. In its ongoing cyclical review of curriculum plans the school should ensure that each one sufficiently guides all aspects of teachers' classroom practice.

- The quality of individual teachers' classroom planning is commendable. All teachers provide comprehensive planning and monthly progress reports. Further clarity is advised with regard to provision for differentiation for the range of learners.

- The school has engaged very well with the school self-evaluation (SSE) process. The effective implementation and positive impact of whole-school approaches in literacy and numeracy were observed during the evaluation.

- 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. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

- Teaching, learning and pupil achievement is of a very high quality. All teachers are highly commended for providing stimulating and attractive learning environments. Teachers are very good communicators and use a range of positive interactions and methodologies to keep pupils

purposefully engaged. The explicit explanation of concepts is a hallmark of most lessons. Teachers work collaboratively, resulting in very good team teaching at different class levels.

- Tá caighdeán an teagaisc agus na foghlama sa Ghaeilge inmholta. Léiríonn na daltaí agus na múinteoirí dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge agus i ngach rang, baintear úsáid éifeachtach as réimse mhaith de rannta agus amhráin chun suim na ndaltaí a chothú. Is inmholta mar a úsáidtear an Ghaeilge mar theanga bhainistíocht ranga i roinnt ranganna. Tá dul chun cinn sásúil sa léitheoireacht bainte amach ag na daltaí agus is léir go bhfuil réimse mhaith de scríbhneoireacht fheidhmniúil déanta acu. I roinnt ranganna, cuirtear béim inmholta ar an scríbhneoireacht chruthaitheach agus ba chóir anois, é seo a fhorbairt go córasach ó rang go rang. Sa chleachtas is éifeachtaí, tá spriocanna foghlama fadtéarmacha agus gearrthéarmacha atá soiléir, leagtha amach sna pleananna scríofa. Sna ceachtanna seo, múintear foclóir agus struchtúir cainte cinnte go córasach agus tugtar seansanna do na daltaí teanga nua a chleachtadh i suíomhanna difriúla le béim ar cheisteanna agus freagraí a chumadh. Moltar go luaifear an teanga nua, atá bunaithe ar phlean scoile na Gaeilge, i bpleananna na múinteoirí, agus go múinfear an teanga nua seo go docht daingean, i ngach rang. Moltar freisin, timpeallachtaí ranga agus scoile atá tacúil d'foghlaim na Gaeilge, a fhorbairt níos mó.

  The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Irish is commendable. The pupils and teachers demonstrate a positive attitude towards the language and a good range of poems and songs was utilised in every setting to engage the pupils. The use of Irish as the language of management in some classes is praiseworthy. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in reading and a good range of pupils' functional writing is in evidence. In some classes, there is a commendable emphasis on creative writing and this should now be systematically developed from class to class. Where teaching is most effective, written planning contains clear, short-term and long-term learning objectives. In these lessons, specific vocabulary and language structures are systematically taught and pupils are provided with opportunities to consolidate newly-learned language in different contexts with an emphasis on asking and answering questions. It is recommended that new language, based on the whole-school plan for Irish, be clearly identified in all teachers' planning and that this new language is taught and consolidated at each class level. In addition, it is recommended that class and school environments that support the learning of Irish, be further developed.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is very good. Team teaching is used very effectively to advance and track the development of guided reading. Reading comprehension strategies are systematically taught using a whole-school approach. Teachers modelled very appropriate language development strategies during high quality oral language lessons. Pupils are making very good progress in writing in terms of content and presentation. The school should review the teaching of genre writing to ensure a more cohesive, systematic and incremental whole-school approach.

- Teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is very good. Nearly all lessons are characterised by very clear teaching of concepts, effective group work and consistent attention to mathematical language. Pupils display very good knowledge of number strategies such as estimation and problem solving, thus providing evidence of strong links between the SSE plan for mathematics and classroom practice. Good use is made of concrete materials. Building on this, teachers are advised to ensure that tasks provided are sufficiently differentiated to suit the range of learning needs in class settings.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Visual Arts is of a very high quality. Excellent displays of pupils' learning achievements were observed and very good photographic evidence celebrates pupils' creativity. Teachers make very effective use of a range of materials and interesting stimuli. In some settings, very good attention is paid to the focused teaching of art vocabulary which is to be encouraged across all settings.

- The overall quality of assessment is good. The tracking of progress during in-class literacy initiatives is commendable. All teachers monitor pupils' written work but there is some variation

in practice. Where practice is very good, teachers consistently provide constructive feedback on how to improve. This practice should be developed across all settings. Data from standardised testing should be used more in planning differentiated approaches to class programmes of work.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- The overall provision for pupils with SEN is of a high quality. Support is provided through a mixture of withdrawal and in-class interventions. In the settings observed, the teaching was of a very high quality and marked by very positive interactions and appropriate strategies. There is comprehensive planning for pupils with SEN and the Continuum of Support has been introduced on a whole-school basis. In embedding this approach to the planning for, and tracking of pupils' progress, the school should ensure that each student support file includes a clear indication of the current stage of support; an appropriate review date; specific, measurable, achievable and time-bound targets, and as appropriate, completed review documents. The school is reminded that as per the *Learning Support Guidelines (2000)*, short term planning should be prepared on a weekly rather than a fortnightly basis.

- The quality of support for the pupils' wellbeing is very good. Commendably, the school supports the holistic development of pupils through a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Almost all pupils surveyed during the evaluation responded that they like this school.

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Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Vision Statement for Monasterevan Convent N.S., outlines the commitments which underpin all of our policies, procedures and actions. The Board of Management welcomes publication of this Whole School Evaluation Report. It is most affirmative concerning the various areas of school activity: teaching and learning, pupil care and welfare, leadership and management, self-evaluation and planning.
Notable inclusions are:-

a) The very high quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement.
b) The very high quality of teaching, provision and comprehensive planning for pupils with Special Education Needs.
c) Comprehensive whole-school and teacher planning.
d) The very good quality of support for pupils' wellbeing.
e) Our pupils are courteous and enthusiastic in their learning.
f) Our In-School Management Team works very effectively while showing very good curricular leadership.
g) Our In-School Management and Principal combine to provide very strong leadership skills and to promote positive relationships within our school community.
h) The work of our Board of Management is very good and it is highly commended for its regular communication with teachers and parents/guardians.
i) Our In-School Management Team, Board of Management and Principal provide excellent leadership to the school.
j) Our school has engaged very well with the School Self-Evaluation Process (SSE).
k) Our Ancillary staff contributes to the smooth running of the school.
l) Our Parents' Council actively supports the work of the school.

The Board of Management greatly acknowledges the dedication and hard work of teachers, the quality of leadership and management, the involvement and contribution of parents and the positive attitudes and engagement of pupils.

Part B: 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 and Staff acknowledge the recommendations of the Whole School Evaluation Report. The recommendations will be incorporated into our school plan as part of our ongoing process of self-evaluation and continuous improvement. Specifically, genre writing will continue to be implemented across additional classroom settings since its original introduction during 2014/2015.