An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Scoil Náisiúnta Cúil an tSúdaire 2,
Sandylane,
Portarlington.
Co.Laois

Uimhir rolla: 18203N

Date of inspection: 18 September 2014

AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS AGUS SCILEANNA | DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS
INSPECTORATE

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Scoil Náisiúnta Cúil an tSúdaire 2 in September 2014. 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 of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

This school is located in Portarlington and is under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Bishop of Meath and Kildare. The 92 pupils enrolled come from Portarlington and a wide catchment area of Church of Ireland parishes in the surrounding townlands. There are four mainstream class teachers and a shared and a part-time support teacher. A newly-appointed principal is in place since 1 September 2014. The daily attendance level of the pupils is very good.

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

- The quality of teaching in the school is of a high standard.
- Support for the pupils' well-being is very good.
- Pupil achievement in reading and Mathematics is very good.
- The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs is highly commendable.
- The board of management and parents are very supportive of the school.
- Music education in the school is of a very high standard.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- The pupils' oral language skills should be further developed through the use of a systematic oral language programme and in-class support.
- Teaching methodologies should be extended to include greater use of pair work in lessons.
- In order to develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the locality, the environment should be explored incrementally as part of the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) programme.

Findings

1. **The learning achievements of pupils**
   - The learning achievements of the pupils are commendable. In all settings, pupils enjoy their learning and are motivated to learn.
   - The pupils' reading achievement is very good. Some good quality writing was evident on displays and in copybooks in Irish and English. The quality of penmanship is of a very high standard. While pupils have a good range of vocabulary, there is scope to develop their communication skills and oral fluency through the use of a systematic oral language programme.
   - Learning outcomes in Mathematics are highly commended. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of mathematical concepts across the strands.
   - Responses to parent questionnaires administered as part of the evaluation indicate that almost all parents agree that the school supports the development of their child's learning in reading and Mathematics.
   - Tá caighdeán na foghlama sa Ghaeilge go maith. Aithrisíonn agus canann na daltaí réimse leathan rainn agus amhráin go muiníneach i ngach rang. Tá siad in ann

ceisteanna a fhreagairt agus abairtí a chumadh go cumasach. Chun tógáil ar an dea-chleachtas seo ba chóir go mbeadh deiseanna leanúnacha ag na daltaí labhairt i bpéirí mar chuid lárnach de cheachtanna. Léann na daltaí go líofa agus freagraíonn siad ceisteanna go rathúil ar an ábhar. (*The standard of learning in Irish is good. The pupils in all classes can recite and sing a wide range of poems and songs confidently. They can answer questions and compose sentences capably. To build on this good practice, sustained opportunities for the pupils to converse in pairs should be a central feature of lessons. The pupils read fluently and can successfully answer questions based on the text)*

- Learning in Music is one of the strengths of the school. Pupils in all classes enjoy singing a wide repertoire of songs, display a good understanding of the elements of music, and demonstrate competence in musical literacy.
- There is scope to develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the immediate and local environment.
- In special education settings, pupils are making very good progress commensurate with their abilities.

2. **Quality of teaching**

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is of a high standard. Teachers are very well prepared and present well-structured lessons which are supported by a good range of resouces. Learning objectives are clear and curriculum-based. Teachers in all classes explain concepts clearly as is evident from the responses to pupil questionnaires administered as part of the evaluation.
- The teachers create very attractive and purposeful learning environments.
- Comptetent whole-class teaching and talk and discussion, with some use of pair and group work, were the main methodologies observed. It is recommended that teachers make more use of pair work in lessons in order to practise communicating in English and Irish and to facilitate more active engagement in learning activities.
- To further progress the reading attainment of some pupils, and to enrich all pupils' reading experiences, greater attention should be given to the use of novels in middle and senior classes.
- As part of the SESE programme, teachers should identify which aspects of the local environment will be investigated, and how the pupils' skills and knowledge can be developed incrementally as they progress through the school.
- The quality of teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs is highly commendable. Lessons in withdrawal and in-class support settings are characterised by very good preparation and effective teaching approaches. It is recommended that models of in-class support are further developed throughout the school to support the develoment of the pupils' oral language skills.

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

- The quality of support for the pupils' well-being is very good. Pupils are respectful and courteous, and a welcoming atmosphere exists within the school. In questionnaire returns, all pupils surveyed indicated that they know what to do if someone is being bullied and that they know the school rules.
- Parents are regular visitors to the school and attend relevant school assemblies. Almost all parents surveyed feel welcome in the school. The parents' association provides valuable support to the school.
- A small minority of pupils miss twenty days or more. The school is advised to monitor these pupils closely.
- 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 is highly committed to the school. It oversees the maintenance and development of the school successfully. The chairperson is a regular visitor to the school and frequently leads school assemblies. It is recommended that the board adopts a cyclical approach to the review and ratification of whole-school policies.
- The newly-appointed principal demonstrates a good understanding of the school's strengths and priority areas for development.

5. **School Self-evaluation**

- The school is making good progress in advancing the school-self evaluation process. There is a need to revise the targets in the school improvement plan to ensure they are focussed on improvements in learner outcomes in literacy.

Conclusion

The school's capacity to develop further is good. The board and staff are committed to school improvement and they collaborate well together.

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