

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

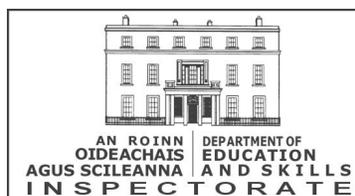
**Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning**

REPORT

**Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa,
Kilcloon, Co Meath.**

Uimhir rolla: 176520

Date of inspection: 7 April 2016



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa, Kilcloon in April 2016. 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.

Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa is located in the village of Kilcloon near Maynooth. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Meath. There are eight mainstream classes and four teachers (three full-time teachers and one part-time teacher) for pupils with special educational needs. At the time of the evaluation there were 220 pupils enrolled in the school and attendance rates were very good for almost all 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.

The evaluation has found:

- The board of management and the staff are commended on the provision and maintenance of a safe, comfortable and stimulating learning environment for all pupils.
- The school has a wide range of methods for communicating with parents and it enjoys strong community support.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is praiseworthy. There is scope, however, to improve differentiation of lessons for pupils with additional learning needs in some mainstream classrooms.
- The teachers discharge their duties conscientiously and diligently and they display an enthusiasm to be involved in continuous professional development, to adopt new ideas and to engage in self-evaluation.
- Very effective supports are implemented to care for and support pupils' well-being.
- While individual learning plans are prepared for pupils with special educational needs, there is scope to improve the target-setting process for this planning.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- In light of the diversity of learning needs in most mainstream classrooms, it is recommended that assessment information be used more systematically to guide planning and approaches to differentiation.
- Greater emphasis should be placed upon teaching discrete oral language lessons in English. Moreover, specific curriculum-based learning outcomes should be identified in the planning for all classroom interventions.
- The targets in all individual support plans for pupils with special educational needs should be outlined in specific and measurable language and should be closely linked to priority learning needs.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- On the whole, the learning achievements of pupils are very good. In response to the Inspectorate survey, almost all pupils indicated that they liked school and that this is a good school.
- Many pupils attain very good standards in English reading. Pupils engage in writing in many genres and that work is affirmed and celebrated in attractive classroom displays. While the majority of pupils express themselves articulately, some pupils would benefit from more systematic exploration of specific oral language objectives during discrete oral language classes.

- San iomlán sroichtear caighdeán maith sa Ghaeilge. Léiríonn formhór na ndaltaí tuiscint inmholta. Cé go labhraíonn na cuid is mó díobh ar chaighdeán maith, téann sé dian ar dhaltaí eile comhráithe nadúrtha a dhéanamh. B'fhiú deiseanna labhartha sa bhreis a chur ar fáil do dhaltaí i ranganna áirithe agus béim níos mó a chur ar an gcur chuige cumarsáideach. Léann agus scríobhann a lán daltaí go maith agus aithrisítear rainn agus amhráin le sult.
- *Overall a good standard is attained in Irish. The majority display good levels of understanding. While most speak at a good standard, others find it difficult to make natural conversations. It would be worthwhile to provide extra speaking opportunities in some classes and to put more emphasis on the communicative approach. Many pupils read and write well and poems and songs are recited enjoyably.*
- Many pupils achieve very good standards in Mathematics. They demonstrate good speed and accuracy in oral computation tasks. Initiatives such as *Mata sa Rang* and *Ready Set Go Maths* are implemented to support mathematical development. Pupils can relate their mathematical knowledge and skills to real life contexts. Very good progress is evident in the development of their problem-solving and measurement skills.
- Pupils produce their own high quality projects in many curriculum areas and the school has been successful in promoting scientific and environmental awareness. There is scope to further incorporate incremental study of the local environment into curriculum provision.
- Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress in relation to their ability levels. There is scope, however, to improve provision for some of these pupils through more systematic differentiation of work in mainstream classrooms.

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is good, with some examples of very good practice observed. Most lessons were well-structured, and teachers facilitated active learning approaches through provision of suitable resources and displays. In the most effective lessons, learning intentions were shared with pupils and differentiated appropriately.
- All teachers prepare written planning for their teaching. There is scope to improve some short-term plans by identifying specific objectives for oral language lessons in English, by including both learning objectives and planned activities for all subjects, and by outlining approaches for differentiating lessons for pupils with additional learning needs
- The school successfully implements a number of early intervention initiatives. The *Aistear* programme, *Buddy Reading* and the *Power Hour* are employed effectively to support the development of learning skills.
- All teachers maintain a range of useful assessment records. In some cases there is scope to extend assessment across a wider range of curriculum areas. The school uses a range of screening and diagnostic tests to identify early learning difficulties. It is recommended that classroom support plans from the NEPS *Continuum Of Support* be documented as the the first stage of assisting any pupils requiring additional learning supports.
- The quality of teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs is good. Mainstream and support teachers cultivate positive relationships with these pupils and appropriate approaches and resources are deployed to address identified learning needs. To further improve on this provision, it is recommended that planning in support settings be completed on a weekly basis, and that targets in individual support plans be outlined in specific and measurable language which is linked to priority learning needs.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- Very good quality supports are implemented for pupils' well-being. Staff members cultivate a caring rapport with the pupils and during the evaluation pupils were co-operative and courteous. Initiatives such as Friends for Life, the worry box, the kindness bucket and buddy systems are implemented to support pupils and to provide them with self-management skills.
- The school benefits from the strong support of a committed parents' association and parents assist with school activities. Effective communication is maintained with parents through newsletters, text messages and the school website. In response to the Inspectorate survey, almost all parents indicated that they felt welcome in the school and that they were happy with the school.
- 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 discharges its administrative and legislative functions very effectively. Members are well-informed and committed to the work of the school. The board is commended on its role in the development of the school building as an attractive learning environment.
- The principal demonstrates very good administrative skills and she provides commendable leadership and management. She articulates a child-centred vision for the school with a strong emphasis on pupils' welfare and educational outcomes.
- She is ably assisted by an in-school management team whose members fulfil a range of delegated administrative, pastoral and curriculum responsibilities conscientiously.
- The administrative policies are of a very high quality and are reviewed regularly. It is recommended that future reviews of curriculum policies be focussed upon adapting curriculum implementation to the particular school context incorporating new initiatives and on identifying further cross-curricular opportunities for local studies.

5. School Self-evaluation

- The school has engaged very effectively with the School Self-Evaluation process. Appropriate improvement targets have been developed for aspects of literacy and numeracy and there is evidence that these whole-school approaches are reflected in classroom practice.

Conclusion

- The school's capacity to engage in school improvement is very good. The teachers display an enthusiasm to be involved in continuous professional development, to adopt new ideas and to engage in self-evaluation.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The board of management of Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa welcomes this very positive and affirmative WSE report. The report acknowledges and affirms the commendable learning achievements and the quality of teaching in our school. The board is pleased that the report also affirms the very high standard of support for pupils' wellbeing. The board of management believes that this report is a tribute to the commitment, dedication and vision of the school staff, parents and wider school community.

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

The board notes the recommendations made and will support the school in their implementation. Assessment information will continue to be used systematically to guide planning and approaches to differentiation.

Teachers have received preliminary training in the new Primary Language Curriculum and specific curriculum-based learning outcomes are identified in the planning for all classroom interventions. The targets in all individual support plans for pupils with special educational needs are outlined in specific and measurable language and are closely linked to priority learning needs. The board of management acknowledges and supports the participation of one of the learning support teachers in the post-graduate diploma in inclusive, learning support and special education in 2016-17.