

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning
REPORT ISSUED FOR SCHOOL RESPONSE**

**Scoil Mhichíl Naofa,
Sneem, Co.Kerry
Uimhir rolla: 08251S**

Date of inspection: 07 June 2013



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

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Scoil Mhichil Naofa, Sneem, in June 2013. 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 Mhichil Naofa has an enrolment of sixty-four pupils. This is a co-education primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kerry. Pupils' attendances are very good in general. The school participates in the Green Schools, Discovery Science and Active Flag initiatives and in local community events.

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

- A very supportive board of management
- A dedicated hard working teaching staff
- A positive school atmosphere permeates all school activities
- Literacy and numeracy standards are above national norms
- The quality of teaching is very good in general.

The following **recommendations** are made:

- It is recommended that all stakeholders be afforded a more formal role in policy revision and school self-evaluation processes
- A whole-school English Oral Language programme should be implemented to further develop pupils' language abilities.
- Assessment across the curriculum requires further development to facilitate planning differentiated programmes of work.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- Overall learning achievements are very good. Pupils regularly engage in project work, use of the local environment and technology in their learning. They are enthusiastic about their learning and apply themselves well.
- Tá caighdeán maith á bhaint amach ag daltaí sa Ghaeilge. Tá foclóir leathan acu agus is féidir leo abairtí a struchtúró go cruinn i gcoitinne. Labhraíonn siad go muiníneach. Aithrisíonn siad raon leathan rannata agus dánta de ghlanmheabhair. Léann siad le brí go h-iondúil. Tá caighdeán cuí á bhaint amach sa scríbhneoireacht chruthaitheach.
(Pupils achieve good standards in Irish. They have a broad vocabulary and structure sentences accurately. They speak with confidence. Pupils recite a wide range of

rhymes and poems by heart. They generally read with understanding. An appropriate standard is achieved in creative writing).

- Results of standardised test results indicate that pupils are generally achieving high standards in literacy. However, they also show a selection of pupils is experiencing challenges in literacy which requires differentiated programmes of work to address their learning needs. Pupils read with fluency and understanding in general. They express themselves confidently in oral language tasks. They engage successfully in writing in a variety of genres. Standardised test results show pupils achieving above the national norms in mathematics generally. Pupils are suitably challenged and display a very good knowledge of mathematical concepts.
- Pupils have a very good knowledge of the local environment and of local history. Field trips are regular features of their learning. They have also studied the lives of significant people in history. Project work is a regular feature of their learning in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education lessons. Scientific experiments are based on the school environment.
- Assessment of literacy and numeracy using standardised tests is conducted annually. Teacher observation and teacher-designed tasks and tests are employed regularly to assess pupils' learning. To further enhance current practice it is recommended that strategies be developed, using curriculum objectives, to assess pupil achievement across the curriculum. Assessment for learning is also recommended.

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is very good. During the evaluation, some very productive interactions between teachers and pupils were observed. Teachers effectively employ a range of active methodologies to introduce and consolidate new concepts. Textbooks are judiciously used. Information and communication technologies are frequently used appropriately in teaching.
- Múintear an Ghaeilge go cumasach. Baintear úsáid éifeachtach as réimse leathan cur chuige chun foclóir nua a mhúineadh agus a dhaingniú. Chun tógáil ar an deobair seo moltar cur chuige cumarsáide a fhorbairt a thuilleadh. Tugtar deiseanna sa scríbhneoireacht chruthaitheach do dhaltai go rialta. *(Irish is capably taught. Effective use is made of a wide range of approaches to teaching and consolidating new vocabulary. To build further on the good practice, it is recommended that a communicative approach be further developed. Pupils are given opportunities to engage in creative writing on a regular basis).*
- English is generally well taught. A commercial phonics programme is implemented effectively in junior classes. Discrete oral language activities are regular features of literacy lessons. To build on current practice, it is recommended that a whole-school programme for oral language development be implemented. Reading is successfully taught using a variety of approaches and texts. Free-writing and creative writing opportunities are regularly engaged in across the curriculum.
- Mathematics is successfully taught using a variety of methodologies including the regular use of concrete materials and the school environment. In junior classes a commendable emphasis is placed on mathematical language, the use of concrete materials and mathematics' trails, which are designed by more senior pupils. This good practice is successfully developed further in other classes.
- Pupils with special education needs (SEN) receive effective support both in class and on a withdrawal basis. Team-teaching and in-class station teaching could now be employed to further address pupils' learning needs. Teachers carefully prepare Individual Educational Programmes (IEPs) collaboratively with class teachers and

parents. Clear learning targets are included, based on recommendations from external professionals. Pupils are successfully integrated into all school activities.

3. Support for pupils' wellbeing

- An atmosphere of mutual respect prevails within the school. Discipline in classes is very good and pupils are well supervised during the school day. Respondents to pupils' questionnaires stated that they feel safe in school. They also stated that their lessons are clearly explained and that they use technology regularly.
- 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 meets regularly. Minutes are carefully maintained. A financial report is presented at most meetings. It is recommended that a detailed report be presented at all meetings. Accounts are independently certified annually. The board is commended for maintaining the building and environs to a high standard. It has overseen the provision of new classrooms, in recent years, with the aid of departmental grants. The chairperson meets with the principal regularly to discuss school business. The board ratifies policies which are signed and dated by the chairperson. Advice was given in relation to the further development of administrative policies. Pupil achievement is a regular feature of discussions at meetings. Members of the board stated that they are satisfied with the standard of education provision at the school.
- The in-school management team consists of a principal, deputy principal and special duties teacher. The principal has a clear vision for the school and promotes a positive school climate, encourages collaborative decision making and has developed very effective working relationships. She effectively employs a distributive leadership style. She has an accurate understanding of pupils' achievement and individual learning needs. She is ably assisted by the in-school management team. Posts of responsibility duties are assigned and reflect the current needs of the school.
- Parents actively support many school activities. Although the board has encouraged the establishment of a parents' association, one does not exist at present. It is advised that such an association be established to facilitate formal communications with the school. Parents' representatives, in a meeting with the inspector, expressed high levels of satisfaction with pupils' achievement levels and the standard of teaching in the school. A monthly newsletter issues from the school to parents informing them of a wide range of school matters. Annual parent-teacher meetings are held and written reports are provided. Parents' responses to department questionnaires were largely positive.

5. School Self-evaluation

- School staff actively engages in school self-evaluation (SSE) processes. Parent and pupils' voices have been included as part of this process through the use of questionnaires. Evidence has been analysed, an SSE report published and an improvement plan for numeracy is being formulated. To further support this process it is recommended that the board of management participates more fully in the SSE process.
- All teachers provide long and short-term planning documents to guide their teaching. Monthly progress reports are integrated into the short-term documents. A variety of practices exist in these documents. Therefore, it is recommended that a whole-school approach be implemented in relation to the above.

Conclusion

The school's capacity to make the necessary improvements and to develop further is good. External assistance and guidance from support services would enhance the potential which exists at board and staff level to engage in self-evaluation and to plan for improvement in a formal and structured way.