

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

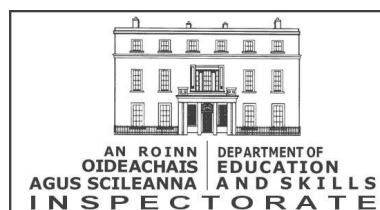
Department of Education and Skills

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

REPORT

**Scoil Íosa
Carracastle, County Mayo
Uimhir rolla: 19651W**

Date of inspection: 4 November 2015



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE-MLL) was undertaken in Scoil Íosa in November 2015. 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 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.

Scoil Íosa is a rural, co-educational primary school located in the village of Carracastle. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Achonry and is situated approximately four kilometres from Charlestown, County Mayo and eight kilometres from Ballaghaderreen, County Roscommon. There are three mainstream class teachers and two teachers working in support roles in the school. The current enrolment is sixty-four pupils and attendance levels are good.

The evaluation has found:

- The board of management provides very good support to the school.
- The principal and teachers are highly dedicated to the care and well-being of the pupils.
- Pupils' oral language is very well developed. Comprehension skills and writing in a variety of genres are being developed, although there is scope to develop a co-ordinated approach to their implementation.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good. However, there is an over-reliance on the direct teaching approach in some settings.
- The current strategic plan is commendable. All curricular policies should be reviewed to guide teaching and learning in the school.
- Pupils are courteous and confident and partake willingly in all school activities, notably in areas of provision pertaining to the Arts and sport.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- A whole-school approach to the teaching of writing genres and comprehension skills should be formulated.
- It is recommended that teachers focus on the further development of collaborative learning strategies, including pair work and group work, and decrease their reliance on the direct teaching approach.
- A whole-school approach to teachers' individual planning is recommended.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall quality of pupils' learning achievements is good, with a significant number of pupils achieving very good learning outcomes. Pupils are motivated and interested in their learning. In English, high standards of reading are achieved by the majority of pupils. Pupils are exposed to a wide variety of reading material and they read with fluency and expression. Pupils' creative writing outputs are good. A co-ordinated approach to the development of writing genres and pupils' comprehension skills should be implemented throughout the school. Pupils have a good knowledge of spelling, poetry and grammar. The emphasis on oral language development as part of the school self-evaluation (SSE) process is effective.

- Tá cáilíocht an-mhaith ag baint le caighdeán an teagaisc agus na foghlama sa Ghaeilge. Baintear caighdeán an-ard amach maidir le labhairt na teanga. Is féidir leis na daltaí gramadach a úsáid, briathra a láimhseáil, abairtí agus scéalta a chumadh agus ceisteanna a fhreagairt go cumasach. Léann na daltaí go muiníneach agus tá raon leathan foclóra ar eolas acu. *(The quality of teaching and learning in Irish is very good. A very high standard has been achieved by the pupils in oral language. Pupils can use verbs and grammar, compose sentences and stories and answer questions competently. They read confidently and know a wide range of vocabulary.)*
- Learning achievements in Mathematics are commendable. Pupils are knowledgeable of number facts, mathematical language and tables. Pupils use concrete materials appropriately and their problem-solving skills are being developed successfully. It is recommended that teachers plan for linkage and differentiation.
- Pupils' learning in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) is effective. Projects on local history are noteworthy and work in Science is praiseworthy. This effective work needs to be extended to continue the development of pupils' skills. The school's participation in the Green Schools Programme and its achievement of the sixth green flag is commendable.
- Pupils' artwork and creative outputs are highly commendable. A local artist shares her skills with the pupils. The standard of work on display is varied and creative. All pupils from first class onwards learn the tin whistle and play competently. Pupils in the senior end of the school can choose to learn an additional instrument. Pupils partake in a school band and play an impressive musical repertoire confidently and enthusiastically.
- Pupils who present with learning and special educational needs are making good progress in accordance with their abilities and needs.

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is very good. Teachers prepare appropriate activities for their pupils. A whole-school approach to teachers' individual planning is recommended. This should be informed by the school's curricular policies. Teachers use the interactive whiteboard effectively. While there was some use of pair work and group work during the evaluation, it is recommended that teachers further develop the use of collaborative learning strategies in their teaching.
- The quality of teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs is commendable. Appropriate emphasis is placed on skill development. The delivery of support at the time of the evaluation was on a withdrawal basis. Consideration should be given to the delivery of aspects of this provision through models of in-class support; this approach would facilitate the introduction of curriculum-based initiatives.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is very good. Pupils experience a caring and supportive environment. They participate in a wide variety of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, such as quizzes, sport and music, with great success. In questionnaires administered during the evaluation, all pupils confirmed that they like school and feel safe there.
- Pupils from disadvantaged and minority groups are supported very well. All pupils are afforded opportunities to participate in all activities. Home-school communication is very good. The school's website is commendable. In parental questionnaires administered during the evaluation, all parents confirmed that the school is welcoming and well run.

- Confirmation was provided that the board of management has formally adopted the *Child Protection 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 quality of leadership and management in this school is very good. The board of management is well informed and supports the school very effectively. Members are highly committed to their role. Meetings are held regularly and policies are discussed and ratified. Consideration should be given to investment in information and communications technology (ICT), as a learning tool for the pupils, as finances permit. The building is exceptionally well maintained. The ancillary staff give dedicated support to the school. All curricular policies should be reviewed to guide teaching and learning in the school.
- The principal was appointed in 2014 and is committed to the well-being of staff and pupils. His strategic plan is commendable. He is highly dedicated to school improvement and his commitment to the introduction and implementation of the school's sports activities is impressive. The in-school management (ISM) team work in a collegial manner. It is advised that an annual review of duties be undertaken to ensure that the responsibilities of the ISM team members reflect the priorities of the school.

5. School Self-evaluation

- There is good progress underway in respect of SSE. The school has formulated a school improvement plan (SIP). A school report on the effective implementation of targets in oral language has been circulated to the school community.

Conclusion

The school's capacity to engage in school improvement is very good. Staff members work as a team and they are committed and dedicated to improving pupils' learning outcomes.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The board of Management of Scoil Iosa welcomes the very positive report it has received from the Inspectorate which highlights the very good teaching, the dedication of staff to the care and well-being of pupils and the commitment and dedication of staff to attaining very good learning outcomes. The Board also welcomes the recognition of the very good leadership and management in the school, the dedicated support of the ancillary staff and the effective support given to the school by the Board itself. The Board is very happy that the report states that the pupils are courteous and confident and partake willingly in school activities, that they learn in a caring, supportive environment and that they participate in a wide variety of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. The Board also welcomes the fact that home-school communication is very good and that the parental survey revealed that all parents feel the school is welcoming and well-run. The Board looks forward to the continued development of our school with great confidence.

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 of Scoil Iosa welcomes the advice and recommendations of the Inspectorate. As mentioned in the report there is already good progress evident in the area of School Self-Evaluation. Through this School Self-Evaluation process, teacher planning and Continuous Professional Development the Board is very satisfied that each recommendation will be implemented in full.