

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

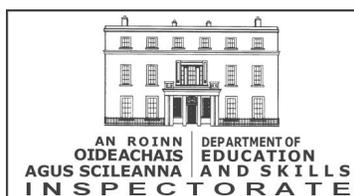
**Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning**

REPORT

**Gorey Educate Together National School,
Kilnahue Lane, Carnew Rd, Gorey, Co. Wexford**

Roll number: 20214H

Date of inspection: 05 November 2015



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Gorey Educate Together National School 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 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.

Gorey Educate Together NS is a co-educational vertical primary school under the patronage of Educate Together. The school has undergone a period of very rapid development and expansion since it was established in 2005. In addition to sixteen mainstream classes, the school has one pre-school class and two special classes for pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The overall attendance of the 435 pupils enrolled is very good.

The evaluation has found:

- The overall learning achievements of pupils, including for pupils with special educational needs are of a high standard, with some pupils achieving at highly commendable levels.
- The overall quality of teaching in the school is of a high standard with examples of very effective practice in evidence in a number of settings.
- Ar an iomlán tá tuiscint mhaith agus stór focal oiriúnach ag roinnt mhaith de na daltaí sa Ghaeilge, ach in ainneoin sin, labhraíonn tromlach dóibh le heaspa muiníne agus líofachta. *Overall, many pupils display good levels of understanding and have an appropriate vocabulary in Irish, however a majority of pupils speak with a lack of confidence and fluency.*
- The good assessment practices that exist in the school should be extended.
- The quality of leadership and management in the school is very good and the principal leads and manages the school very effectively.
- Support for pupils' well-being is highly commended and parents and the parent-teacher association are very supportive of the work of the school.
- The school is highly commended for the work undertaken to date in literacy and numeracy, as part of its engagement in the school self-evaluation (SSE) process.
- In light of the rapid growth of the school, a particular challenge for the leadership is that of ensuring a consistently cohesive approach to curricular implementation.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- To further build on existing high standards, agreed whole-school literacy and numeracy initiatives should be embedded in practice to support a more cohesive and incremental approach to pupils' learning.
- Ar mhaithe le gnóthachtáil na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge a uasmhéadú, moltar scileanna foghlama neamhspleácha sa teanga a fhorbairt agus leanúnachas agus dul chun cinn sa chlár foghlama a shoiléiriú.
To enhance pupils' achievement levels in Irish it is recommended that independent-learning skills be developed and continuity and progression of the learning programme be clarified.
- An increased focus should be placed on assessment for learning and pupil self-assessment.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning achievements of pupils, including for pupils with special educational needs are of a high standard, with some pupils achieving at highly commendable levels. The pupils engage with praiseworthy levels of interest and enthusiasm in the extensive breadth and range of learning experiences provided. In the questionnaire responses, almost all pupils report that they like their school, and most confirm that they enjoy their lessons and learning.
- The overall quality of pupil achievement in English is high. Pupils read with interest and fluency and, in questionnaires administered during the evaluation, most pupils expressed the view that they think they are doing well at reading. Some fine examples of pupils' personal writing across a range of genres are in evidence in response to a whole-school promotion of the writing process. In general, pupils communicate with their teachers and peers with suitable confidence and competence. In order to progress pupils' oral skills further, additional promotion of their active listening skills and their ability to elaborate and to engage with the views of others, is advised.
- Léiríonn an chuid is mó de na daltaí suim sa Ghaeilge. Ar an iomlán, tá tuiscint mhaith agus stór focal oiriúnach ag roinnt mhaith díobh. In ainneoin sin, cé go gcuirtear béim ar fhoclóir, ar fheidhmeanna teanga oiriúnacha agus ar dheiseanna chumarsáide, labhraíonn tromlach na ndaltaí le heaspa muiníne agus líofachta. Ar mhaithe lena ngnóthachtáil a uasmhéadú, moltar scileanna foghlama neamhspleácha sa teanga a fhorbairt agus leanúnachas agus dul chun cinn sa chlár foghlama a shoiléiriú.
Most pupils display an interest in Irish. Overall, many display good levels of understanding and have an appropriate vocabulary. However, while vocabulary, suitable language functions and opportunities to communicate are emphasised, a majority of pupils speak with a lack of confidence and fluency. To enhance their achievement levels, it is recommended that independent-learning skills be developed and continuity and progression of the learning programme be clarified.
- Overall school-wide attainment in Mathematics is commended. Most pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the mathematical concepts being taught and significant improvements in pupil learning outcomes have been achieved in numeracy in recent years. The extension of whole-school approaches to problem solving will support further improvements. In the questionnaires most pupils expressed the view that they think they are doing well at Mathematics.
- The pupils' abilities and interests are nurtured successfully across all subject areas. They apply their knowledge and skills with ability. The pupils make an important contribution to the life of the school by participating in relevant decision-making, including the *Green Schools* committee and the School Council.

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is of a high standard, with examples of very effective practice in evidence in a number of settings. Overall, lessons are well structured, paced and resourced. Meaningful opportunities are provided for pupils to work collaboratively and actively participate in their learning. Teachers demonstrate openness and commitment to ongoing school improvement. Their engagement in continuing professional development is lauded. Teachers are successful in creating very positive learning atmospheres. Interesting and enjoyable learning contexts and

activities are provided where pupils' work and achievements across the curriculum are celebrated.

- The introduction of the Aistear framework, a play-based approach to teaching, in the pre-school class and the infant classes is praised. Early intervention is a key feature of practice and a number of programmes targeting specific aspects of learning have been effectively implemented.
- Credible progress has been made in the review and development of whole-school assessment practices. Effective examples of assessment of learning and some assessment for learning, are in evidence. The good assessment practices that exist in the school should be extended and an increased focus should be placed on assessment for learning and pupil self-assessment.
- Commendable support is provided for pupils with special and additional learning needs. Teaching is flexible and adapted to take account of pupils' needs and a suitable balance of in-class support and withdrawal is achieved.
- In general, education plans are of a good quality and are devised collaboratively with parents and staff. Main class and support teachers collaborate effectively. Overall, high quality team-teaching and individualised interventions are being implemented. To build on the very good work in support for pupils, the use of a greater range of diagnostic tests and the ongoing sharing of expertise regarding the setting and review of learning programmes, is advised.
- In the classes for children with an ASD, teachers are commended for using a good range of ASD specific teaching approaches appropriately. The individual needs of pupils are successfully addressed through the planning for and delivery of a suitably broad curriculum. The extension of opportunities for pupils to experience more in-depth learning through the additional use of integrated, thematic approaches to learning should be considered.
- In the questionnaires, all parents indicated that they think teaching is good in the school and almost all feel that their child is doing well.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- Support for pupils' well-being is highly commended. An inclusive, open and welcoming school atmosphere with strong supportive relationships between pupils, teachers and staff, is evident. The high level of meaningful and worthwhile inclusion experienced by pupils with special educational needs throughout the school is praised.
- The quality of relationships and communication between home and school is very good. Parents and the parent-teacher association are very supportive of the work of the school. The parent-teacher association is commended for its range of meaningful and interesting projects to broaden the pupils' learning experiences. In the questionnaires almost all parents said that they felt welcome in the school and that there was a good atmosphere. Almost all parents said that their child feels safe and is well looked after.
- During the evaluation pupils' behaviour and support and respect for each other was very good. In the questionnaires, almost all pupils reported that they like the school and think it is a good school. The planned formulation of a care team and whole-school charter for behaviour, based on positive behaviour management strategies and existing individual classroom charters, is welcomed. In the pending review of the school's Code of Behaviour, whole-school developments in relation to positive behaviour management and interventions should be documented.
- 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 quality of leadership and management in the school is very good. The board of management is commended for the effective manner in which it supports the school's development. The board is regularly updated on the learning progress of pupils. The

board's plan to strengthen the level of parental input into the development of pertinent school policies is welcomed.

- The principal provides very effective leadership and management. He displays commendable commitment to the school's vision and the promotion of the pupils' best interests. He purposefully encourages innovation in teaching and learning. A strong spirit of collaboration and praiseworthy levels of teamwork among teachers and staff are successfully fostered by him.
- In fulfilling his duties, the principal is ably supported by the committed and hard-working members of the in-school management team. Their work contributes positively to developments in teaching, learning, organisational and pastoral support in the school. The dedication of other teachers who voluntarily lead additional curriculum initiatives and pupil-support measures is also praised highly.

5. School Self-evaluation

- The school is highly commended for the work undertaken to date in literacy and numeracy, as part of its engagement in the school self-evaluation (SSE) process. Actions and interventions have been identified, which are impacting positively on pupils' learning and a regular review process is in train.
- In light of the rapid growth of the school, a particular challenge for the leadership is that of ensuring a consistently cohesive approach to curricular implementation. Agreed whole-school literacy and numeracy initiatives should be embedded in practice to support a more cohesive and incremental approach to pupils' learning.

Conclusion

Given the developments in school self-evaluation, the work undertaken in response to the most recent school inspection and the openness to innovation in teaching and learning, the school's capacity to develop further is very good.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

This Inspection Report describes a very successful school community. The Board of Management wishes to acknowledge the dedication and collaboration of the many individuals and groups who drive that success on an ongoing basis, including the children & their families and the entire school staff.

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 recommendations included in this Inspection Report will be central to our School Improvement Work over the coming year.