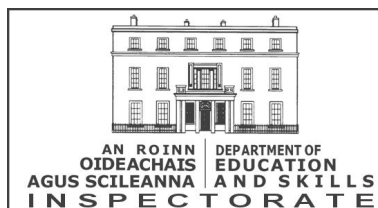


An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning
REPORT

Bunscoil McAuley Rice,
Callan, County Kilkenny
Uimhir rolla: 20255V

Date of inspection: 5 March 2014



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Bunscoil McAuley Rice in March 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.

Bunscoil McAuley Rice is an eighteen-teacher, mixed, vertical primary school, which is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Ossory. Its current enrolment of 339 pupils represents a steady increase since the establishment of the school in 2007. The school was established as a result of the amalgamation of two local primary schools, Scoil Mhuire and Scoil Iognáid Rís. The school is currently situated on two separate sites in Callan which are one kilometre apart. However, a new school building is under construction and this will be ready for occupation in the very near future.

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

- The board of management and parents' association are very supportive of the school.
- The school creates a positive learning environment and the principal and staff are committed to the pastoral care and holistic development of the pupils.
- Pupils are courteous, respectful and very well behaved.
- The overall quality of teaching in the school is commendable.
- In the teaching of Mathematics new concepts are explained clearly, manipulatives and maths games are employed effectively and suitable emphasis is placed on problem-solving.
- The classrooms provide stimulating and aesthetically-pleasing learning environments, with impressive displays of pupils' work across the curriculum.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- In support teaching for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN), it is advised that in-class support and team-teaching be further developed as part of the early intervention and prevention programmes.
- In English, a whole-school approach to writing and the writing process should be agreed and implemented.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The school creates a positive learning environment for pupils, with weekly assemblies reminding pupils of the core values of the school.
- Positive levels of pupil achievement in core subject areas are in evidence.
- The classrooms provide stimulating and aesthetically-pleasing learning environments, with impressive displays of pupils' work across the curriculum.
- In SEN settings, lessons are conducted in a very affirming, structured manner and learning outcomes are good.
- Support is provided primarily on a withdrawal basis to small groups of pupils. It is advised that in-class support and team-teaching be further developed as part of the early intervention and prevention programmes.

- It is also advised that opportunities be provided for members of the support team to share good practice in relation to the use of diagnostic testing in setting and assessing targets for pupils with special educational needs .

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is commendable with some skilful delivery of lessons observed during the evaluation. Lessons are well structured, paced and resourced and new content is explained clearly. Constructive use is made of the interactive white board.
- With the competence that is available on the staff, the extent of textbook use and their relevance should be reviewed.
- Pupils responses to questionnaires indicate that teachers explain things clearly and that pupils enjoy their lessons and learning. Some responses, for example in respect of opportunities to work in groups and to have regular access to computers, would benefit from further discussion at school level.
- It is noteworthy that all parents consider that teaching is good in the school.
- Laudable features of provision in the teaching of Mathematics include the clear explanation of new concepts, the effective use of manipulatives, the use of maths games and the approaches to problem-solving. The pupils surveyed report that they believe that they are achieving well in Maths.
- Baineann na daltaí taitneamh as na ceachtanna Gaeilge agus cothaíonn na múinteoirí atmaisféar dearfach i rith na gceachtanna. Tá béim chuí ar theanga na ndaltaí a fhorbairt ach moltar a thuilleadh deiseanna cainte a chruthú chun a bhféinmhuinín a ardú.
The pupils enjoy Irish lessons and the teachers create a positive atmosphere during lessons. There is suitable emphasis on developing pupils' language skills. However, it is recommended that more opportunities to practice speaking in Irish be provided to the pupils to build their confidence.
- In line with the school improvement plan for literacy, admirable attention is placed on promoting the pupils' reading skills. Some good examples of pupils' writing are in evidence. However, there exists the potential for raising writing standards in English further. This can be achieved through the implementation of a whole-school approach to writing and the writing process.
- The quality of teachers' individual classroom planning is good. Each teacher produces comprehensive long-term and short-term schemes of work on an agreed school format.
- Whole-school planning is also of a suitable quality. However it is recommended that in the Special Educational Needs policy the staged approach be included and implemented fully, particularly at stage one.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- The school offers a wide range of school based extra curricular activities and learning experiences to the pupils, ranging from music to sports and visual arts.
- The management of pupils is excellent and staff are commended on their commitment to their pastoral care and holistic development. Pupils are courteous, respectful and very well behaved.
- Pupil responses to the questionnaires administered indicate that almost all pupils like school and that they feel safe in their classes.
- 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 are well-informed and active and influential in the development and growth of the school.

- Positive and productive relationships exist between the board, school staff, parents and the wider community.
- The board of management and parents' association consider the contribution and commitment of the principal to be a significant strength. He attends to the management and administration of the school in a conscientious manner. He is capably supported by the in-school management team who carry out their assigned roles with dedication.
- Parents, through the parents' association and the wider parent body, demonstrate strong commitment and work in partnership with the school. Parent questionnaires indicate very high levels of satisfaction with all parents reporting that they are happy with the school.

5. School Self-evaluation

- The school participates meaningfully in school self-evaluation. As part of the process the school engages with parents and pupils to ascertain their views and opinions and these are informing the development of plans.
- As a result of the review of literacy in the school there is now an added focus on oral language, comprehension strategies and handwriting.

Conclusion

The school's capacity to continue to grow and develop is very good. The completion of the new school building will further enhance teaching and learning across the curriculum.