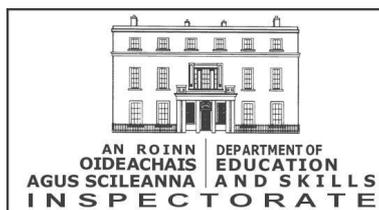


**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills**

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

**Naomh Iosef NS  
Rathwire, Killucan, Co Westmeath  
Uimhir rolla: 18640M**

**Date of inspection: 16 November 2012**



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

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Naomh Iosef NS in November, 2012. 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.

Naomh Iosef NS has an enrolment of 230 and attendance levels are very good for most pupils. The school has experienced rapid growth in the last ten years and plans for a new building are at an advanced stage. An ASD unit has recently been established in the school. 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.

### Findings

#### 1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning achievements of the pupils are commendable and almost all pupils reported enjoying their lessons and learning.
- Good standards are achieved in English reading and pupils write in a wide variety of genres. While many pupils present their written work attractively, there is scope to improve the layout and neatness in some cases.
- Learning achievements in Mathematics are good and significant improvements have been achieved in recent years through emphasis on improving problem-solving skills.
- Cé go léiríonn daltaí tuiscint maith ar na ceachtanna Gaeilge, téann sé dian ar chuid acu comhráithe nádúrtha a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge. *While pupils understand the Irish lessons well, some of them find it difficult to make natural conversation in Irish.*
- Learning outcomes for pupils with special educational needs are fully appropriate and pupils are affirmed and supported in their learning.
- Pupils demonstrate mastery of a range of skills and knowledge in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education and their learning experiences could be extended through more opportunities to explore the local environment.
- The quality of learning in Arts Education and Physical Education is very good.

#### 2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is competent and some very good teaching was observed. Features of best practice included the sharing of intended learning outcomes with pupils, resource use, lively interaction, differentiated learning and the facilitation of active and collaborative learning. Less successful lessons usually depended on textbooks or workbooks and a whole-class approach.
- Successes of literacy teaching include the early intervention strategies, phonics teaching, use of graded reading materials and the promotion of shared reading. There is scope to improve oral language development in English through more systematic implementation of curriculum objectives.
- Teaching approaches for pupils with special educational needs are fully appropriate. There is scope, in some settings, to track the achievement of learning targets more systematically. Teachers are commended on the manner in which they establish rapport with these pupils, affirm their efforts and fully integrate them into school life.
- Tá cáilíocht an teagaisc sa Ghaeilge sásúil, ar an iomlán, cé go bhfhéadfaí béim sa bhreis a chur ar chumarsáid na ndaltaí féin. *The quality of teaching in Irish is satisfactory, although more emphasis could be placed on pupils' own communication.*
- Mathematics teaching is effective and teachers emphasise the areas of problem-solving and measures purposefully as part of their school improvement plan.

- Good practices regarding summative assessment are well established in the school. There is scope to extend teachers' use of ongoing formative assessment strategies to track individual pupils' progress and acquisition of short-term planning objectives.

### 3. How well pupils are cared for and supported

- The quality of care and support for pupils is commendable. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils' efforts are affirmed and their work is monitored effectively. Pastoral care initiatives are in place to support pupils in times of difficulty.
- The school provides a range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities for pupils and the school has received acclaim for its athletics, football, camogie, chess and environmental care.
- The parents' association provides valuable support for the work of the school. To further enhance co-operation, the board of management and the parents' association should meet annually to discuss and co-ordinate priorities and activities for the school year.
- Communication with parents is facilitated through text messages, newsletters and the school website. In response to the Inspectorate questionnaire, almost all parents expressed satisfaction with the school and its welcome for parents.
- A minority of parents indicated concerns about facilities, the manner in which the school deals with bullying and their own awareness of the school's programme for Relationships and Sexuality Education. The school should respond to these concerns.
- 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 is well informed about the standards of teaching and learning in the school. Its members are committed to providing effectively for the social and academic needs of pupils.
- The principal is highly visible in all school activities and he leads school planning and self-evaluation effectively. He has successfully delegated important administrative, pastoral and curricular functions to the members of the in-school management team
- A culture of shared leadership is well established between the principal and the in-school management team and this contributes significantly to continuous school improvement. High levels of collaboration are evident among staff members.

### 5. School Self-evaluation

- School self-evaluation has been undertaken very successfully into the school.
- The practice of analysing whole-school assessment information to create targets for school improvement in Mathematics has been very effective.
- The school has designed instruments to include the views of teachers, pupils and parents to further enhancing the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

### Conclusion

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

- The school has made a creditable start to its self-evaluation.
- Effective teaching in English and Mathematics is reflected in improved learning outcomes evident in assessment data and pupils' work.
- An affirming learning atmosphere is palpable throughout the school and pupils with special educational needs are included and integrated successfully.
- A culture of shared leadership is well established and this contributes significantly to continuous school improvement.

The following areas require improvement:

- Increased emphasis should be placed on developing oral language skills for pupils in English and Irish.
- Opportunities to explore the local environment should be expanded in the school's provision for Social, Environmental and Scientific Education.
- The board of management and the school's Parents' Association should meet annually to discuss and co-ordinate priorities and activities for the school year.

The school's capacity to make the necessary improvements and to develop further is good. There is evidence that recommendations from a previous evaluation were addressed and the school has made a creditable start to its self-evaluation. Success in making the improvements will depend upon strong leadership and the collaborative efforts of the whole school community.

# **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 and staff of St. Joseph's N.S. would like to thank the inspectors for their professional and courteous manner throughout the evaluation process. We found the inspection to be both positive and affirming.

We welcome the acknowledgement of the high standards of teaching and learning in our school. We are pleased with the recognition of the affirming learning atmosphere in St. Joseph's and that the inclusion and integration of pupils with special education needs was recognised

#### **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 of Management and staff acknowledge the recommendations made in the report and we plan to incorporate them in our school improvement plan and implement them as part of our continuous improvement process.