

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

**Whole School Evaluation**  
**REPORT**

**Emo National School,**  
**Emo, Co. Laois**  
**Uimhir rolla: 13643Q**

**Date of inspection: 3 May 2016**



**AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF**  
**OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION**  
**AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS**

## 1. Introduction

Emo National School is a rural, co-educational primary school, operating under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. The school moved to its current site, adjacent to the grounds of Emo Court, in 2009. Current enrolment is 213 pupils and attendance levels are very good. During the whole-school evaluation, provision for Gaeilge, English, Mathematics and Music was evaluated. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in eight mainstream class settings and three support teaching settings. The board accepts the report as the final inspection report available for publication and wished to respond formally to the report. The Board agrees that the response submitted will be included as an appendix to the published report. The board's response is submitted below.

## 2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

The following are the **key findings**:

- Pupils engage in learning tasks with interest and enthusiasm.
- A very high standard of leadership and management is provided by the board, principal and in-school management team.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy is very good.
- Intended learning objectives for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) should be stated in more measurable, progressive language and based on pupils' diagnosed priority needs. Short-term planning should be outlined in weekly, rather than fortnightly plans, in line with the *Learning Support Guidelines (2000)*.
- The school community is highly commended for the provision and maintenance of high quality learning environments.
- Ní mór scileanna cumarsáide, léitheoireachta agus scríbhneoireachta na ndaltaí i nGaeilge a fhorbairt go céimniúil ó rang go rang.  
*Pupils communicative, reading and writing skills in Irish need to be systematically developed throughout the school.*

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- The intended learning outcomes for pupils with SEN should be more measurable, progressive and based on the pupils' diagnosed priority needs. It is advised that short-term planning should be set out in weekly objectives, as opposed to fortnightly objectives, in line with the *Learning Support Guidelines (2000)*.
- Moltar scileanna cumarsáide, léitheoireachta agus scríbhneoireachta na ndaltaí a fhorbairt go céimniúil ó rang go rang trí plean straitéiseach forbartha don Ghaeilge a chur i bhfeidhim ar bhonn scoile uile.  
*It is recommended that pupils' communication, reading and writing skills are systematically developed through the implementation of a whole-school strategic development plan for Irish.*

## 3. Quality of School Management

- The quality of the work of the board of management is very good. Very effective governance is provided by certifying accounts, playing an active role in policy development and maintaining excellent facilities. The board is commended on supporting

teachers' engagement with professional development courses. Communication within the school community is facilitated through regular newsletters, texts and an informative website.

- The work of the in-school management team is of a very high quality. The principal provides very strong instructional and administrative leadership. He is ably supported by the deputy principal who places a strong emphasis on the pastoral care and holistic development of the children. Minutes are kept of meetings and members provide regular progress reports to the board and staff. The in-school management team fulfils an appropriate range of duties, which are reviewed annually in line with school priorities.
- The quality of the management of resources is very good. Staff expertise is utilised very effectively for curricular and extracurricular activities. School facilities are very well maintained and their upkeep is highly commendable. School grounds are successful learning environments, and resources are well chosen. The secretary and maintenance staff contribute positively to the functioning of the school.
- Strong community links have been created to promote sport, music and environmental awareness. The parents association is very supportive of the work of the school and provides assistance with many school-based activities. In their responses to the Inspectorate survey, parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school and home-school communication.
- Pupils are very well behaved and welcoming of visitors. There is an affirmative whole school approach to behaviour.

#### **4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation**

- The quality of school planning is good. An appropriate range of curricular and administrative policies is in place. Some aspects of the whole-school plans need clearer guidance for teachers, in order to ensure the consistent, spiral and cumulative curriculum development at each class level.
- Engagement with the school self-evaluation process is very effective. Teachers have identified areas for development and this is having a positive impact on teaching and learning.
- The overall quality of classroom planning is good. All teachers prepare long-term and short-term plans. To optimise this work, short-term planning should now detail clearer learning objectives and strategies to address pupils' learning needs appropriately.
- 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*.

#### **5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement**

- Overall, teaching, learning and pupil achievement are of a high quality. Lessons were structured appropriately and included interesting content. All corridors and classrooms are print-rich learning environments and many teachers displayed pupils' cross-curricular work. Pupils are enthusiastic about learning activities and effective use is made of group work in many lessons. Most teachers provided pupils with opportunities to actively engage with their learning and this practice should be extended throughout the school. In questionnaire responses, every parent agreed that teaching is good in the school.

- Tá cáilíocht an teagaisc, na foghlama agus torthaí inniúlachta na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge go maith. Cothaítear dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge agus tá sé le moladh go bhfuil roinnt daltaí in ann sraith abairtí a chumadh go neamhspleách. Aistríonn roinnt mhaith muinteoirí an foclóir Gaeilge go Béarla le linn na ceachtanna Gaeilge agus ní mór deireadh a chur leis an gcleachtas seo. Moltar do mhuinteoirí úsáid a bhaint as trí thréimhse an cheachta sa teagasc, agus pleanáil a dhéanamh d'ionchur teanga cinnte i ngach ceacht. I bhformhór na ranganna baineann muinteoirí úsáid as amhráin agus rainn chun foclóir na ndaltaí a fhorbairt i slí thaithneamhach. Léann roinnt mhaith daltaí go muiníneach. B'fhiú anois don scoil a chinntiú go bhfuil an t-ábhar léitheoireachta breise atá ar fáil ar léibhéal léitheoireachta na ndaltaí. Tá béim ar scríbhneoireacht fheidhmiúil agus ba chóir anois don scoil níos mó beime a leagan ar an scríbhneoireacht chruthaitheach. Moltar scileanna cumarsáide, léitheoireachta agus scríbhneoireachta na ndaltaí a fhorbairt go céimniúil ó rang go rang trí phlean straitéiseach forbartha don Ghaeilge a chur i bhfeidhim ar bhonn scoile uile.

*The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Irish is good. A positive attitude is promoted towards Irish and it is praiseworthy that some pupils can independently compose a number of sentences. Many teachers translate Irish vocabulary into English during the Irish lessons and this practice should be discontinued in line with best practice. It is recommended that teachers use the three stages of the lesson during teaching, and that definite language input is planned for in all lessons. In most classes, teachers use poetry and songs to develop the pupils' vocabulary in an enjoyable manner. Many pupils read confidently. It is now advised that the school ensure that additional reading materials are appropriate to the pupils' reading ability level. There is an emphasis on functional writing and the school should now place more emphasis on creative writing. It is recommended that pupils' communication, reading and writing skills be systematically developed through the implementation of a whole-school strategic development plan for Irish.*

- Teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is very good. Teachers are very good communicators and they model very high quality language for the pupils. The consistent, explicit implementation of graded reading materials throughout the school is highly commendable. There is a very good whole-school approach to the teaching of comprehension. In most classes, pupils are able to recite poetry and rhymes from memory and with expression. The strategic, whole-school approach to the teaching of writing genres is very effective.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is very good. Lessons are structured and paced well. Oral mathematic lessons are developed very well. In most lessons, mathematical language is focused on very effectively. Teachers use activity-based methodologies very effectively to encourage discovery learning. Pupils' understanding of concepts is effectively supported through the use of suitable resources. In order to enhance learning outcomes, existing practices should be extended so that mathematical lessons are differentiated appropriately to support all pupils in achieving their full potential.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Music is good, with some very good practice observed. iPods were used effectively for recording and composing. Pupils performed songs and the school choir performed part singing to a very high standard. In many classes, pupil knowledge of stick and staff notation, rhythmical patterns, and musical elements such as duration, mood and tempo was commendable. In some classes, pupils played tin whistles and some percussion instruments. It is now recommended that the school further promote a comprehensive spiral programme which incorporates the breadth and balance of all strands of the music curriculum.

- Assessment is of a good quality. Careful attention is paid to maintaining individual pupil profiles and samples of pupils' work. Where assessment records were most effective they were aligned to curriculum objectives and used to inform planning and this practice should be extended throughout the school. In some classes, formative and summative assessment is used and pupil self-evaluation practices have been embedded. It is recommended that teachers use this assessment data to plan lessons. Copybooks are regularly monitored and where very good practice was observed, formative feedback was provided systematically.

#### **6. Quality of Support for Pupils**

- Supports for pupils with SEN are of high quality. Supports include in-class interventions and withdrawal teaching models. Lessons observed were characterised by mutually respectful, affirming teacher-pupil relationships and the delivery of structured, well-resourced lessons. It is recommended that intended learning outcomes for pupils with SEN be stated in more measurable, progressive language based on pupils' diagnosed priority needs. Fortnightly short-term plans are prepared for pupils and it is now advised that all short-term planning be set out in weekly plans, in line with the *Learning Support Guidelines (2000)*. The special needs assistants manage the pupils' care needs, competently.
- Pastoral care provision is of a very high quality. In instances of disadvantage, pupils are supported discreetly and respectfully. As fewer than half of the pupils surveyed reported that they have a say in how things are done in the school, it is now timely to support the existing student council to further promote the pupils' voice within the school.

# **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 of Emo National School warmly welcomes this very positive W.S.E. report and appreciates the affirmation of the high quality of teaching and learning in our school. We are pleased the report recognises the many strengths of our school and positively affirms the dedication and commitment of staff, pupils, parents, ISM team and Board of Management.

**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 members of the Board of Management welcome the recommendations of the Inspectors in the W.S.E. report. Through the well-established process in our school of self-evaluation and continuous improvement, it is our intention to incorporate the recommendations in a measurable and timely manner into our school plan for implementation.