

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

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

**Gaelscoil Mhúscraí,
Blarney,
Co. Cork.**

Roll number: 20151J

Date of inspection: 27 January 2016



**A N R O I N N | D E P A R T M E N T O F
O I D E A C H A I S | E D U C A T I O N
A G U S S C I L E A N N A | A N D S K I L L S
I N S P E C T O R A T E**

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Gaelscoil Mhúscraí in January 2016. 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 acting 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.

Gaelscoil Mhúscraí was established in 2003. It is a mixed, Catholic school under the patronage of Foras Pátrúnachta na Scoileanna Lan-Ghaeilge. It is situated in temporary accommodation in Blarney. 149 pupils are on roll. Inspection of the roll books show that pupil attendance is generally very good.

The evaluation has found:

- The newly-appointed board of management is committed to the school's development.
- The financial accounts are not independently certified.
- The quality of teaching and learning is generally good.
- Although pupils have a wide range of abilities, little differentiation takes place.
- The support teacher has responsibility for teaching certain subjects to classes.
- A limited range of evaluation tools are used to assess progress.
- There is a very active parents association in the school.
- Pupils are given opportunities to input into school decisions.

The following **recommendations** are made:

- It is recommended that the financial accounts are independently certified to comply with the provisions of the Education Act (1998).
- Differentiation in teaching and learning must be further developed on a whole-school basis.
- It would be worthwhile implementing a systematic assessment system for all subjects of the curriculum.
- It is recommended that an active approach to teaching and learning is further developed on a whole-school basis.
- The provision of learning support in the school must be restructured.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- Achievements in learning are good overall. Pupils are making very good progress in literacy and numeracy. Pupils possess a very high standard of spoken Irish. They recite a wide range of rhymes, poems and songs from memory. Overall, they learn enthusiastically. Productive use is made of novels in order to develop reading in English. It is recommended that greater emphasis is placed on the pupils' standard of handwriting. Regular use is made of information and communications technology but it would be worthwhile integrating this further in learning.

Pupils with special learning needs are making appropriate progress in accordance with their abilities.

2. Quality of teaching

- The quality of teaching in the school is good overall. Teachers provide appropriate planning documents for their teaching. It would be worthwhile implementing a common approach to these documents in order to further guide teaching. In the main, teachers possess effective classroom management skills. A wide range of teaching approaches were observed being effectively used in a number of lessons. It is recommended that these active teaching methods be developed on a whole-school basis. The pupils' work is celebrated very frequently in classrooms and around the school.
- The quality of teaching for pupils with special needs is good. Appropriate individual study plans are prepared collaboratively for pupils. It would be worthwhile recording more specific targets in these documents. The support teacher takes responsibility for teaching certain subjects to one class each day. It is recommended that this practice is changed in order to comply with circular 02/05. The support is provided on a withdrawal basis and in classrooms. To enhance this work, it would be worthwhile providing extra in-class support.

3. Support for pupils' wellbeing

- The management of pupils is of a high standard. They are treated both kindly and fairly. They willingly cooperate with their teachers and with each other. Equal opportunities are afforded to both boys and girls in every aspect of school life. Almost all pupils indicated in questionnaires from the Department of Education and Skills that they have learned about different types of bullying and that they can talk to an adult in the school if they are being bullied. A pupil council has been established and is in operation in the school. This gives pupils the opportunity to participate in school decisions.
- The school's authorities confirmed that the board of management has formally accepted the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, without changing or altering them, and that the school's practice is consistent with that required under the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

4. Leadership and Management

- A new board of management was recently appointed. It is committed to providing pupils with a high standard of education through the medium of Irish. The board meets on a regular basis throughout the year. Accurate minutes of the work done at meetings are recorded. The treasurer provides a financial report at the meetings. It is recommended that these accounts be independently certified on an annual basis to comply with the provisions of the Education Act (1998). It is also recommended that members of the board attend training events for newly-appointed boards as they are provided.
- An acting principal and an acting deputy principal have been appointed since the beginning of this school-year. They work closely to guide and advance the school. To build on this work, it would be worthwhile organising formal in-school management meetings to develop systematic structures for guiding the work.
- There is a very active parents association in the school. It greatly supports the school's work. A representative of the association told the inspectors that they are extremely happy with the school's work and with the standard of communication between all stakeholders. The results of questionnaires, distributed to parents, have shown that they believe this school to be a good school and that they are very happy with their children's progress.

5. School Self-evaluation

- The school provides suitable written reports on pupil progress annually. Parent-teacher meetings are also held formally each year. Standardised and teacher-designed tests are used to assess pupil learning. It is recommended that a systematic, objective-based assessment is developed and implemented over the entire curriculum in order to assess pupil progress.
- The school has begun the school self-evaluation process. The voice of pupils and parents were considered in this work. An appropriate range of evidence was analysed in order to

provide a report. It is recommended that an improvement plan is prepared, based on the aforementioned report.

Conclusion

The school's capacity to engage in school improvement is good but it would be worthwhile using school support services such as the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) in order to support the advancement of this development work.

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 Gaelscoil Mhuscraí welcomes the results of the report. We welcome, in particular the findings that acknowledge our effective management of the school, the very good pupil progress in literacy and numeracy, the good quality in teaching and learning and the high standard of spoken Irish amongst our pupils.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

It is, at all times, the aim of the community of Gaelscoil Mhuscraí to provide an excellent Irish education and we welcome the recommendations of this report which will be a support to us in achieving this aim. In relation to the recommendations:

- Accountants have been organized to carry out an independent financial audit at the end of the school year, as per the Education Act (1998)
- The school improvement plan has been finalized and approved by the Board of Management. The school has already availed of the services of the Primary Development Service in assisting us with this plan and in implementing a whole-school approach to active learning in maths.
- The Primary Development Service will be further utilized to help in implementing a systematic assessment system for all subjects in the curriculum.
- Increased differentiation in learning will occur in class work.
- Learning Support has been re-structured.