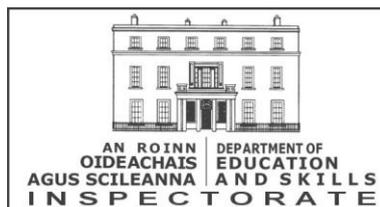


**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills**

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

**Convent of Mercy National School,  
Belturbet, Co Cavan  
Uimhir rolla: 16057S**

**Date of inspection: 15 October 2012**



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

### Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Convent of Mercy NS, Belturbet in October, 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.

Convent of Mercy NS has an enrolment of 150. Enrolment levels have stabilised in recent years following increases for several years. Overall school attendance levels are good.

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. How good are the learning achievements of pupils in the school?

- Overall learning achievements of pupils are very good. Pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum and they are motivated to learn. In particular, their attainments in literacy and numeracy are very satisfactory. In mainstream classrooms, good collaborative learning and problem-solving approaches were in evidence. Outcomes for children with additional learning needs are praiseworthy. The tracking of their learning is exemplary and informs provision for them.
- Is inmholta gnóhachtáil na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge. Tá foclóir leathan acu agus is féidir leis an chuid is mó díobh labhairt go leanúnach ar raon maith téamaí. Léiríonn saothar na ndaltaí go bhfuil caighdeán ard bainte amach acu thar na snáitheanna curaclaim uile. *Pupils' achievement in Irish is praiseworthy. They have a wide vocabulary and the majority of them can speak continuously on a good range of topics. Pupils' work shows that they have achieved a high standard across all curriculum strands.*

#### 2. How good is the teaching?

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is very good. Teachers' commitment to team teaching is admirable and the sharing of expertise is particularly effective. A very good example of this is how successfully the in-class support for literacy operates. Teachers' personal and team reflection strengthen the quality of teaching in the school.
- Both the preparation for and the presentation of lessons is highly commendable. While examples of very effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) were observed, it was noted that its use was not widespread during the evaluation in teaching or learning. More systematic use of ICT would enhance lesson presentation throughout the school, and there is scope for greater use of ICT by pupils in the presentation of their work.
- In the support setting, effective practice is evident in the provision for pupils. Planning, recording and assessment of pupils are appropriate. During small group sessions a very caring environment is in evidence. It is advised that timetabling and group size be reviewed.

- Tá clár córasach agus dea-struchtúrtha leagtha amach ag na hoidí don Ghaeilge agus múintear an teanga go héifeachtach agus ar bhealach spreagúil tríd an scoil. Is suntasach an soláthar sna ranganna naíonáin go háirithe. *A systematic and well-structured programme for Irish is set out by the teachers and the language is taught in a stimulating manner throughout the school. Of particular note is the provision in infant classes.*

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

- Pupils are very well cared for. The quality of home-school communication is very high. The management of pupils' behaviour is exemplary and as a consequence, pupils are very well behaved and they are attentive and co-operative learners. The school and classrooms are presented beautifully and are very learner centred. Provision for extracurricular and co-curricular activities is excellent. Amongst the many activities are regular traditional music and dancing workshops facilitated by the school staff. Financial contributions from parents towards specialised tuition in gymnastics should be discontinued.
- 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. How effective are leadership and management?

- School leadership and management is excellent. Strategic planning, innovation and curriculum leadership are strong features of the principal's practice. She models and facilitates the development of a collaborative culture in the school to excellent effect. Together with other members of the in-school management team, she ensures that close links are maintained between the school and the local community. Discrete duties are assigned to individual post-holders and these are performed diligently and thoroughly.
- The board of management is very committed to ensuring that the quality of education provided in the school is high and it works very effectively with staff in this regard. Parents agree that the school is well run, is a welcoming, safe environment and they are very happy with the school.

### 5. How effectively is the school engaging in School Self-Evaluation?

- The school has been engaged in robust and effective self-evaluation for several years and is highly commended in this regard. The assessment of pupils' learning is very good and informs both teachers' planning and provision for pupils' learning. The use of self-assessment by pupils is intrinsic to assessment practices and encourages them to reflect on their learning.

## Conclusion

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

- Curriculum, instructional and pastoral leadership is very strong
- Pupils' attainments in literacy and numeracy are very good
- Cruthaítear atmaisféar dearfach sa scoil a chuireann go mór le húsáid na Gaeilge tríd an scoil
- Assessment practices, including the tracking of pupils' progress, are very good in the school

- Purposeful engagement in school self-evaluation is a very positive feature of school practice
- The management of pupils' behaviour is exemplary; they are very well behaved and are attentive and co-operative learners
- The school and classroom environment is presented beautifully

The following area requires improvement:

- More frequent use of ICT would enhance lesson presentation throughout the school, and there is scope for greater use of ICT by pupils in the presentation of their work.

Given the manner in which this school has engaged in the school self-evaluation process over a number of years, the school's capacity to develop further is excellent.

## **Appendix**

**School response to the report**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

## **Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report**

Gabhann Bord Bainistíochta Scoil Chlochar na Trócaire, ár mbuíochas leis na gcigirí go léir. Tá Bord na Scoile thar a bheith sásta go n-aithníonn an tuairisc píolóta dea-oibre na scoile.

The B.O.M. of the Convent of Mercy N.S. welcome the report which we received following our Whole School Evaluation-Management Leadership and Learning.

The B.O.M. wish to thank, most sincerely, the D.E.S. team of inspectors for the professional and courteous manner, in which they conducted the WSE\_MLL. It was our privilege, having been chosen to participate in the WSE\_MLL pilot, to work with the Inspectors. During the course of the evaluation, they established an excellent rapport with staff, both teaching and ancillary, pupils, B.O.M. and parents, complementing the school on its open and positive atmosphere.

We welcome the positivity of the report and the affirmation of the teaching standards implemented which fosters learning in a happy and safe environment. In addition, we are pleased that the report acknowledges and affirms the dedication and conscientiousness of all parties involved in the leadership and management of our school.

The Board appreciates the recognition of the high levels of satisfaction, expressed by the parents, with the school and with the provision of an extensive range of in-school and after-school activities.

The Board congratulates the staff, both teaching and ancillary, pupils, parents and the wider community for their co-operation.

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

Tacaíonn an Bord Bainistíochta le príomh moltaí na tuairisce agus táimid ag obair leis an bhfoireann teagaisc, chomh maith leis na tuismitheoirí agus na daltaí, chun na moltaí i bplean forbartha na scoile, a chur i bhfeidhm.

The B.O.M. acknowledges and accepts the key recommendations of the report and in keeping with our well established culture of self-evaluation and continuous improvement have incorporated those recommendations into our 3 year plan and will endeavour to address them.