

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

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

**REPORT**

|   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Ainm na scoile /<br/>School name</b>       | Glinsk National School                |
| <b>Seoladh na scoile /<br/>School address</b> | Glinsk<br>Via Castlerea<br>Co. Galway |
| <b>Uimhir rolla /<br/>Roll number</b>         | 19841E                                |

**Date of Evaluation: 21-09-2016**



## **WHAT IS A WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION: MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING?**

Whole-School Evaluations – Management, Leadership and Learning report on the quality of teaching and learning and on the quality of management and leadership in a school. They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of the subject in the school.

## **HOW TO READ THIS REPORT**

During this inspection, the inspector(s) evaluated and reported under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

1. Teaching and learning
2. Support for pupils' wellbeing
3. School leadership and management

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

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.

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

### INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Dates of inspection</b>  | 21-09-2016   |
| <b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting with principal and deputy principal</li><li>• Meeting with representative of the board of management</li><li>• Meeting with parent representatives</li><li>• Meeting with teachers</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analysis of parent and pupil questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Feedback to senior management team and teachers, and to parent and board of management representative</li></ul> |

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Glinsk National School is a rural co-educational school operating under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Elphin. Currently, there are three mainstream class teachers and one shared support teacher on staff. In addition, one support teacher based in another school provides additional support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Enrolment figures have increased steadily over recent years and currently 59 pupils are enrolled. The attendance levels are very good for almost all pupils.

### FINDINGS

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the school is good with some very good practice observed.
- The commitment of the principal and staff to the holistic development of all pupils is praised.
- Pupils are achieving a good standard in writing. However, the development of writing genres is not implemented consistently throughout the school.
- Léiríonn na daltaí dearcadh dearfach i leith fhoghlaim na Gaeilge, ach tá gá le scileanna cumarsáide ó bhéal na ndaltaí a fhorbairt sa theanga. *Pupils demonstrate a positive attitude to learning Irish but the pupils' oral communicative skills in the language need to be developed.*
- Teachers' collaborative practice is highly commendable. However, there is a need for in-class interventions to support and challenge pupils of all abilities.
- The school has engaged very effectively in the school self-evaluation (SSE) process.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- The development of writing genres in English should be implemented consistently throughout the school.
- Ba chóir scileanna cumarsáide ó bhéal na ndaltaí a fhorbairt sa Ghaeilge. *The pupils' oral communicative skills in Irish need to be developed.*
- In-class interventions should support and challenge pupils of all abilities.

### DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. THE LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS OF PUPILS

- The overall learning achievements of pupils, including those in SEN settings are good. The school places a strong emphasis on providing a wide range of learning opportunities and pupils' achievements are celebrated. The school achieved a Digital School of Distinction Award in 2015 and participates in the Green Schools Project and Junior Entrepreneur Programme.

- The quality of pupils' learning outcomes in literacy is good. The school has appropriately prioritised the development of pupils' oral language skills. Commendable practices include, the implementation of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*, discrete oral language lessons and debating. Recitation of poetry and rhymes is exemplary. Positive initiatives are in place to foster an interest in reading for pleasure, such as paired reading and the use of novels. In the junior classes, a systematic approach to the further development of reading and comprehension skills, such as the guided-reading approach, should be explored. Pupils are achieving a good standard in writing, however, the development of writing genres should be implemented consistently throughout the school.
- Pupils' levels of achievement in Mathematics are good. Mental and oral mathematics skills are commendable features in all maths lessons. A whole-school approach to problem-solving is being implemented as part of the school improvement plan (SIP). Teachers place an explicit focus on the development of mathematical language and strategies to solve word problems.
- Ar an iomlán, léiríonn na daltaí dearcadh dearfach i leith fhoghlaím na Gaeilge. Is inmholta mar a aithrisíonn na daltaí ar fad rainn agus amhráin go bríomhar. Tá gá le scileanna cumarsáide ó bhéal na ndaltaí a fhorbairt sa theanga. Léann siad le tuiscint agus le líofacht. Baintear dea-úsáid as cnuasach breá fíorleabhar chun eispéiris léitheoireachta na ndaltaí a leathnú.  
*Overall, pupils demonstrate a positive attitude to learning Irish. The manner in which all pupils recite poems and rhymes expressively is praiseworthy. The pupils' oral communicative skills in the language needs development. Pupils' read with understanding and fluency. Good use is made of a selection of real books to provide a wide variety of reading experiences for pupils.*
- High standards are achieved in musical performances. The pupils sing with energy and enthusiasm and their instrumental playing is very accomplished.
- The school has forged links with community groups and sporting organisations to support and enhance pupils' learning experiences.

## 2. QUALITY OF TEACHING

- Overall, in mainstream and SEN settings good quality teaching was observed with some very good practices evident. Teachers demonstrate high levels of dedication to the school and to their work. Classroom environments are visually stimulating and well organised. A whole-school approach has been adopted for planning, this is very effective practice. In Inspectorate questionnaires, all parents agreed that teaching is good in the school.
- Discovery learning, active teaching methods, station teaching and the use of concrete materials characterised the examples of very good teaching observed in some lessons. In certain settings, teaching could be enhanced by reducing whole-class teaching methodologies to facilitate greater differentiation for pupils of all abilities. A reduction in the use of workbooks will facilitate this change. Opportunities to work in pairs and in collaborative groups are provided in some classrooms and this good practice should now be extended to all lessons.
- Teachers' collaborative practice is highly commendable. However, in-class interventions to support and challenge the needs of all pupils should be provided.
- Good examples of assessment for learning (AfL) approaches were observed. The use of e-portfolios to record pupil achievement and the emphasis on pupils' self-assessment is praiseworthy.

## 3. SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELL-BEING

- During the evaluation pupils were respectful in their interactions. In their responses to questionnaires, all pupils reported that they feel safe in class and they know who to go to if they were to experience bullying at school.
- Pastoral care provision is very good. A wide range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities is provided. The commitment of the principal and staff to the holistic development of all pupils is praised. Pupils experience opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning.
- 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**

- Leadership and management are of a very good quality. The board of management is very supportive of staff and the initiatives which they seek to implement. The board is active in policy development and facilitates the involvement of the parents' association. A comprehensive annual report on the work of the board is provided to the school community. The board should ensure that its accounts are audited or certified annually.
- The principal works diligently and has successfully fostered a positive school culture where there is open communication, collaborative relationships and a strong work ethic. Administrative tasks are carried out efficiently. She has been instrumental in encouraging the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support the pupils in their learning.
- The deputy principal undertakes her duties competently and makes a very positive contribution to leading initiatives in the school. The collaborative teamwork in evidence amongst all staff in the school is of great benefit to the pupils.
- There is a very active parents' association in the school. They meet regularly and are involved in many areas of school life including offering a voice in policy development and fundraising. In their responses to the questionnaires, all parents said they feel welcome in the school. A very attractive and informative school website provides valuable insights into the life of the school for the community.

#### **5. SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION**

The school has engaged in the SSE process and there is evidence that agreed targets and actions are having a positive impact on teaching and learning in classrooms.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The school's capacity to develop further is very good. There is strong collaborative leadership and teachers are open to continuous improvement of teaching and learning.

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

## **Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board of Management of Glinsk National School welcomes the recent positive W.S.E. – M.L.L. report affirming the high standard of teaching and learning in the school.

## THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality the school's provision of each area.

| Level               | Description  | Example of descriptive terms  |
|---------------------|--|---|
| <b>Very Good</b>    | <b>Very good</b> applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is <b>outstanding</b> and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.        | Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary |
| <b>Good</b>         | <b>Good</b> applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.                                    | Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement   |
| <b>Satisfactory</b> | <b>Satisfactory</b> applies where the quality of provision is adequate. Overall, learners have access to a basic level of provision. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard. | Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas  |
| <b>Fair</b>         | <b>Fair</b> applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.  | Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve   |
| <b>Weak</b>         | <b>Weak</b> applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.   | Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;   |