

Sabbatical Report

September / October 2008

Institution: Department of Education and Science Ireland
Inspectorate: Information on Whole School Evaluations in
Primary Schools in Ireland
Place: Dublin Ireland

Report

Under the Education Act of 1998, inspectors must report the outcome of their evaluations of schools and centres for Education to the Minister, the board of management of the school, or centre, teachers, parents and the school patron. The reports contribute to the promotion of improvement and quality in the education system. Through the publishing of school reports the Inspectorate seeks to acknowledge and affirm good practice, provide an assurance of quality in the education system, encourage school self renewal and development, promote greater accountability and transparency, provide valuable information to parents and students and ensure wider dissemination of good practice in and among schools.

All schools in Ireland are visited and evaluated by inspectors from the Department of Education and Science. The evaluation is designed to provide information about how well the school is managed, how it caters for children's welfare and safety, the school's planning for learning and teaching, how the school is value adding to specific needs and how children are progressing in their learning and the involvement of parents in the life of the school.

Following on from this whole school evaluation, the inspector writes an evaluation report on the work of the school. This report informs parents, the board management, the teachers and the department about what the school is doing well at. It also makes recommendations on what needs to be changed to improve the quality of the education provided.

During whole school evaluations inspectors will visit classrooms and observe the children at work, talk to the children about what they are learning, listen to the children's views and opinions, look at samples of the children's work, talk and discuss their teaching with them, meet with the principal and with other teachers who have management responsibilities to discuss the work of the school and examine school documents including the school plan.

The school inspectors invite the board of management to a meeting. At the meeting the whole school evaluation process is outlined and the procedures and operation of the board are discussed.

The report on the school is sent to the principal and to the board of management approximately six weeks after the evaluation. This report provides constructive recommendations for school development and improvement. The board of management should consider the report in detail. It is invited to provide a written response to the findings and recommendations of the report.

The report will be published on the Department of Education and Science website. Normally, the board's response will be published with the report. A copy of the report can be downloaded from the website or can be obtained by writing to the Department of Education and Science.

End of Report.