

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

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

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	S N Naomh Lorcan
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Upper Kilmacud Road, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin.
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	168931

**Date of inspection: 07-02-2019**



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

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

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning reports on the quality of teaching and learning and on the quality of management and leadership in a school. It affirms good practice and makes recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of educational provision 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. The quality of pupils' learning
2. The quality of teaching
3. The quality of support for pupils' well-being
4. The quality of leadership and management
5. The quality of school self-evaluation

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.

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.
4. The Child Safeguarding Statement meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.
5. The records of the last three board of management meetings record a child protection oversight report that meet the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2017.
6. The board of management has ensured that arrangements are in place to provide information to all school personnel on the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2017
7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE, and Wellbeing).
8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.

The school did not meet the requirements in relation to number 5 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, the minutes of the last board of management meeting held since the evaluation record a child protection oversight report that meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools and it has confirmed that it has a system to ensure that the school will be compliant from now on.

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

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	07-02-2019
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meetings with principal and in-school leadership team</li><li>• Meeting with representatives 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, pupil and teacher questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

St. Laurence's Boys' National School operates under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and caters for boys from junior infants to sixth class. There are 450 pupils enrolled across seventeen classes. There are six special education teachers on staff. Attendance rates among the pupils is very good.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils' learning including pupils with special educational needs is of a high standard with many pupils achieving very high levels; there is further scope to develop pupils' skills across the curriculum.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is commendable with some very good practice observed; learning targets for some pupils in receipt of additional supports are not specific and in some cases require systematic monitoring.
- The overall quality of support for pupil well-being is of a high standard; the staff and board of management succeed in creating a very inclusive learning environment, which fosters the holistic development of pupils.
- High quality leadership and management is provided by the board of management, principal, deputy principal and in-school management team (ISM); there is further scope to develop instructional leadership skills among the ISM team.
- The school's engagement with SSE is good, it is a reflective learning community with very good capacity for ongoing improvement.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- More structures and processes should be developed to share, implement and embed consistent teaching approaches as a means of further developing the learning experiences and skills of the pupils.
- The instructional leadership skills of the ISM team should be extended to play a more significant role in leading the development and embedding of very high quality teaching approaches throughout the school; the SSE process should be used as a means of achieving this.
- Specific targets should be included in support plans for all pupils in receipt of additional supports and a system for monitoring and recording progress should be agreed and implemented across SEN settings.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupils' learning including pupils with special educational needs is of a high standard with many pupils achieving very high standards. Pupils present as highly interested and motivated learners.
- Some very high quality learning environments were evident which celebrate the pupils' learning across the curriculum. These very high quality environments should be replicated in all settings.
- Tá cáilíocht eispéaras foghlama na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge go han-mhaith. Léiríonn formhór na ndaltaí leibhéal maith tuisceana agus tá foclóir maith acu. *The pupils' experience of learning in Irish is very good. The majority of pupils demonstrate a good level of understanding and they have a wide vocabulary.*
- In Literacy, pupils generally read with fluency and confidence. Phonological awareness in infant and junior classes is very successful. Pupils in all classes can recite a wide range of poems in English and Irish with enthusiasm and confidence. High quality handwriting and presentation skills are evident in the majority of settings and this should be extended to all settings. As a means of further developing the pupils' writing skills, more in-depth exploration of the genres is advised.
- High standards are achieved in Mathematics learning across the school. Learning for some pupils is of an exceptionally high level.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of a range of topics within Social Environmental and Scientific Education Knowledge (SESE) and display this with enthusiasm. A more balanced approach to the development of skills within SESE would further enhance outcomes in this area.
- The pupils' ability to sing a wide repertoire of songs tunefully and with enthusiasm is highly commendable.
- Some very high quality learning experiences were observed including problem solving across the curriculum, pair work and group work. This very good practice involved challenging pupils to justify their answers and the application of concepts acquired in one curriculum area being applied to other curriculum areas. It is recommended that this very effective practice be shared and embedded in whole-school practice.

### 2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- Overall, the quality of teaching is commendable. Teaching practices observed ranged from satisfactory to very good.
- All teachers cultivate very positive relationships with the pupils, display very good communication skills and model language very effectively. Information and communications technology (ICT) and interactive whiteboards are used to good effect.
- Very high quality practice observed involved the sharing of learning intentions, explicit teaching and instruction, development of curricular-specific skills, very good use of resources and methodologies which facilitated pupils working collaboratively. In other instances, there was an over reliance on whole class, teacher-directed instruction and the use of text books and there was an imbalance between in the teaching of knowledge and skills. Most pupils surveyed did not agree that they work in groups most days. In order to further develop the learning experiences for all pupils and extend pupils' skills across the curriculum, it is recommended that very effective teaching and learning practices be shared and embedded throughout the school.
- All teachers prepare long-term and short-term planning and for the most part plans are based on specific curriculum objectives.

- In Special Education Needs (SEN) settings, some excellent teaching strategies were observed for pupils with social, emotional and physical needs and some very good environments and use of resources were evident. For the most part, teaching for pupils with special education needs is provided in accordance with their identified needs. In some instances, there is greater need for diagnostic assessments for pupils receiving support for literacy and numeracy to inform priority needs. Some plans include specific and measurable targets for improvement. It is recommended that all support plans include specific targets and that a system for monitoring and recording pupils' achievement of the targets be implemented in all SEN settings.
- Overall, assessment practices are good and a variety of assessment strategies are evident. Outcomes of assessment should be utilised further to inform teachers' individual and collective practice.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELL-BEING**

- The overall quality of support for pupil well-being is of a high standard; the staff and board of management succeed in creating a very inclusive learning environment which fosters the holistic development of each pupil. Pupil behaviour was excellent during the evaluation.
- Pupils have access to a very wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. The schools' very successful participation in the Active School Flag and Green School's Initiative as well as the creation and use of a stimulating and vibrant school garden is having a positive impact on the pupils' wellbeing and sense of global citizenship.
- The school has identified Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) as a priority area for review. As part of this review, it should give consideration to how aspects of the programme can be planned and implemented consistently.

### **4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

- High quality leadership and management is evident in the school. All teachers surveyed and almost all parents who completed a questionnaire agree that the school is well run.
- A highly competent board of management governs the school very effectively. It meets frequently, ensures accounts are carefully managed, and plans strategically for the development of the building. An active parents' association significantly supports the work of school.
- The principal and in-school management team fulfil their duties professionally and conscientiously. The principal communicates effectively with the whole school community and his vision is centred on high expectations for teachers and pupils. His highly successful organisational and management skills are having a very positive impact on the running of the school.
- Commendably, the ISM team encourages other staff members to play a leadership role in developing whole-school initiatives. There is further scope to develop their instructional leadership skills. It is recommended that they play a stronger role in implementing, embedding and monitoring successful teaching approaches throughout the school and to ensure these approaches are having an impact on pupil learning experiences.

### **5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION**

- The school's engagement with SSE is good. As a result of engaging with SSE the school has introduced a number of initiatives throughout the school. There is greater need to monitor the impact of such initiatives.
- The school is a reflective learning community with very good capacity for ongoing improvement. The school self-evaluation process should be used as a means of addressing priority areas for development within the school; the ISM team will be fundamental to this process.

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

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

We are pleased with the findings of the inspection and have put a plan in place to implement all of the recommendations.

**Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.**

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## 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 of 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. 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;

*Published April 2019 / Foilsithe Aibreán 2019*