

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	The Adelaide & Meath Hospital (Incorporating The National Children's Hospital) Special School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Tallaght Hospital, Tallaght, Dublin 24.
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	19207D

Date of Evaluation: 22-03-2017



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 educational provision in the school.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector 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 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

Dates of inspection	22-03-2017
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with principal• Meeting with representatives of the board of management• Review of relevant documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of parent and pupil questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal and to board of management representatives

SCHOOL CONTEXT

The Adelaide and Meath Hospital School operates under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin. Pupils range in age from four to eighteen years of age and have dual enrolment while attending this school. While the majority of pupils are short-term enrolments, there are a small number of recurrent or long-term pupil enrolments.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The whole-school community is commended on creating a welcoming and attractive learning environment.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the school is good and pupils demonstrate high levels of participation in learning. Lessons are effectively differentiated to support and challenge all pupils.
- While the board of management provides a range of stimulating resources for the school, there is scope for the board to fully discharge its statutory obligations to meet legislative and policy requirements.
- While classroom planning is good, the quality of whole-school planning requires improvement.
- The principal manages the smooth day-to-day running of the school, however, there is a need to strengthen communication processes at all levels of the school community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The board should manage and lead the school in full accordance with the procedures outlined in the *Governance Manual for Primary schools 2015-2019*.
- All administrative and curricular school plans and policies should be cyclically and systematically reviewed and ratified by the board.
- Effective communication processes should be developed with parents and the wider community.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS OF PUPILS

- The overall quality of the learning achievements of pupils is good. During the evaluation, pupils were observed to engage well and lessons were differentiated for the individual needs of the primary and post-primary pupils in attendance.
- Many pupils have complex health needs. Supportive individual lessons in ward settings are effective in addressing the learning needs of pupils who are receiving ongoing medical interventions.
- Pupils have regular access to workshops for Music and Visual Arts. During the evaluation, pupils were observed to positively participate in a weekly visual arts workshop, directed in conjunction with the visiting artist in residence.
- The quality of pupils' learning outcomes in literacy is good. Pupils are encouraged to read from a variety of texts and good use is made of the school library. In both classroom and ward settings, pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively to develop their writing abilities and to enhance their researching skills.
- The quality of pupils' learning outcomes in numeracy is good. Effective use is made of concrete materials to develop pupils' mathematical skills and to extend their learning. Meaningful connections were also made for pupils enabling them to discuss their mathematical knowledge and to link their personal experiences to new mathematical concepts.
- Tá cáilíocht mhaith ag baint le foghlaim na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge. Léirítear dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge agus cothaítear spéis na ndaltaí bunscoile trí ghníomhaíochtaí míme agus scéalaíochta. Dírítear ar shiollabas na hiar-bhunscoileanna chun scileanna labhartha, léitheoireachta agus scríbhneoireachta na daltaí iar-bhunscoile a fhorbairt. Sna ceachtanna a breathnaíodh, cruthaíodh atmasféar spreagúil foghlama.

The quality of the pupils' learning outcomes in Irish is good. A positive attitude to Irish is displayed and primary school pupils' interest in Irish is fostered through mime and storytelling activities. The oral, reading and writing skills of post primary pupils are developed by focusing on the post-primary syllabus. In the lessons observed, a stimulating learning atmosphere was created.

2. QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The quality of teaching is good. The teacher demonstrates an understanding of the learning needs of pupils in this setting. Methodologies, resources and activities are aligned with pupils' needs and interests.
- Overall, lessons are well prepared and structured. Effective one-to-one and small-group teaching was observed during the evaluation. Good use of individualised resources and stimulating learning supports was observed.
- Long-term thematic planning, based on the *Primary School Curriculum (1999)* is provided. Differentiated daily planning addresses the needs of pupils enrolled for short periods, pupils who have repeated admissions and post-primary pupils. Creative methodologies and teaching approaches are in evidence.

- Assessment procedures for long-term and recurring enrolments, involve identifying the syllabus in use in pupils' base schools; establishing subject baselines and recording the pupils' learning achievements for their return to their base school.

3. SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELL-BEING

- The support for pupils' well-being is of a high quality. Pupils' learning experiences are enhanced through engagements with on-site health professionals regarding care, management and support strategies. In their responses to the Inspectorate questionnaires, all pupils surveyed reported that this is a good school.
- Some links have been established with base schools in relation to the learning experiences of a small number of long-term pupils.
- Parents are welcome in the school and during the evaluation a small number of parents accompanied their children to school. In responding to the Inspectorate questionnaires, all parents reported that there is a good atmosphere in the school and that their child is treated fairly and respectfully. Fewer than half of the parents surveyed, reported that they were aware of the school's code of behaviour or the anti-bullying policy.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The overall quality of leadership and management is fair. While the board of management is commended for its commitment to ongoing continuous professional development for teaching staff and for providing stimulating learning resources for the school, action is urgently required to improve governance. In order to address deficiencies, board meetings should be held regularly; parental representation should be put in place on the board; accounts should be certified or audited annually and recruitment and appointment procedures should be applied as specified in the *Governance Manual for Primary schools 2015-2019*.
- The principal promotes a caring school environment where the individuality of each pupil is central to their learning.
- Overall, whole-school planning is fair. While some curricular policies have been developed, whole-school planning for all curricular areas is not in place and this needs to be addressed. The board should ensure that administrative and curricular school plans and policies are cyclically and systematically reviewed and that all legally-required policies are implemented. Furthermore, where there are long-term pupils, the board should ensure that adequate protocols are in place for the effective two-way sharing of learning outcomes and assessment data with base schools.
- 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*.

5. SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The school has begun the school self-evaluation (SSE) process and has identified elements of the schools' assessment process as an area of focus for improvement. It is recommended that those leading the SSE process should review the involvement of students and parents in the process and implement agreed actions to improve the learning outcomes for pupils.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The report reflects well on the standard of teaching and the care of children in this special setting. It gives encouragement for better communication of policies and school news to the ever-changing parent body and also encourages improved ways of approaching whole school planning.

The greatest challenge is to the operation of the Board of Management and its effectiveness in representation of the stake holders in the particular needs of a school in a hospital setting. Frequency of board meetings and the fuller auditing of accounts is brought to its attention.

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

Whole school planning improvements are already in train.

The development of a good website is planned to be the main vehicle for the publication of school policies and to maintain communications with parents is an immediate priority.

The frequency of Board meetings has been increased and new board members including a parent representative will be fully in place by September 2017. Fully audited accounts had already been requested by the Chairperson and are under way for the future.

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
Very Good	Very good 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 outstanding 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
Good	Good 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 very good standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	Satisfactory 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
Fair	Fair 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
Weak	Weak 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;