

**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>	Saint Cronan's Junior National School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Brackenstown Swords County Dublin
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	19456B

**Date of inspection: 06-02-2019**



## **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 inspectors 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 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, Wellbeing).
8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

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

<b>Date of inspection</b>	06-02-2019
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meetings with principal and in-school management team</li><li>• Meeting with representatives of the board of management</li><li>• Meeting with parent representatives</li><li>• Meetings with teachers</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analysis of parent and teacher questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Post-evaluation feedback meeting with the principal, deputy principal, teachers, and a board of management representative</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Saint Cronan's Junior National School is a co-educational primary school located in Brackenstown, Swords, County Dublin. It caters for pupils from junior infants to second class. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, with twenty-two mainstream classes and two special education classes for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs). There are 576 pupils enrolled currently. The attendance of most pupils is very good, with ongoing measures in place to promote attendance.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- Pupils' learning is good overall with pupils demonstrating very good learning outcomes in Mathematics and a suitable knowledge and understanding of key curriculum content; pupils' skill development on a cross-curricular basis requires further attention.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, with some examples of very good practice observed; significant variance is evident in teachers' use of assessment-for-learning (AfL) strategies.
- Support for pupils' well-being is of very good quality.
- The quality of care provided for pupils is highly effective and this is a praiseworthy strength of the school.
- Leadership and management are good with the principal and in-school management (ISM) team successfully fostering a very positive school climate; there is scope to realign the duties of the ISM team with the evolving needs of the school and to progress its role in monitoring curriculum implementation.
- School self-evaluation (SSE) is of very good quality; leaders of the SSE process articulate a strong vision and they endeavour to establish high expectations for teaching and learning.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- All teachers should provide additional opportunities for cross-curricular skills development on a whole-school basis, which will in turn support pupils' higher-order thinking.
- Whole-school approaches to assessment should be developed to support greater consistency in teachers' use of AfL strategies.
- The principal and ISM team should further develop systems and procedures that facilitate the ongoing monitoring of curriculum implementation.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The overall quality of pupils' learning is good. Pupils demonstrate positive dispositions towards their learning; they work co-operatively with teachers and they engage well in assigned learning tasks. They enjoy participating in multi-sensory learning experiences. In the Inspectorate questionnaires, almost all parents agreed that their child enjoys school and is doing well in school.
- Pupils take pride in their work. They have a strong sense of the characteristics of being a good learner. In most instances, pupils recall and discuss their learning competently, demonstrating a good knowledge and understanding of key curricular concepts and content. There is potential to enhance pupils' questioning skills. In most classrooms, there is need to enhance pupils' skills on a cross-curricular basis through increased levels of participation in open-ended and discovery learning.
- Pupils demonstrate very good ability to apply Mathematics learning to real-life situations. They understand and use appropriate mathematical language very effectively. Learning outcomes in Mathematics are of a very high standard.
- Pupils have opportunities to engage in digital learning experiences; they are familiar with a variety of applications and they use information and technology communications (ICT) to support them in undertaking project work.
- Positive reading attainments are in evidence. Pupils have access to a diverse reading experience. Their phonological skills are developing well. Pupils' writing is of a good standard. In classes where pupils' writing was of a very high quality, pupils engaged in suitably differentiated writing activities across a wide range of genre. In a few classes, there remains scope to develop the quality and variety of pupils' writing experiences.
- Infant pupils engage in playful approaches to learning. The assessment of their learning through the medium of play is in the early stages of development. Opportunities exist to enhance pupils' early-literacy and early-numeracy skills through play and to provide for greater progression in their learning.

### 2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The quality of teaching is good overall, with some examples of very good practice observed. Teachers have very effective classroom management. They have successfully created inclusive learning environments based on mutual respect, affirmation and trust. In the Inspectorate questionnaire, almost all parents agreed that their child is treated fairly and respectfully and that teaching is good in the school.
- Teachers prepare diligently for their lessons. Their individual practice is well informed by teachers' collaborative meetings. In the Inspectorate questionnaires, all teachers agreed that they collaborate well and share good practice with one another.
- Teachers create attractive, well-ordered learning environments that are very supportive of pupils' literacy and numeracy development. Interest and investigation areas are provided for pupils in a few classrooms; this practice should be extended across the school. Meaningful timelines should be displayed to support pupils' understanding of time and chronology.
- Teachers in mainstream classes and in special education settings model English language very well for pupils, with suitable emphasis on the application of new learning in meaningful contexts. Sa Ghaeilge, baineann na múinteoirí úsáid as fearais oiriúnacha, teicneolaíocht na

faisnéise agus na cumarsáide san áireamh, chun tacú le foghlaim teanga. *In Irish, teachers use suitable tools, including ICT to support language learning.*

- Teachers promote pupils' enjoyment of Visual Arts and they integrate learning in this area with other curricular subjects. Displays of the pupils' work in Visual Arts across the school show an overemphasis on template-based art and crafts that does not always facilitate the exploration of children's individual creativity or skill development. To this end, teachers should place additional emphasis on facilitating learning experiences that develop pupils' imagination and spontaneity, with particular emphasis on guided discovery.
- The *Continuum of Support* has been introduced in the school. Classroom support plans are not implemented in all classrooms where pupils have needs; they should be developed to reflect teachers' collaborative discussions and their awareness of pupils' needs. In a few instances, targets in support plans need to be more specific and measurable to facilitate more ready monitoring of pupil attainment and better support planning for progression in learning.
- Provision in classes for pupils with ASD was appropriately aligned to pupils' social, emotional and academic needs. In these contexts, the use of dynamic approaches that are well-informed by teachers' engagement in continuous professional development is highly commendable. The facilitation of pupils with ASD in mainstream classes is very effective. During the evaluation, teachers' interactions with these pupils were skilful.
- Procedures for team-teaching have been successfully developed in the school. During the evaluation, a significant minority of the activities provided to pupils during station-work and play-based activities were not appropriately pitched for pupils. Teachers should place additional emphasis on the provision of suitably differentiated learning activities in this regard.
- The quality of assessment is good. Standardised tests are administered and diagnostic testing is used appropriately to identify pupils' needs. A few teachers monitor infant pupils' engagement in learning and they assess the development of these pupils' dispositions towards learning; this practice should be extended to all infant classes. There is significant variance in teachers' use of assessment-for-learning strategies. There is need to develop a more consistent and incremental whole-school approach to assessment so that pupils can assess their own learning through self-assessment and peer assessment.

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

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is very good. The principal, in-school management team and teachers demonstrate notable recognition of pupils' backgrounds, personalities and individual preferences. They nurture pupils' sense of self-esteem.
- Staff and management have established clear principles of inclusion and they are committed to delivering equality of opportunity for pupils through the varied aspects of school life.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They use strategies to promote positive behaviour that are very well aligned to pupils' learning dispositions. They communicate these expectations to pupils very effectively, and they facilitate pupils in internalising them.
- Teachers, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, have devised appropriate care plans to meet pupils' needs in a meaningful way. The quality of care provided to pupils is a very significant strength of the school.
- During the lessons observed, interactions between teachers and pupils and among pupils were supportive and affirming and highly conducive to learning.

- A broad range of strategies is in place to promote pupils' social and emotional well-being, including emphasis on healthy eating and physical fitness. Pupils' sense of belonging and self-identity is nurtured through participation in intercultural events that celebrate diversity.
- The school has made very worthwhile links with pre-schools and the local senior primary school to support pupils in making effective transitions.

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

- The quality of leadership and management is good. The day-to-day running of the school is highly effective. The principal and leaders foster a very positive school climate and they maintain mutually beneficial relationships between the school and the wider community.
- The board of management is alert and responsive to the changing needs of the school. It actively supports teachers' ongoing professional development and is committed to providing high quality resources to support pupils' learning.
- The principal and ISM team promote and facilitate the opinions of teachers. Teachers undertake activities and events that add richness to the life of the school. Pupils are provided with opportunities to participate in roles that develop their leadership capacities.
- The parents' association is very supportive of the work of the school. The results of the parent questionnaires show high levels of satisfaction with leadership and management.
- Whole-school curriculum plans are of good quality overall. They should provide additional guidance on skills, differentiation and assessment to support teachers' classroom practice.
- The principal and ISM team have developed a strong culture of collaboration; teamwork structures are very well established. The ISM team consists of a deputy principal and seven assistant principals. It undertakes a broad range of duties diligently and promotes elements of innovation with noteworthy capacity to identify strengths in teaching and learning. There is need to realign the team's duties with the evolving needs of the school and to progress the role of its individual members in the ongoing monitoring of curriculum implementation.
- The school provides placements for student teachers and this offers valuable benefits for teachers, student teachers, pupils and the teacher education institution.

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

- The quality of SSE is very good. Leaders and teachers have focused successfully on bringing about improvements in learner outcomes in Mathematics and English.
- Leaders of the SSE process articulate a strong vision in relation to the school's ongoing development and they endeavour to establish high expectations for pupils through school improvement plans. Their awareness of the need to align work in SSE with curriculum changes is noteworthy. Their engagement with the support services to bring about improvements in teachers' practice is commendable.
- Relevant stakeholders were very appropriately involved in previous phases of SSE; there is scope to re-engage parents in the current process.
- Going forward, leaders and teachers need to further develop monitoring procedures to evaluate the impact and success of improvement initiatives on pupils' 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 wishes to express its appreciation for the recent WSE-MLL report provided by the Inspectorate. We are very pleased that the report identified the very positive school climate which exists throughout the school community and the highly effective quality of care provided for pupils. The extremely positive results of the parents' questionnaire were very affirming. The report reinforces how teachers prepare diligently, work collaboratively and create attractive well-ordered environments in which pupils have a strong sense of the characteristics of being a good learner. The board acknowledges that the staff and management of the school have created an inclusive learning environment which celebrates diversity and has established equality of opportunity for all pupils. The very positive findings in the areas of Mathematics and School Self-Evaluation are also very affirming.

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

The board accepts the recommendations made in the report and is actively pursuing their implementation.



## 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;