

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Saint Oliver Plunkett Junior National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Saint Helena's Drive Finglas South Dublin 11
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	19546C

Date of inspection: 25-01-2019



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 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

Dates of inspection	25-01-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meetings with principal and in-school leadership team• Meeting with representatives of the board of management• Meeting with parent representatives• Meeting with teachers• Review of relevant documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of parent and teacher questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Saint Oliver Plunkett Junior National School is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The school participates in Band 1 of Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. There are 168 pupils enrolled currently across eight mainstream classes and one Early Start class for pre-school children. There are four special education teachers based in the school, one of whom is shared with another school; there is also a shared home-school-community liaison (HSCL) co-ordinator. School attendance levels are very good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of learning is good; in all observed lessons pupils demonstrated a commendable understanding of lesson content and were able to recall prior learning effectively.
- Pupils enjoy their learning across a range of curriculum areas and engage in a broad range of appropriately playful and engaging learning experiences; in a few classes, pupils' mathematical learning experiences were not sufficiently challenging.
- The quality of teaching is good with very good practices evident in the teaching of reading for pupils in receipt of additional support; practices such as the modelling of reading, extended discussion and focused vocabulary work are not fully embedded in the teaching of reading outside of the support setting.
- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is very good.
- The quality of school leadership and management is very good.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is very good; agreed targets and actions impact beneficially on teachers' collective practice, their individual teacher planning and pupils' learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Exposure to more open-ended questioning, enquiry-based learning experiences and appropriately-challenging tasks in Mathematics would further enhance pupils' attainment in Mathematics.
- The very good practices evident in the teaching of reading in support settings should be adapted for whole-class settings and extended across the school to benefit all pupils.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- The quality of learning is good. In all observed lessons pupils demonstrated a commendable understanding of lesson content and a good understanding of previous learning. Pupils demonstrate a very good ability to engage in their work in a focused manner and to complete assigned tasks to a good standard.
- In general, pupils are reading well in line with their ability. Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of the sounds they have learned and songs and rhymes are used effectively to consolidate this learning. The quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work is very good overall across a range of curriculum areas. In a few instances, pupils should be encouraged to use target vocabulary from classroom word walls in their independent writing. Although pupils demonstrate a good ability to ask questions seeking clarification, a greater emphasis should be placed on pupils' ability to ask questions as a means of extending classroom dialogue.
- Pupils' learning in Mathematics is good. They demonstrate positive attitudes to Mathematics and engage in activities with high interest and enjoyment levels. Exposure to more open-ended questioning, enquiry-based experiences and appropriately-challenging tasks would further enhance their learning. Pupils have very good computational skills and demonstrate a good understanding of number. While a very good emphasis is placed on ensuring that pupils use mathematical language precisely, their understanding would be consolidated if they were explicitly asked to clarify their understanding of particular mathematical terminology. Good links are evident between pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding and how it applies to their lives.
- Sa Ghaeilge, is féidir leis na daltaí ceisteanna simplí ar réimse théamaí a fhreagairt go cumasach. Chun cur leis an dea-chleachtas seo, b'fhiú aird breise a dhiriú ar na daltaí a chumasú chun sraith abairtí iomlána a chruthú as a stuaim féin. Canann na páistí amhráin le taitneamh. *In Irish, pupils can answer simple questions on a range of themes capably. To build on this good practice, additional attention should be paid to enabling pupils to construct a series of sentences independently. Pupils sing songs with enjoyment.*
- Pupils enjoy their learning in Arts and engage in a broad range of learning experiences. Attention is usefully paid to developing pupils' awareness of the elements of Art while engaging in a variety of media. It is evident that pupils enjoy their learning in Drama and demonstrate a good ability to enter into role and character. Pupils' ability to co-operate and communicate in making Drama is very good. Specific time should be allocated during lessons to enable pupils to reflect on the dramatic action. Teachers engage in a range of activities to facilitate learning across all the elements of Music and examples of very good pupil engagement in Music were noted during the evaluation. The school's participation in the Creative Schools initiative enriches the quality of pupils' learning experiences.

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The quality of teaching is good; lessons have clear objectives and are well-structured and paced. Classroom management is very effective in engaging pupils' attention and facilitating their engagement in learning. Teachers demonstrate a good ability to facilitate pupils' learning in a range of settings including whole-class, group work and pair work. A few examples of good quality extended questioning by teachers as a means of encouraging authentic conversations with pupils were observed during the evaluation; this good practice should usefully be extended to all settings. In a few instances, pupils were not provided with sufficient time to clarify their

thinking and work independently; teachers should be more judicious in deciding when to intervene to support pupils' learning.

- Play-based pedagogy is afforded a clear priority in teachers' planning and practice and this largely results in language rich learning experiences for pupils. While there are many examples of teachers encouraging pupils to engage in extended speech, there were instances where pupils' responses were overly-short; teachers should, therefore, facilitate further opportunities for pupils to speak in a sustained manner.
- In general, the teaching of reading is effectively differentiated to match pupil ability and attainment level. Very good practices are evident in the teaching of reading for pupils in receipt of additional support; these very good practices include the modelling of reading, the systematic teaching of vocabulary and word structure, the linking of new learning to previous learning and the manner in which teachers draw pupils' attention to their own development as learners. These very effective practices should be extended to all settings. Pupils are supported by the very effective print-rich classroom displays which facilitate pupils in consolidating their learning and making connections across their learning.
- Story is used effectively as a teaching methodology in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education. A good focus is placed on providing pupils with opportunities to work actively as historians. Good practice observed during the evaluation included the effective use of visual resources and the preparation of interesting collaborative tasks for pupils.
- The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good. A broad range of teaching approaches is in place to foster inclusive practice. Appropriate planning is undertaken to identify and support the needs of pupils. In a few instances, the connection between needs, activities and progress is not always clear and should be established more explicitly; this would be useful in guiding teachers to generate optimum impact from the activities being implemented. There is evidence of very good collaboration among the members of the SEN team and the mainstream class teachers. This collaboration is effective in identifying pupils with needs and meeting these needs through a carefully considered intervention. The SEN team demonstrates a very good capacity to reflect on the effectiveness of their interventions and adjust where necessary. It is evident that learning targets for pupils with SEN are regularly reviewed and updated in the light of pupils' ongoing progress. The broad range of successful programmes and interventions delivered through the HSCL initiative significantly benefits pupils and parents in the school.
- The quality of assessment is very good. Teachers maintain useful records of pupils' progress. They also monitor pupils' written work very effectively providing pupils with useful feedback which is impacting positively on subsequent learning.

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

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being is very good. School leadership and teachers have high expectations of pupils and have been successful in creating a calm, positive and holistic learning community in which these expectations are being realised.
- The parents' association provides valuable support to the school and a sense of community was evident during the evaluation. These close links with the community support the delivery of a broad curriculum as well as a range of worthwhile co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. In questionnaires administered during the evaluation, almost all parents reported that the school was well run and that their child feels safe and well looked after in the school.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership and management is very good. The board of management demonstrates a strong commitment to the school. The in-school leadership team (ISL) led by the school principal has clear and worthwhile responsibilities. Members of the ISL team exercise effective leadership both individually and collectively demonstrating a good capacity to review and amend existing practice and programmes to ensure optimum impact on pupils' learning. The implementation of new initiatives is managed effectively and clear systems are put in place to guide implementation and communication with teachers around these changes. In questionnaires, all teachers reported that the school is well run and that the views of teachers are valued in the decision-making processes in this school.
- The staff of the school reported that it regularly provides placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and is included among the standards in the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers as it can provide valuable professional 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; agreed targets and actions have been well chosen to meet pupils' needs and these are impacting beneficially on teachers' collective practice, their individual teacher planning and 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 welcomes the WSE-MLL report and the many positive findings therein. We believe the report portrays an accurate picture of the practices of the school, and it acknowledges the hard work, commitment and dedication of all those involved in our school community.

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

We accept the recommendations of the report and are committed to implementing them. School staff will collaboratively review each recommendation and plan for its implementation in order to further enhance teaching and learning for the benefit of all our pupils.

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
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;