

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School Name	St Patrick's Senior School
Seoladh na scoile/ School Address	Corduff Blanchardstown Dublin 15
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	19636D

Date of Evaluation: 16-11-2016



WHAT IS A WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION?

The Whole-School Evaluation model is used to provide whole-school evaluative information, advice and support to the school. These inspections affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of educational provision in the school. In addition to evaluating management and leadership in the school, the inspectors typically examine the quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in four subjects, including English, Gaeilge, Mathematics and one other subject.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector(s) evaluated and reported under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

1. Quality of leadership and management
2. Quality of school planning and school self-evaluation
3. Quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement
4. Quality of support for pupils

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

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Date of inspection	16-11-2016
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with principal and deputy principal• Meeting with the board of management• Meeting with parent representatives• Review of relevant documents• Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to senior management team and teachers• Feedback to board of management

SCHOOL CONTEXT

St. Patrick's Senior School is a co-educational, primary school in Corduff, Dublin 15, which is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. It receives additional grants through its participation in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative. The attendance levels of the 234 pupils enrolled are very good. Teaching and learning were evaluated in seven mainstream settings and four support settings.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of leadership, as demonstrated by the principal, the board and the in-school management team, is exemplary, and the school has made excellent progress in raising standards of learning in recent years.
- The quality of care and support for the pupils' wellbeing is highly commendable.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the school is good.
- The pupils' reading and writing skills are well developed, with scope for further progressive development of their oral language skills in both English and Irish.
- While pupils engage with a broad programme of learning in Geography, there is scope for enhanced learning, particularly in relation to local Geography.
- The pupils' ability to recall and communicate their prior learning across curriculum areas has scope for further development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school should further develop the pupils' communication skills in both Irish and English.
- Teachers should ensure that they regularly revise and consolidate key concepts, skills and knowledge to support and strengthen the pupils' learning.
- In the Geography programmes, more in-depth study of selected topics is recommended, particularly relating to the locality.

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The work of the board of management is highly commendable. The chairperson is a very visible and supportive presence in the school. Board members work effectively to ensure that the school is a safe and caring place which provides high-quality learning experiences for all pupils. The board's work is carried out in a consultative and collaborative way.
- The principal provides highly effective leadership. Leading by example, her work is characterised by her care for the pupils and her commitment to high standards in teaching and learning. She strategically leads the school in a visionary manner and fosters excellent relations with parents, staff members and the community. She empowers all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, to play an active part in contributing to school effectiveness. The in-school management team, in close partnership with the principal, leads improvements in teaching and learning, and carries out a wide range of duties to a very high standard.
- The management of resources is very good. The school has developed a number of additional resources including a well-run library, a sensory room and garden areas. All teachers use a variety of teaching resources, including technology. While many teachers prepare stimulating classroom environments, it is advised that an extensive range of visual resources be used in every setting to support, simplify and consolidate the pupils' learning. School personnel are very well managed. Induction and continuous professional development practices are well established. All ancillary staff members carry out their duties in a very capable and supportive manner.
- There are excellent relations and communications with the community. This inclusive and welcoming school has very close links with its junior school, the local third-level college and the community. Very effective communication strategies are in place to inform and support parents regarding their children's education. The shared parents' association provides good support to the school. In the Inspectorate survey conducted during the evaluation, almost all parents agreed that they feel welcome, that teaching is good and that they are happy with the school.
- The management of pupils is a significant strength of the school. All staff are praised for the skilful and positive way in which they manage the pupils. The pupils are exemplary in their behaviour, their interactions and their disposition to learning. In the Inspectorate survey, the majority of pupils agreed that they feel safe in class, that their teacher explains things clearly and that it is a good school.

2. QUALITY OF SCHOOL PLANNING AND SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of the school planning and school self-evaluation (SSE) process is very good. All school plans are devised through collaboration and consultation. The school improvement plan (the DEIS plan) reflects the school's very capable engagement with evidence gathering, data analysis, target setting and review. Its impact is evident in every teacher's practice and in the impressive raising of standards in the pupils' learning.
- The detailed, organisational policies assist the smooth and effective running of the school. The comprehensive whole-school curriculum plans are reflective of the school context and give clear guidance to teachers on relevant aspects of curricular provision. Teachers are very well

prepared for their teaching and provide good quality planning, which, for the most part, is objectives-based.

- 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.

3. QUALITY OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT

- The quality of teaching and learning is good, with very good teaching observed in some settings. Teaching is characterised by well-structured lessons, vibrant delivery and cooperative work by pupils. Teachers share their learning intentions with their pupils and many encourage pupil reflection. The teachers should now agree specific success criteria in key areas of learning and share these with the pupils. This will support assessment by both teachers and pupils alike. Pupils are highly motivated and engaged during lessons. The presentation of their written work is very good. The pupils' ability to recall key learning across the curriculum varied. At times, pupils displayed difficulty in articulating their prior learning of knowledge and concepts. To this end, it is recommended that ongoing revision and consolidation of key learning become a stronger feature of all teachers' practice.
- Ar an iomlán, tá caighdeán sásúil sa Ghaeilge cé go bhfuil gnéithe le forbairt. Múintear na ceachtanna go fuinniúil agus baintear úsáid as fearais, cluichí, amhráin agus rainn. Múintear foclóir nua sna ceachtanna ach téann sé dian ar daltaí cumarsáid a dhéanamh agus go mórmhór, ceisteanna a chur. Ba chóir go mbunófaí na heiseamláirí nua atá leagtha amach sa phleanáil ar ghnáthshaol na ndaltaí agus achar níos faide a chaitheamh ar mhúineadh agus ar ath-mhúineadh na n-eiseamláirí go córasach. Moltar tuilleadh deiseanna a sholáthar do na daltaí an teanga nua a úsáid i bpéirí agus i gcomhthéacsanna éagsúla, an scríbhneoireacht san áireamh, chun máistreacht a fháil orthu.
- *Overall, the standard of Irish is satisfactory, although there are aspects for development. Lessons are taught in a lively manner with games, songs and rhymes in use. New vocabulary is systematically taught during lessons, however pupils experience some difficulty using the language to communicate, particularly in posing questions. It is recommended that the planned language exemplars be based on the pupils' everyday lives and more time be spent on the direct teaching and revising of these exemplars in a systematic way. It is advised that the pupils be provided with extended opportunities to use the new language in pairs and in different contexts, including writing, in order to gain mastery of it.*
- The standard of reading and writing in English is good. This is achieved through the consistent and effective teaching of agreed skills and strategies, and the delivery of well-planned intervention programmes. Pupils are provided with varied reading and writing opportunities across a range of genres, and are enabled to read at their ability level. They are encouraged to contribute and fully participate during lessons. Nevertheless, the pupils' oral communication skills have scope to be further developed. It is recommended that the school place particular emphasis on the teaching of specific oral language skills and on the purposes for which pupils communicate. Teaching methodologies such as drama, play and teacher

modelling should be used extensively so that pupils are enabled to communicate with growing confidence and competence.

- The quality of teaching and learning in Mathematics is good, with some very effective practice observed. Lessons are well structured and comprise thorough explanation of concepts, teacher-modelling and the use of concrete resources. Teachers place very good emphasis on the language of Mathematics. In the most effective practice, teachers consistently related Mathematics to the pupils' everyday lives. This approach, as with the solving of problems, should be a stronger element of all teachers' practice. In the main, pupils engage in suitably-challenging and well-planned tasks. To support pupils, most particularly those who are low-achieving, more intensive daily oral work across all strands, whereby all pupils are computing for a purpose, is advised.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Geography is good. Teachers capably develop the pupils' skills as geographers through project work, surveys and mapping. Discovery-based learning was a feature of the best practice observed. Key concepts and language are explicitly taught by teachers. They make good use of visual resources, including maps and photographs. While good balance was noted across local, national and international areas of study, there is scope overall to ensure that the pupils' learning of local Geography is more comprehensive. It is recommended that the planned programmes with respect to local Geography clarify the intended progression in learning outcomes for pupils.
- Effective assessment approaches are used at whole-school and individual level to identify pupils' learning needs, track progress, inform interventions and support, and evaluate the pupils' learning. The whole-school promotion of self-assessment and reflection by pupils is praiseworthy. Where assessment records were most effective, they were aligned to curriculum objectives or success criteria, and were used to inform planning for improvements in learning. The pupils' work is well monitored and corrected, and teachers provide constructive feedback for improvement.

4. QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS

- The quality of supports for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The team members carefully plan, deliver and review the interventions and programmes in consultation with parents and staff. The support models include withdrawal, team-teaching and ability grouping. Dynamic teaching, stimulating environments and high expectations are the hallmarks of the support provided. In order to ensure that pupils' learning is consistently progressive and to aid assessment, it is recommended that weekly planning be undertaken which outlines all relevant aspects of provision.
- A significant strength of the school is the quality of support and care for the pupils' wellbeing. The school ensures that the achievements of all pupils, both past and present, are celebrated. Through the provision of a very wide range of in-school and after-school supports, clubs, activities and sports, the pupils are enabled to engage in enriching and enjoyable experiences, many of which are provided through the commendable dedication of the teaching- and non-teaching staff. The work of the coordinator for the home-school-community-liaison (HSCL) programme and that of the school counsellor is praiseworthy in supporting pupils and their families.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of St Patrick's SNS welcomes this very positive report and is delighted with the positive recognition given to affirm the valuable high standard of work that is taking place throughout the school. We are delighted that the excellent progress in raising standards of learning in recent years is recognised. The Board is pleased that the inspectors acknowledge the dedication and conscientiousness of all parties involved in the effective management of the school. We are delighted that the inspection recognised that a significant strength of our school is the quality of support and care for the pupils' wellbeing through the provision of a very wide range of in-school and after school supports. We are pleased with the manner in which the inspectors commented on the provisions made for the children with special educational needs. The Board would like to commend and thank our in school management team, all our teachers, SNAs, ancillary & support staff, students, parents and volunteers for their dedication, commitment and enthusiasm.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

The school will implement the key recommendations with the support of the Board of Management. The report will greatly help to guide the school in the immediate 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. Overall, learners have access to a basic level of provision. 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;