

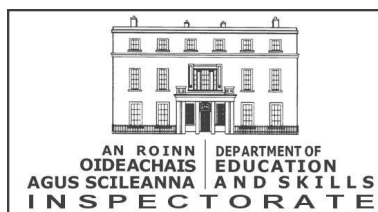
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills**

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

REPORT

**Loreto Primary School
Dublin14
Uimhir rolla: 00729F**

Date of inspection: 13 February 2014



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Loreto Primary School in February 2014. This report is based on a selection of lessons observed in a range of learning settings in the school, interaction with pupils and review of their work, meetings with the principal and with board and parent representatives, completed parent and pupil questionnaires, and a selection of school documents. The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

Loreto Primary School is a large all girls school in the suburbs of South Dublin. It operates under the Loreto Trust and the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The attendance of the 528 pupils on roll is very good.

The school has **strengths** in the following areas:

- The principal provides very effective pastoral leadership and places relationships at the heart of school life.
- A positive, caring and respectful atmosphere, reflecting the Loreto ethos, pervades the school and a strong sense of school community is evident.
- Pupils are highly motivated and enthusiastic.
- Parents are very supportive and interested in the school.
- The overall learning achievements of the pupils are very good.
- The overall quality of teaching is good with some very good practices evident.
- A very good range of resources is available to support pupil learning.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- It is recommended that the board of management put a plan in place to formally and regularly review and ratify all school policies and procedures.
- Assessment outcomes should be used more directly to inform the teaching approaches and learning activities to meet the varying abilities including those pupils with higher ability.
- Regular formal meetings of the in-school management team should be commenced to facilitate a more cohesive and consistent approach to curriculum implementation, monitoring and review.
- Opportunities for more skill-based learning should be provided across the curriculum at all class levels and should include the development of higher order-thinking skills, collaborative and independent learning skills and the use of ICT

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning achievements of the pupils are very good. They are in receipt of a broad and balanced curriculum and are highly motivated, interested and enthusiastic.
- Reading levels in English are very good and literacy overall is successfully integrated across the curriculum. In order to match the pupils' very good levels in reading, a more cohesive whole-school approach to children's writing across a range of genres is recommended. Some very good examples of pupil competence and confidence in oral language were also observed during the evaluation. Pupils at all levels demonstrate very good understanding of discrete mathematical concepts.

- Tá tuscint agus stór focail maith ag na páistí sa Ghaeilge agus tá scileanna reasúnta maith á bhaint amach acu sa Ghaeilge labhartha. Tá réimse maith dánta, rannta agus amhráin ar eolas acu. Chun muinín na ndaltaí agus a gcumas cainte a fhorbairt, ba chóir clár céimniúil agus ábhartha a chur i bhfeidhm go córasach tríd an scoil. The pupils have a good Irish vocabulary and demonstrate good understanding. Their language skills are reasonably good and they know a good range of poems and songs in Irish. To further develop the pupils' confidence and oral skills in Irish, an incremental and relevant programme in Irish should be taught through the school.
- Some very good skill-based learning was demonstrated by the pupils in Social Environmental and Scientific Education and in Physical Education and they have had some very good creative experiences in Music and in the Visual Arts. Pupils in the junior classes are given some opportunities to learn through play.
- While pupils with special educational needs are attaining well, insufficient provision is currently being made for pupils who are achieving at very high levels. Further targeted provision for the pupils with higher ability levels is advised.

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching for pupils in both mainstream and special educational needs settings is good with some very good practices observed. Some of these included the use of assessment information to inform differentiated teaching, a clear focus on the teaching of discrete skills and the development of independent learning. A thematic, integrated approach to teaching is used effectively in many classes and the judicious use of the textbook is also evident in some settings. A very good range of teaching resources is available. Opportunities for more skill-based learning should be provided across the curriculum at all class levels and should include the development of higher order-thinking skills, collaborative and independent learning skills and the use of ICT
- A commendable practice of collating formal assessment data for each class is in place and the information is passed on annually from class to class. Some effective assessment practices by individual teachers were also noted. It is recommended that assessment for learning be embedded in classroom practice and that assessment outcomes be used more directly to inform teaching approaches and learning activities in order to cater more appropriately for the varying abilities among the pupils with particular reference to those of higher ability.
- The deployment of Special Education Needs teachers to work in-class alongside class teachers is a recent development. To optimise the impact of this work these interventions should be extended, planned and implemented in a targeted, focused manner, and regularly reviewed.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- Pupils are very well supported and are managed in a positive and effective manner. Pupil behaviour is very good and the welfare of individual children is a central concern for all staff members. Responses to the pupil questionnaires indicate that children feel safe in the classrooms and in the playground and feel confident in knowing who to turn to if in any difficulty.
- A range of co-curricular and after-school activities are provided to support the overall development of the pupils.
- The student council and the Green Schools Committee operate effectively and provide very good opportunities for personal and social development. Consideration should be given to extending opportunities for pupils to develop their voice and their role as active citizens.

- 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*.

4. Leadership and Management

- The board of management operates effectively and is very supportive of the teachers and the work of the school. It is recommended that the board put a long-term plan in place to guide the on-going development of the school. This should include a focus on teaching and learning and a regular review and ratification of all school policies and procedures.
- Parents are very supportive and interested in the school. A forum should be established to facilitate parental involvement in policy-making and review as appropriate.
- The principal provides very effective pastoral leadership to the pupils, staff and wider school community. She values relationships and has created a safe, secure environment where every individual is nurtured and cared for. She is supported by the deputy principal and four special duties teachers. In their questionnaire responses parents reported that the school is well managed and has a very good atmosphere.
- As school self-evaluation processes develop the principal's role in sharing leadership and facilitating professional dialogue will be very important. Regular, formal meetings of the in-school management team should now be commenced to facilitate a more cohesive and consistent approach to curriculum implementation, monitoring and review. A structure for planning and co-ordinating learning already exists at each class level and formalising this structure and linking it directly to the in-school management team would also contribute to greater consistency and cohesion.

5. School Self-evaluation

- The school has made a positive start on school self-evaluation. Staff have rightly identified problem-solving as a priority area. Initial evidence is being gathered from standardised tests and teacher reflections, and the distribution of pupil and teacher questionnaires is planned. This evidence will provide baseline information for the school and enable the staff to set clear targets and actions for improvement in this aspect of mathematics in all classes. The ongoing monitoring of progress, the regular sharing of good practice and the effective use of the team-teaching will all contribute to the school meeting its stated targets for improvement.

Conclusion

The school has the capacity to bring about improvements as outlined in the recommendations.