

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

**Whole School Evaluation**  
**REPORT**

**Naul NS**  
**Naul, Co. Dublin**  
**Uimhir rolla: 01170G**

**Date of inspection: 10 May 2012**



**A N R O I N N** | **D E P A R T M E N T O F**  
**O I D E A C H A I S** | **E D U C A T I O N**  
**A G U S S C I L E A N N A** | **A N D S K I L L S**

## 1. Introduction

Naul NS is a co-educational primary school serving the village of Naul, Co. Dublin. The school is under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and there are currently 107 pupils enrolled. Pupil attendance levels are good. During this whole-school evaluation, provision for Irish, English, mathematics and Social, Personal and Health Education was inspected. 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.

## 2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

The following are the **main strengths** of the work of the school:

- The board of management, the school principal, the teachers and the parents' association display a strong and shared purpose towards the development of Naul NS.
- The recently-appointed principal has been successful in developing and improving communication with parents.
- In their English writing, pupils demonstrate a very good ability to structure sentences and paragraphs clearly and coherently.
- Pupils have good computation skills in Mathematics.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Cé go bhfuil foclóir sásúil ag na daltaí sa Ghaeilge, moltar tuilleadh béime a chur ar fhrásaí agus abairtí a mhúineadh agus a dhainginiú, níos mo den Ghaeilge leanúnach a úsáid sna ceachtanna, agus cumas na ndaltaí a fhorbairt maidir leis na briathra a réimniú i gceart. *Even though pupils have a satisfactory vocabulary in Irish, it is recommended that a greater emphasis is placed on the teaching and consolidation of phrases and sentences, that more continuous use of Irish during lessons is practised, and that pupils' ability to conjugate verbs correctly is developed.*
- Better provision needs to be made for more able pupils in Mathematics.
- The school's enrolment policy should be immediately reviewed. The homework policy and the Relationship and Sexuality (RSE) policies also require amendment.

### **3. Quality of School Management**

- Although recently constituted, the board has identified clear roles for each board member and specific and worthwhile actions have been initiated within these areas of responsibility. Considerable work has been done by the board to advance curriculum and organisational planning. The board is to be particularly commended for its understanding of how it can make a worthwhile contribution to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy and to the development of learning generally within the school. At its meeting with the inspector, the board expressed its concern with regard to current parking facilities for parents as they bring their children to and from school.
- The principal (appointed March 2012) has been very effective in developing and improving communication with the parent body in addition to implementing a number of practices within the school that have improved its functioning. As the school creates an action plan for its development, each member of the in-school management team should develop their leadership role through taking on the co-ordination of these action plans. There is a commendable commitment among teachers to on-going continuous professional development both through undertaking courses (education leadership and special needs education) and researching and implementing new programmes within curriculum areas such as Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE).
- Teachers and staff are successful in creating a positive and ordered learning environment for pupils.
- In a meeting with the inspector conducted as part of the whole-school evaluation, members of the parents' association expressed great appreciation of the efforts of the newly-appointed principal to develop and improve home-school communication and to provide them with a channel to contribute to the development of education within the school. They are pleased that the code of behaviour has been updated. However they state that they remain alert to seeing the effect of its full implementation. They also expressed concerns with regard to playground supervision and homework. During the post-evaluation meeting these issues were discussed. Different options for lunchtime supervision and ways to help pupils cope with homework demands at certain class levels were considered. In a questionnaire completed as part of the whole-school evaluation process, the majority of parents stated that their child likes school and that teaching is good in the school.

### **4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation**

- All organisational policies required by legislation that include an enrolment and admissions policy and health and safety statement have been drawn up and ratified by the board of management. However, the enrolment and admissions policy needs to be reviewed to ensure that the criteria applied, in the event of an over-subscription in applications for enrolment, are clarified. In addition, to ensure that it is compliant with pertinent legislation, the statement that the school can defer the enrolment of a pupil with special needs pending the provision of resources from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) should be removed from the policy. The homework policy needs to be reviewed in light of conflicting information in other policies regarding the amount of homework to be allocated and how often it should be assigned, and to address parental concerns.
- While the principal has sought to oversee the updating of a number of curriculum plans since her recent appointment, the resulting plans are too general to be of significant guidance to teachers. To improve curriculum plans, the school is advised to focus more on the delineation of desired learning outcomes and the documentation of decisions

made by the school which are particular to Naul NS in its implementation of the curriculum.

- A formal school review has been initiated by the principal through the dissemination of questionnaires to parents, pupils and teachers. The resulting responses should prove fruitful to the school in formulating an action plan for the development of teaching and learning. It is commendable that the school is eager to act upon these responses.
- The quality of teachers' short-term planning is good although better provision needs to be made for more able pupils in Mathematics through specifying specific learning objectives for them. In the middle and senior classes, teachers could make better provision for the teaching of English reading through identifying specific reading skills to be taught in a systematic and progressive manner. The quality of teachers' long term planning could be improved by a greater focus on content and the delineation of this content within specific time-frames.
- 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. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

- Tá gnéithe le forbairt maidir le cáilíocht an teagaisc agus na foghlama sa Ghaeilge. Sna ranganna naíonán agus sna ranganna sóisearacha, cé go bhfuil foclóir sásúil ag na daltaí moltar tuilleadh béime a chur ar abairtí a mhúineadh, a chleachtadh agus a dhainginiú agus níos mó den Ghaeilge leanúnach a chloisint. Sna meánranganna moltar córas céimnithe a chur ar siúl maidir le múineadh an litriúcháin. Sna ranganna sinsearach, moltar córas céimnithe a chur ar siúl maidir le múineadh na briathra agus conas iad a láimhsiú i gceart. Cé go léann formhór na ndaltaí le foghraíocht cheart, b'fhiú a bheith cúramach nach mbíonn na téacsanna ro-dheacair do roinnt dhaltaí. Moltar freisin tuilleadh béime a chur ar thuiscint na ndaltaí a fhorbairt.
- *There are aspects of teaching and learning in Irish that require development. In the infant and the junior classes, even though the pupils have a good vocabulary, it is recommended that more emphasis be placed on the teaching, the practice and the consolidation of sentences and that they hear more continuous spoken Irish. In the middle classes, it is recommended that a systematic programme be put in place for the teaching of spelling. In the senior classes, it is recommended that a systematic programme be put in place regarding the teaching and the application of verbs. Even though pupils read with correct pronunciation, care must be taken that the texts are not too difficult for some pupils. It is also recommended that a greater emphasis be placed on developing pupils' understanding of the texts read.*
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is good. In terms of oral language, pupils demonstrate a good ability to express themselves fluently and confidently. During the whole-school evaluation pupils in the senior classes demonstrated a commendable ability to work as a group to formulate and to communicate a response to a discussion topic. Reading is taught effectively in the infant classes with a good emphasis on the development of both visual and auditory skills. As pupils progress through the school, the majority of pupils either maintain or improve on their achievement level in their annual standardised test scores. Even so, the majority of these children could be attaining at a higher-level. More focused skill development in the middle and senior classes will assist with raising achievement levels. Developing class libraries and closely monitoring pupils' reading of library books will also contribute to improving attainment levels. The quality of content in pupils' independent writing is very good and pupils demonstrate a commendable ability to structure sentences and paragraphs

coherently. In some classes, the majority of pupils do not present their work neatly with due regard to punctuation and presentation conventions.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is good. The mathematics curriculum is taught in a broad and balanced manner. While concepts are taught clearly, teachers need to make better provision for more able pupils in Mathematics and to ensure that all pupils are sufficiently challenged. A review of standardised test results in Mathematics over a three-year period indicates that the majority of pupils maintain the same level of achievement. This level of achievement could be improved. During the inspection, pupils in all classes answered computation questions and questions in other strands posed orally to a satisfactory standard. However, pupils in the junior classes need more practice at oral mental computation to become adept at this type of mathematics activity. Pupils in all classes demonstrated a good understanding of the language structures intrinsic to mental problem-solving. However, as pupils proceed through the school, there needs to be a systematic approach to the solving of written problems. A specific strategy is currently being put in place in the senior classes to address this issue and this is commendable.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Social, Personal and Health Education is good. A variety of resources and teaching approaches are used to provide pupils with a broad range of interesting learning experiences. Provision is made for pupils to play an active role in their education through initiatives such as the Green Schools Programme, the recently established Student Council and the designation of certain of the senior pupils as Play Leaders for break-times. During the evaluation, pupils demonstrated a good knowledge of a range of topics from the curriculum. The school's Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy needs to be revised to indicate clearly how all the objectives of RSE as outlined in the Primary School Curriculum are being implemented at each class level. In a questionnaire completed as part of the whole-school evaluation, the majority of pupils are positive about their experience of education in Naul NS. Pupils also state that they feel safe in school and in the classroom, that they know what to do if they are being bullied, and that Naul NS is a good school.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement generally is good. Concepts are taught clearly and all classrooms are ordered and present as positive learning environments. Care needs to be taken in lessons, however, to ensure that provision is made for the broad range of pupil ability levels. The planning of appropriately-challenging lesson objectives and the selection of texts at an appropriate level is recommended to enhance provision for teaching and learning.

## **6. Quality of Support for Pupils**

- The quality of support for pupils with special education needs is good. Care is taken to formulate Individual Education Plans that identify pupils' learning needs clearly. Most long and short term planning is effective in ensuring that these needs underpin learning support provision. Where best practice was observed, there was sufficient detail to ensure a correlation between pupils' needs and the planned learning activities. Lesson delivery is effective through being clear, encouraging and well-paced. In some instances, greater care needs to be taken with the selection of reading texts within the support setting to ensure that they are at an appropriate level for pupils. Similarly, the approach to hearing pupils read could be usefully altered to optimise the potential for pupil learning. This change should include the explicit discussion and teaching of new vocabulary and checking pupils' understanding of the text read. Provision should also be made for pupils to hear the teacher reading aloud and to have time to read silently in advance of their own oral reading.

*Published October 2012*

# **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, staff and Parents of Naul National School wish to thank the Inspectorate for the way in which the WSE was carried out. The school community welcome the recommendations as laid out by the inspector and thank him for recognising the good work that is carried out in Naul National School. The Board wishes to thank the inspector for the courteous and supportive way the inspection was carried out and the way in which the staff, pupils and parents cooperated with the school evaluation process.

### **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 Board of Management immediately drew up a new enrolment policy.

The Principal and the Board informed the parents on the elements of the RSE programme in a more transparent manner.

School Libraries are continuing to be developed.

Teachers have started to review curricular plans so that they are contextual to the needs of Naul National School.