

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Central Model Infants' School
Marlborough Street, Dublin 1.
Uimhir rolla: 01795A

Date of inspection: 21 November, 2011



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

The Central Model Infants' School is a co-educational national school catering for pupils from junior infants to first class. It shares a building in Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 with the neighbouring senior school. The school was established in 1859 and major refurbishment of the building was carried out in the early 1990s. Currently, there are 153 pupils on roll. Strategies to improve attendance are having a positive effect and attendance levels are improving. The school is included in Band 1 of the School Support Programme of Delivering Equality of Opportunity to Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. 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 organisation and operation of the school is overseen by a dedicated and effective board of management.
- The school is led by a dedicated and dynamic principal who has established excellent relationships with pupils, parents and teachers and who is committed to the educational success of every pupil.
- The management of pupils is excellent.
- The quality of whole-school planning and self-evaluation is good.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Mathematics is good.
- In English, structured programmes are used effectively to develop pupils' oral language, reading and writing skills.
- Teaching approaches used for pupils with special educational needs and EAL needs are of high quality.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- It is recommended that the practice of having school accounts audited or certified annually, which used take place in the past, be reinstated.
- It is recommended that the format of teachers' planning and the system for recording monthly progress be reviewed.

3. Quality of School Management

- The organisation and operation of the school is overseen by a dedicated and effective board of management. The board is properly constituted and all members undertake their duties conscientiously. Meetings are held regularly and detailed minutes are kept. A financial statement is presented at each meeting. It is recommended that the practice of having school accounts audited or certified annually, which used take place in the past, be reinstated. The board appropriately supports the formulation and ratification of school policies.
- The school is under the patronage of the Minister for Education and Skills. To respond to the needs of a changing, multi-cultural community which the school now serves, the

school recently undertook a review of its ethos. Parents, staff and members of the board engaged enthusiastically in a consultation process and their views are being communicated to the Minister.

- The school is led by a dedicated and dynamic principal who has established excellent relationships with pupils, parents and teachers. She is committed to the educational success of every pupil and is ably supported by the in-school management team. Post holders have been assigned appropriate leadership responsibilities in curriculum, pastoral and organisational areas.
- Parent-teacher meetings are held at least once each year and parents participate in a number of school-based initiatives, such as *Maths for Fun*, *Kidstalk* and *Be Active*. It is recommended that the school provides all parents with a written report on their children's progress each year and it is noted that plans to do this are already in place. Parents are very supportive of the school and questionnaire results indicate their satisfaction with the way the school is run.
- The management of pupils is excellent. There is a positive, supportive atmosphere in the school and all classroom interactions occur in a pleasant, affirming manner. During the evaluation, pupils were seen to be actively engaged in all the learning activities. Parents report that their children like coming to school and that they are doing well at school.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- A comprehensive three-year DEIS action plan has been compiled. The plan identifies targets and appropriate actions to improve literacy, numeracy, attendance and parental involvement. It is recommended that the targets for achievement in literacy be more specifically delineated.
- The quality of whole-school planning and self-evaluation is good. The school plan addresses all curriculum areas in addition to describing policy to guide the organisation and day-to-day running of the school. The plan was devised co-operatively by teachers, parents and the board of management.
- Teachers at each grade level prepare long-term plans co-operatively. Where these plans are set out in appropriate time-spans they are particularly effective. Short-term planning is also completed by teachers. To optimise the impact of planning on pupils' learning, it is recommended that clear learning objectives be set out in short-term plans together with a description of appropriate teaching and learning activities to achieve the objectives. It is recommended that the template for recording monthly progress be reviewed to provide a more succinct account of the work completed in each curriculum area. In addition to written planning, all teachers prepare a good range of resources to enhance lesson quality and scaffold pupils' learning.
- 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 caighdeán an teagaisc agus na foghlama sa Ghaeilge go maith. Cothaítear scileanna éisteachta agus labhartha na ndaltaí go héifeachtúil agus tá go leor rainn bheaga agus

amhráin foghlamtha acu. Déantar iarracht mhaith cur chuige cumarsáideach a úsáid i ngach rang agus cuirtear béim faoi leith ar thuiscint agus ar líofact daltaí a fhorbairt. Baintear leas tairbheach as cluichí teanga agus as gníomhaíochtaí taitneamhacha chun suim na ndaltaí a mhúscailt. Baintear úsáid chruthaitheach freisin as fearas oiriúnach agus an bord bán idirghníomhach chun míniú a léiriú agus chun foclóir daltaí a leathnú. Chun teagasc na Gaeilge a fhorbairt a thuilleadh fós, moltar go mbeadh na daltaí ag éisteacht le níos mó Gaeilge leanúnach sna ceachtanna agus go mbeadh béim faoi leith ar ionchur teanga nua i ngach ceacht.

- *The standard of teaching and learning in Irish is good. Pupils' listening and speaking skills are developed effectively and they have learned quite a few rhymes and songs. A good attempt is made to use a communicative approach in every class and particular emphasis is put on developing pupils' understanding and fluency. Effective use is made of language games and enjoyable activities to promote children's interest. Creative use is also made of suitable equipment and the interactive white board to illustrate meaning and to extend pupils' vocabulary. To further develop the teaching of Irish, it is recommended that children would hear more continuous Irish being spoken during lessons and that there is a specific emphasis on the input of new language in every lesson.*
- In English, structured programmes are used effectively to develop literacy levels. Appropriate, play-based activities are used, particularly at infant level, to foster pupils' language, cognitive and social development. Collaborative teaching is used very well and is particularly effective in facilitating the differentiation of learning activities to match pupils' ability levels. The intensive support which the school provides through well-planned, in-class interventions has a positive effect on pupils' engagement during lessons and on the quality of their learning outcomes. A successful feature of the programme is the participation of parents in activities such as *Kidstalk*, in which pupils and parents participate in a range of in-class activities based on selected texts. The *First Steps* programme is implemented in a consistent manner. Teachers monitor pupils' written work carefully and analyse their free writing in copybooks perceptively. It is recommended that, in line with the *Primary School Curriculum* and the *Teacher Guidelines*, the formal teaching of grammar be minimised. Alternatively, pupils' knowledge of the conventions of grammar should be developed in the context of their general language development.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Mathematics is good. The school's action plan appropriately targets the improvement of measurable achievement on standardised tests. Teachers provide a broad and balanced programme and there is a commendable emphasis on language development and hands-on activities during Mathematics lessons. The *Maths for Fun* programme fosters parental involvement and *Maths Recovery* is used effectively to target individual pupils requiring particular support.
- Drama is taught in a well-structured manner throughout the school. Careful planning ensures that lessons are integrated effectively with other curriculum areas. In particular, transitions between Drama lessons and English lessons are seamless and smooth. Drama corners in classrooms allow pupils to develop their confidence in role-play situations. Props, classroom space and drama games are used well to enable pupils to enter into role and to co-operate with others. Pupils engage enthusiastically in all the Drama lessons.
- In the four subjects evaluated, lessons were appropriately organised, well resourced and taught effectively. Pupils were seen to be actively involved and fully engaged in learning. Teachers monitored pupils' work carefully using a good range of formative and summative assessment mechanisms and they provided pupils with constructive feedback

on how to improve. Questionnaire responses from parents indicate that the great majority of them consider that teaching is good in the school and that their children are doing well.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- A range of formal and informal assessment instruments is used judiciously to identify at an early stage pupils with additional learning needs and to monitor their progress. A highly commendable set of interventions is employed to address pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy.
- Teaching approaches used for pupils with assessed educational needs and for those with English as an additional language (EAL) are of high quality. The co-ordinated nature of provision by mainstream and support teachers is highly commended. Very effective in-class interventions are complemented by programmes such as *Reading Recovery* and *Maths Recovery* to provide intensive support for individual pupils. Assessment data indicate that pupils are making good progress. Careful analysis of test results facilitates the tracking of individual pupils as they progress through the school.
- The success of home-school partnership is reflected in the willingness of parents to come into the school to participate in a broad range of programmes, including *Maths for Fun*, *Kidstalk*, *Be Active* and various art and craft activities. Resources, including high-quality teacher-made materials, are used very well to support parental involvement. Contact with parents is established prior to the enrolment of pupils and is maintained during their children's time in school. Courses for parents are organised in conjunction with outside agencies and are co-ordinated with those run in other local schools.

Published May 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 would like to acknowledge receipt of the Whole School Evaluation Report. Having discussed the report at the Board of Management Meeting we would like it noted that we found the report to be to our satisfaction.

On behalf of the school community we would like to take this opportunity to put on record that we found the WSE process to be a valuable part of our ongoing school evaluation.

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

We are happy to confirm that we have followed through on all recommendations.