

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

St. Andrew's National School
Lucan
Co. Dublin
Roll No. 12014D

Date of inspection: 04 March 2011



AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS

1. Introduction

St. Andrew's National School is a co-educational school catering for pupils from junior infants to sixth class. It operates under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin. The attendance of the 233 pupils enrolled is very good. A small number of pupils are absent for more than 20 days. The board of management was give the opportunity to respond to the findings and recommendations of the evaluation; a response was not received from the board.

2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

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

- The board, principal, staff and parents are praised for their commitment to the ongoing development of the school and for the welcoming and inclusive atmosphere.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- The pupils are very well behaved. They demonstrate positive attitudes towards each other and display a sense of pride in themselves, the school and their community.
- The school has an extensive range of resources which is used effectively to support teaching and learning.
- Provision for and use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is very good.
- The school is commended on making excellent provision for the delivery of all strands of the physical education curriculum.
- There are high quality displays of pupils' work in classrooms and around the school.

The following main recommendations are made:

- Assessment data should be analysed at whole-school level and used to inform differentiated learning activities for groups and individuals.
- Teachers should use diagnostic tools to inform specific learning targets for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL). The achievement of these targets should be regularly measured and reviewed.
- As curriculum policies are reviewed, specific guidance on methodologies and content for each class level should be included to facilitate continuity and progression throughout the school.

3. Quality of School Management

- The school has a competent and very supportive board of management. The board is involved in the development of all organisational policies. It keeps itself informed of the content of curriculum policies. All policies are signed and ratified by the board. The chairperson of the board takes a very active role in the life of the school. The board is

commended on the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the building notwithstanding the constraints regarding available space and facilities.

- The principal has a long association with the school. She is committed to the holistic development and pastoral care of pupils. She demonstrates a sound knowledge of the curriculum and promotes high standards of pupil behaviour and learning. All parents surveyed responded that the school is well run. She is ably assisted by a conscientious in-school management team with whom she meets on weekly basis. In addition to their curriculum roles the in-school management team carry out a significant number of organisational and administrative duties. It is recommended that a review of their responsibilities be undertaken to ensure an appropriate balance of administrative, pastoral and curricular duties in line with the school's identified priority needs.
- The school has a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. There are high quality displays of pupils' work in classrooms and around the school. The school has an extensive range of resources which is used effectively to support teaching and learning. Provision for and use of ICT is very good.
- The management of pupils is very good. Rules, routines and expectations are explained clearly and understood by all. The pupils are very well behaved. They demonstrate positive attitudes towards each other and display a sense of pride in themselves, the school and their community. All pupils participate in a broad range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- The quality of communication and relationships with the school community is very good. In the parent questionnaires almost all parents responded that the school is welcoming of them. The school has a very active parent/teacher association (PTA). The association meets regularly and makes a valuable contribution to school-life. It is involved in a range of fundraising and non-fundraising activities. A significant number of parents surveyed responded that they were not consulted on policies. It is recommended that parents be given a more active role in the development and review of pertinent school policies.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- A comprehensive whole-school plan has been collaboratively developed, including plans for all curriculum areas and a wide range of organisational policies. The organisational policies are specific to the school context and give very good guidance on the operation of the school. The quality of the curriculum policies varies. It is recommended that as the school engages in its ongoing review of curriculum policies specific guidance on methodologies and content for each class level should be included in each policy.
- The overall quality of teachers' individual planning is very good. All teachers prepare objectives-based plans. The school is at an early stage of engaging in school self-evaluation. Individual teachers reflect on their work and regularly review practice. The school should continue to develop its self-evaluation processes at whole-school level using a range of pertinent data including the results of standardised tests in literacy and numeracy and teacher-designed tasks and tests.
- School authorities provided evidence that, in compliance with Primary Circular 0061/2006, the board of management has formally adopted the Department's *Child Protection Guidelines for Primary Schools*. Evidence was provided to show that these child protection procedures have been brought to the attention of management, school staff and parents; that a copy of the procedures has been provided to all staff (including all new staff); and that management has ensured that all staff are familiar with the

procedures to be followed. A designated liaison person (DLP) and a deputy DLP have been appointed in line with the requirements of the guidelines.

5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

- Tá caighdeán an-mhaith ann i múineadh agus i bhfoghlaim na Gaeilge. Baintear úsáid éifeachtach as straitéisí mar obair bheirte, cluichí agus drámaíocht chun scileanna éisteachta agus labhartha na ndaltaí a chothú. Tá stór maith d'amhráin, rannta agus dánta ar eolas ag na daltaí i ngach rang. Léiríonn an chuid is mó de na daltaí caighdeán an-mhaith sa Ghaeilge labhartha. Pléann siad raon leathan de thopaicí bunaithe ar na téamaí ón gcuraclam go héasca. Léann formhór na ndaltaí sna meán agus sna hardranganna go hábailta agus go cruinn. Tá scríbhneoireacht na ndaltaí ar chaighdeán ard. Scríobhann siad aistí suimúla i nGaeilge agus cumann siad a leabhairín féin.

Teaching and learning in Irish is of a very good standard. Effective use is made of strategies such as pair work, games and drama to cultivate the pupils' listening and speaking skills. Pupils in every class know a good range of songs, rhymes and poems. Most pupils demonstrate very good levels of spoken Irish and can discuss a wide range of topics based on the themes of the curriculum with ease. Most of the pupils in the middle and senior classes read ably and with accuracy. The standard of pupils' writing in Irish is high. Pupils write interesting essays in Irish and produce their own booklets.

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in English is very good with some commendable practice observed. Very good provision is made for the development of oral language skills and the pupils engage articulately and confidently in class discussions. Poetry is well taught and the pupils in all classes can recite a range of poems and are afforded opportunities to write their own poetry. Explicit teaching of reading skills is a feature of lessons across the school. Most pupils in senior classes demonstrate high levels of fluency and comprehension in reading. Effective use is made of class novels to foster and cultivate responses to literature. Most pupils produce writing of high quality in a wide variety of genres. In some classes excellent provision is made for all stages of the writing process. The presentation of pupils' written work is excellent.
- Teaching and learning in Mathematics are good. The teachers present clear and well-structured lessons. All teachers make provision for mental maths activities. To build on this good practice all teachers should ensure that pupils are equipped with a range of strategies for mental arithmetic and problem-solving. Provision for differentiation is primarily facilitated through in-class support. This model should be further developed to incorporate explicit planning for differentiated learning outcomes particularly in the strands of number, measures and data.
- The school makes commendable provision for the delivery of all curriculum strands within the constraints of the facilities for physical education. To enhance the provision of the gymnastics strand the school employs an external tutor. A coach provides coaching in Gaelic games on a voluntary basis. All teachers present stimulating and well-organised lessons that make excellent provision for the explicit teaching and application of skills. The children engage very well in lessons and co-operate effectively with one another. The assistance of parents in facilitating after-school activities in sport is acknowledged.

5. Quality of Support for Pupils

- A comprehensive policy for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is in place. Provision is made for different approaches including in-class support, withdrawal in groups and individuals. SEN environments are attractive, well resourced and aesthetically

pleasing. All support teachers prepare individual education plans (IEPs) based on pupils' strengths and identified areas of need. Overall, the targets contained in these are general in nature. It is recommended that teachers employ a variety of diagnostic tools to inform specific learning targets. The achievement of these targets should be regularly measured and reviewed. Greater consultation with parents and class teachers in the formation of IEPs is needed.

- A small number of EAL pupils are enrolled at the school. In devising the programmes of work for these pupils, a thematic approach has been adopted. A useful bank of resources has been developed to support the delivery of the thematic approach. The *Primary School Assessment Kit (PSAK)* is used to assess the language proficiency of these pupils. It is recommended that the resulting assessment data, in conjunction with the *Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT)* programme, be used to inform planning.

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