

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

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

**St Enda's Primary School**  
**Whitefriar Street**  
**Dublin 8**  
**Uimhir rolla: 14556D**

**Date of inspection: 7 March 2013**



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

## 1. Introduction

St Enda's Primary School, founded in 1894, is a co-educational, vertical primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and the trusteeship of the Order of Carmelites. The school participates in the Department's *Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools* (DEIS) urban programme and also receives support through the *School Completion Programme* (SCP). There are 132 pupils enrolled and the attendance of most pupils is good. The school is commended for improvements in attendance levels in response to the strategies introduced. 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 pupils of St Enda's Primary School experience a caring, supportive and inclusive learning environment.
- The board of management functions effectively and is strongly committed to ensuring the ongoing development of the school.
- The pupils are friendly and well-mannered. They display good levels of interest in their learning and an ability to work cooperatively with their classmates.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good and high quality assessment approaches, in particular for literacy and numeracy, are used effectively to inform planning and teaching.
- The significant increase in overall literacy standards and in individual pupil achievement following the implementation of effective literacy interventions is praised highly.
- Provision for pupils with additional learning needs, including pupils for whom English is an additional language, is of a high quality.
- The school building and grounds are well maintained and the pupils' work contributes very significantly to the attractiveness of the school environment.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- A reconfiguration of in-school management duties is recommended to utilise fully the potential of the team and to reflect the curriculum leadership requirements of the school.
- Greater opportunities should be provided for parents to become actively involved in the life and work of the school.
- Individual curriculum plans should adequately reflect the school context and provide sufficient guidance for teachers to ensure continuity and progression in learning.
- The pupils' oral language needs in English should be addressed through sustained attention to discrete listening/speaking skills.
- The school should investigate the range of numeracy-specific initiatives being

implemented in DEIS schools nationally and extend the range of teaching interventions currently in use.

### 3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management functions effectively and is strongly committed to ensuring the ongoing development of the school. It plays an important role in the formulation and review of school policy and in ensuring that the requirements of pertinent legislation and national guidelines are being implemented appropriately. Pupil achievement matters, particularly in literacy and numeracy, are considered regularly. The school's financial accounts are certified externally on an annual basis.
- The principal has served in Whitefriar Street for many years and over that time has established valuable relationships with families and members of the wider school community. She successfully encourages good pupil attendance, behaviour and participation in learning. In the main, official school records regarding pupil attendance are maintained correctly. The principal should ensure that all required data is completed fully in all records. The principal devolves considerable responsibility to the members of the in-school management (ISM) team who fulfil their assigned duties diligently. The work of the ISM team contributes substantially to the effective running of the school and to aspects of teaching, learning and pupil achievement. Nonetheless, a reconfiguration of duties is recommended to utilise fully the potential of the ISM team and to reflect the curriculum leadership requirements of the school.
- The school building and grounds are well maintained and the pupils' work contributes very significantly to the attractiveness of the school environment. Available resources are used skilfully to aid teaching and learning. The school's substantial investment in literacy materials is employed particularly effectively. As financial resources permit, it would be beneficial to increase the range of mathematics and geography resources available.
- Parents are kept well informed regarding their children's progress through formal and informal parent/teacher meetings and end-of-year reports. In the questionnaires, almost all parents reported that the school is welcoming of parents. A range of initiatives is implemented through the school's home/school/community liaison (HSCL) service, including home visitation, opportunities for parents to participate in relevant courses and activities, and support for pupils' transition to second level. In line with the school's stated HSCL policy, it is recommended that formal consideration be given to increasing parental involvement in curriculum activities and in policy-making decisions. The provision of a parents' room, the publication of a regular newsletter to parents and ultimately the establishment of a parents' association are suggested as means of progressing this recommendation. The proposed establishment of a school website is welcomed. Through links fostered with a range of external organisations, the school works successfully to address the pupils' learning and care needs, including tuition in instrumental music and the operation of a homework club.
- The pupils are friendly and well-mannered and their behaviour and participation in learning is managed very well. Overall, they display good levels of interest in their work and an ability to work cooperatively with their classmates. In the questionnaires, almost all parents confirmed that discipline is good in the school and that the school helps their child's social and personal development. Similarly in the pupil questionnaires, almost all pupils stated that they feel safe in the class and playground, with most confirming that they get on well with the other children at school.

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

- Whole-school organisational planning is of a good quality. A range of administrative policies has been devised collaboratively and their implementation assists the efficient operation of the school. The quality of whole-school curriculum planning is variable. The school's plan for English is of a very high standard and is impacting positively on classroom practice and learning outcomes for pupils. The approach adopted in English, which reflects the school context and provides clear direction for teachers, should be used when reviewing other curriculum plans.
- A detailed DEIS plan has been devised and is positively influencing the school's provision for literacy and numeracy in particular. Creditable progress is being made in the use of school self-evaluation and this work is linked successfully to the DEIS plan.
- A praiseworthy standard of classroom planning is in evidence overall. While a whole-school approach to monthly progress reports is in place, the quality of such reports varies. Where effective practice was in evidence, the learning outcomes achieved by pupils were reported on clearly at the end of each month. This approach should be implemented consistently and such records should in turn be reviewed formally to assess the extent to which continuity and progression in learning is being achieved.
- Confirmation was provided that the board of management has formally adopted the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* without modification. The school is compliant with almost all requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*. It is recommended that the school's child protection policy is brought to the attention of parents without delay.

#### 5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

- The overall quality of teaching is very good. Lessons are well structured and the teachers draw on a wide range of teaching approaches. Clear explanations of new content are given and teachers' questioning is skilful. In the parent questionnaires, almost all parents agreed that teaching is good in the school with all parents confirming that their child is doing well. In the pupil questionnaires, most pupils reported that they enjoy their lessons and learning. Pupil learning and achievement is of a good standard overall and reflects the wide range of pupil abilities in evidence. High quality individualised assessment approaches are in evidence, in particular for literacy and numeracy, with outcomes being used effectively to inform planning and teaching.
- Sa Ghaeilge, cé go bhfuil cáilíocht na múinteoireachta go maith, tá scóip chun caighdeán na foghlama agus gnóthachtáil na ndaltaí a fhorbairt. Baineann na hoidí úsáid chruthaitheach as raon straitéisí oiriúnacha chun suim na ndaltaí a mhúscailt. Moltar anois, béim níos láidre a leagadh ar fhorbairt scileanna cumarsáide agus plean córasach don Ghaeilge labhartha a chur i bhfeidhm chun a chinntiú go bhfuil leanúnachas agus dul chun cinn ó rang go rang. Cleachtar an léitheoireacht agus an scríbhneoireacht fheidhmiúil go rialta.

*In Irish, while the quality of teaching is good, there is scope to develop the standard of learning and pupil achievement. The teachers creatively use a range of suitable strategies to generate pupil interest. It is now advised that a greater emphasis be placed on developing communicative skills and that a systematic plan for oral Irish is put in place to ensure continuity and development from class to class. Reading and functional writing are practised regularly.*

- The overall quality of teaching in English is very good. The significant improvements in individual pupil achievement and the schoolwide increase in literacy standards are praised highly. While most pupils speak with suitable confidence, a significant range of oral language needs is in evidence. The school has identified oral language development as a priority area through its ongoing self-evaluation activity. The proposed introduction of individualised assessment of oral competence is welcomed and identified needs should be addressed through sustained attention to discrete listening/speaking skills. A wide variety of interventions to cultivate a love of reading and to improve reading abilities are being implemented successfully. In the questionnaires, most pupils report that they think they are doing well at reading. Substantial progress has also been made in improving the pupils' capacity to write for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Teaching in Mathematics is of a high quality and considerable improvements in pupil achievement are in evidence. Praiseworthy features of current practice include the emphasis on oral/mental maths and maths language. New concepts are introduced skilfully through well-designed talk and discussion. During the course of the evaluation, effective opportunities for collaborative working were created and available resources were employed well. The consistent use of a hands-on, real-life and problem-solving approach is advised. In the main, the pupils display competent understanding of concepts previously addressed. In order to build their mathematical confidence further and ensure ongoing improvements in achievement, the school is advised to investigate the range of numeracy-specific initiatives being implemented in DEIS schools nationally with a view to extending the range of teaching interventions currently in use.
- During the evaluation, the quality of lessons observed in Geography was praiseworthy. Pupil interest was generated successfully through the use of active-learning approaches, including investigation of outdoor environments, the use of maps and photographic images, and the development of research skills. In a number of classes however, the pupils demonstrated variable understanding of topics previously addressed. A review of monthly progress records also pointed to the potential to improve continuity and progression in learning. It is therefore recommended that the school review its approach to Geography to ensure greater breadth and balance in programme implementation. In so doing, greater attention to the local area and a more overt emphasis on skills development and working as a geographer would be beneficial.

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

- Provision for pupils with additional learning needs, including pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), is of a high quality. Programmes of learning are devised collaboratively and implemented skilfully. Opportunities for regular consultation with parents are provided, including guidance to assist parents to support their child's learning. The pupils experience effective teaching in supportive in-class and withdrawal settings. They are progressing well in relation to their individualised learning targets and their confidence in their ability to achieve is built successfully. In reviewing the school's policy for pupils with special educational needs, it is advised that a greater focus is placed on the continuum of support and that formal classroom support plans be implemented at mainstream class level.
- The pupils of St Enda's Primary School experience a caring, supportive and inclusive learning environment.

# 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 welcomes the report of the Inspectorate and wishes to thank them for the supportive and professional manner in which they carried out the Whole School Evaluation. We are especially delighted with the very high praise of our teaching staff and principal. Their continuing diligence and commitment is seen by the Board to be one of the school's greatest strengths and it is gratifying to see this reflected in the report. The Board also appreciates the affirmation received in the report with regard to:

1. The affability, politeness and enthusiasm of our pupils.
2. The range of measures put in place to address literacy and the subsequent, significant increase in overall literacy standards.
3. The strong level of commitment evident in management.
4. The well maintained and attractive school environment.

#### **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 welcomes and concurs with the recommendations made in the report. Work has now commenced on beginning to implement them.

1. Oral language testing and the formulation of an intervention plan are now underway.
2. The Principal and EAL Teacher will endeavour to foster enhanced links with new parents in the coming year.
3. Our school English plan will be used as a model for developing individual curriculum plans.
4. The configuration of in-school management duties as suggested is being addressed.

We remain committed to ensuring our school is a happy, safe and caring place for our pupils, their families, our staff and the wider community.