

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

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

**REPORT**

**Ardee Monastery National School,  
Ardee, Co. Louth  
Uimhir rolla: 17124M**

**Date of inspection: 29 January 2014**



## Introduction

Ardee Monastery National School, Ardee, County Louth, is a vertical boys' school which is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Armagh. The school has experienced increased enrolment in recent years and currently caters for 244 pupils. Overall pupil attendance is very good and is carefully monitored. 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.

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

- The quality of support for pupils' well-being and holistic development is very good.
- The work ethic, collaborative spirit and teaching skills of the staff underpin the high quality of provision in this school.
- Very effective leadership and collaborative teamwork is evident in the school community.
- Good engagement with school self-evaluation processes is contributing to school improvement in literacy and numeracy.
- A strong emphasis is placed on nurturing a well-ordered learning environment and pupils demonstrate commendable behaviour.
- Pupils engage positively in their learning activities and demonstrate good learning attainments overall.
- Spacious and attractive school facilities provide a vibrant learning environment.

The following **recommendations** are made:

- Differentiated provision to address the varying levels of pupils' abilities should be further developed and underpinned by a deeper analysis of a wider range of assessment data.
- More extensive use of focused in-class support models which are closely aligned to specific pupils' prioritised needs together with the development of team-teaching which targets key literacy and numeracy skills would further enhance the quality of provision.
- Further development of pupils' problem solving and reasoning skills in mathematics would enhance learning experiences and attainments in this area.
- Ní mór plan céimnithe Gaeilge a chur i bhfeidhm ar bhonn uile-scoile, chun scileanna labhartha, léitheoireachta agus scríbhneoireachta na ndaltaí a fheabhsú a thuilleadh. *An incremental Irish plan should be implemented at whole-school level, to further improve pupils' oral, reading and writing skills.*

## Findings

### 1. The learning achievements of pupils

- Pupils demonstrate high levels of engagement in learning activities and positive learning outcomes across a range of curricular areas.

- Overall learning achievements of the pupils are good. They demonstrate positive dispositions towards Mathematics and good understanding of key mathematical concepts and procedures. However, there remains scope to enhance their reasoning and problem solving skills.
- A strong whole-school emphasis on the development of pupils' listening and speaking skills is impacting positively on pupils' oral language skill development. They demonstrate very good word attack skills and mastery of sight vocabulary in their approaches to reading. Overall literacy attainments are good with incremental progress in evidence for the majority of pupils. It is recommended that pupils' instructional reading material be more closely aligned to their varying abilities. Further development of team-teaching approaches should ensure more comprehensive, strategic provision for the range in pupils' abilities. Pupils engage regularly in process writing and they demonstrate awareness of the key characteristics of a suitable range of writing genre. Greater promotion of pupil self-assessment and editing skills would enhance the quality of their independent written work and penmanship.
- Tá sé ar chumas roinnt daltaí abairtí simplí a chumadh go hábailta agus a úsáid i nGaeilge. Ar an iomlán tá caighdeán labhartha na ndaltaí go maith. Léann na daltaí le líofacht agus le tuiscint áirithe agus tá forbairt á déanamh ar a bhfeasacht fóineolaíochta. Is scríbhneoireacht fheidhmiúil struchtúrtha a chleachtann siad den chuid is mó. *(Some pupils can structure sentences capably and use them in Irish. Overall, pupils' oral skills are of a good standard. Pupils read with a certain accuracy and understanding and their phonological awareness is being developed. They practise structured functional writing for the most part.*
- Pupils' active engagement in science experiments and their understanding and knowledge of historical events is commendable. They demonstrate very good mastery of skills from the arts curriculum. High levels of motivation and achievement characterise pupils' learning experiences and outcomes in physical education.
- Pupils with special educational needs are making very good progress commensurate with their ability.

## 2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is high. Teachers effectively deploy a wide range of teaching methodologies in an industrious and dedicated manner to ensure the implementation of a broad and balanced curriculum. Teaching is characterised by clear explanation, effective questioning and regular consolidation of key concepts and lesson content. The facilitation of play-based learning and the provision of a cohesive integrated learning experience for infant pupils is of a particularly high standard. Greater use of assessment data to underpin and extend differentiation strategies is recommended. Attractive, vibrant well-resourced learning environments are used purposefully to support teaching and learning.
- B'fhiú an dea-chleachtas atá sa scoil maidir le teagasc na Gaeilge a leathnú agus plean céimnithe Gaeilge a chur i bhfeidhm ar bhonn uile-scoile, chun scileanna labhartha, léitheoireachta agus scríbhneoireachta na ndaltaí a fheabhsú. *The good practice with regard to the teaching of Irish should be extended and an incremental Irish plan should be implemented at whole-school level, to improve pupils' oral, reading and writing skills.*
- The quality of teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs is high. Regular collaboration with all stakeholders ensures early identification of special needs and effective monitoring of pupils' progress. The provision of pupil profiles would augment good record keeping practices in this area. More frequent use of focused in-class support models should be considered as a means of enhancing the development of social and cognitive skills for some pupils.

### **3. Support for pupils' wellbeing**

- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing and holistic development is very good. A strong emphasis has been placed on the nurturing of a well-ordered, affirming learning environment. Pupils interact positively with each other and with staff and demonstrate positive engagement in their learning activities. Pupil responses to questionnaires indicate that they feel safe and positively disposed towards school. Suitable co-curricular activities are organised within the school community which enrich pupils' educational experiences and foster their positive self-esteem. Comprehensive school reports are issued annually and parental responses to questionnaires administered during the evaluation indicate very high levels of satisfaction with the school.
- 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 for the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

### **4. Leadership and Management**

- The board of management supports the organisation and development of the school in a competent manner. Present and previous boards have developed school infrastructure and resources to a very high standard.
- The principal demonstrates very effective leadership and management skills. He has successfully established a significant number of organisational systems which ensure a well-ordered, holistic learning environment for pupils. Together with the dedicated deputy principal and in-school management team he has nurtured a culture of collaboration within this school community.

### **5. School Self-evaluation**

- Creditable progress has been made by the school in using collaborative, evidence-based school self-evaluation processes to promote improvement in teaching and learning. Clearly defined learning targets have been identified to monitor the effectiveness of the whole-school initiative to develop pupils' oral language skills. To augment good practices it is recommended that greater use be made of teachers' monthly progress reports to monitor improvement initiatives.

### **Conclusion**

The school community has demonstrated commendable capacity to engage in purposeful school improvement initiatives and is committed to sustaining and developing high standards in teaching and learning.

## **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 very positive Whole School Evaluation, Management Leadership, and Learning report January 2014. This report affirms the work ethic, collaborative spirit and quality of teaching that underpin the high quality of provision in our school. The Board also acknowledges the very high levels of satisfaction indicated by parents and by pupils in their questionnaire responses.

The Board wishes to thank the whole school community who contributed to the 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 and staff acknowledge the recommendations made in the report and plan to review our three year strategic school plan accordingly. The recommendations will also form a key part of our on-going school self-evaluation process and will also inform our school improvement plans.