

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Whole School Evaluation
REPORT**

**Loreto Junior National School
Crumlin Road
Crumlin,
Dublin 12
Uimhir rolla: 17683C**

Date of inspection: 17 September 2012



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

1. Introduction

Loreto Junior National School operating under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin caters for boys and girls from junior infants to first class and girls only in second class. The school participates in Band 1 of DEIS, shares the services of a Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) coordinator and participates in the *School Completion Programme* (SCP). At the time of the evaluation there were 203 pupils on rolls. Attendance in the school is generally good although a significant number of pupils are absent for more than 20 days. Strategies are in place to promote regular school attendance. In the context of the forthcoming review of the school's DEIS plan, it is timely for the school to review these strategies. 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:

- Loreto Junior National School is an inclusive school that welcomes all pupils. Staff display high levels of caring and respect for individual children.
- The school is managed very effectively by the board, principal and the in-school management team.
- The co-operative and proactive spirit among the staff members reflects the effective team dynamic and collaborative approach that operates in the school.
- The quality of the teaching is very good. Teachers use a range of teaching methodologies effectively and present lively engaging and well-structured lessons.
- The management of pupils is excellent. Pupils demonstrate very good levels of engagement and present as happy, enthusiastic and well-motivated learners.
- A very good range of resources for teaching and learning is provided and purposefully used by teachers.
- The school's collaborative and consistent approach to planning is commended.
- The school engages very well in school self-evaluation.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Pupils' learning should be further enhanced through the analysis and use of assessment data to establish targeted programmes of learning for pupils and through an increased focus by teachers on the development of pupils' independent learning skills.
- As the school reviews its DEIS plan, an action-planning approach is advised, which should include a focussed and strategic plan for improved attendance and increased parental involvement in the school.

3. Quality of School Management

- Commendable support is given to the school by the board. It carries out its duties enthusiastically, efficiently and competently. The board is actively involved in policy development. The board should explore ways in which the welcoming atmosphere inside the school building can be reflected in the immediate environs of the school.
- The quality of the school leadership is praised. The principal approaches her work in a highly professional manner. She demonstrates effective organisational, administrative and curriculum leadership skills. She successfully promotes a culture of collaboration and the co-operative and proactive spirit among the staff members reflects the effective team dynamic that operates in the school. She is ably-assisted by a hardworking and enthusiastic in-school management team.
- A very good range of resources for teaching and learning is provided and purposefully used by teachers. The support provided by the caretaker and the secretary makes a significant contribution to the day-to-day running of the school.
- The school endeavours to involve parents in school-life. The home school community liaison (HSCL) co-ordinator communicates effectively with local agencies and has successfully organised a range of courses for parents. The school hosts meetings for parents on a class by class basis at the beginning of the school year. Formal parent/teacher meetings are held annually, reports are sent home to parents at year-end and a homework sheet is given weekly. Parents are involved in the *Creativity in the Classroom* initiative. There is no formal parents' association in the school though many efforts have been made to establish one. Consideration should be given to exploring ways in which parents can become more involved in school activities.
- The management of pupils is excellent. A positive code of behaviour is in place which is clearly reflected in the management of the pupils in the classrooms. Pupils present as happy, enthusiastic and motivated learners

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The quality of planning in the school is very good. A cohesive whole-school plan which incorporates relevant curriculum, administrative and organisational policies has been developed. A DEIS plan is in place but is due for review in late 2012. As the school reviews its DEIS plan, an action-planning approach is advised.
- The consistency of approach adopted to classroom planning is commended. Classroom planning reflects the initiatives of the DEIS plan and directly informs teaching. In planning teachers should continue to identify the different activities for the varying ability levels of the pupils. The school engages very well in school self-evaluation. A significant amount of assessment data has been gathered, and teachers reflect on their work, share ideas and recognise the importance of ongoing professional development.
- 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

- The overall quality of teaching is very good. Lessons are well planned, structured and implemented effectively. The range of methodologies in use includes talk and discussion, effective questioning and some opportunities for collaborative group work. Classrooms are stimulating and pleasant. Children are motivated and engage well in lessons and overall they are achieving good learning outcomes. To enhance the pupils' learning further, there is need to develop the range of methodologies to include more opportunities for independent learning. Teachers employ a good range of assessment modes to assess pupil progress. To build on this very good practice, further consideration should be given to the use of this data to inform differentiation at individual class levels.
- Ar an iomlán tá caighdeán maith ann i leith foghlaim agus múineadh na Gaeilge. Tá raon maith d'achmhainní ann le haghaidh múineadh na Gaeilge. Baintear úsáid éifeachtach as cluichí, drámaí agus postaeir chun na daltaí a mhealladh chun cainte. Múintear an foclóir nua agus na frásaí go coinsiasach. B'fhiú áfach deiseanna níos mó a thabhairt dona daltaí an foclóir a chleachtadh, dul siar go rialta agus fíor chumarsáid a dhéanamh. Chun dul chun cinn agus leanúnachas a fhorbairt ó rang go rang, ta gá ann critéir mheastóireachta a chumadh don Ghaeilge. B'fhiú na critéir seo a úsáid go córasach tríd an scoil chun forbairt agus measúnú céimniúil a dhéanamh ar scileanna na ndaltaí. Baineann na daltaí taitneamh as na ceachtanna agus léirítear dearcadh dearfach I Leith na Gaeilge. Tá raon maith de rannata agus amhráin ar eolas acu.
- *Overall the standard of teaching and learning in Irish is good. There is a good range of resources in place for the teaching of Irish. Games, drama and posters are used effectively to encourage the pupils to speak Irish. The new vocabulary and phrases are taught conscientiously. However there is need for pupils to be afforded more opportunities to practise vocabulary, revise regularly and to engage in real communication. To ensure continuity and progression from class to class, it would be worthwhile to devise evaluation criteria for Irish. These criteria could be employed systematically throughout the school to incrementally develop and assess the pupils' skills. The pupils enjoy their lessons and display positive attitudes towards Irish. The pupils know a good range of rhymes and songs.*
- Commendable efforts have been made to raise literacy standards and overall the quality of teaching and learning in English is very good. There is effective teaching of oral language across the curriculum. Reading is taught in a planned and systematic way. There is an agreed approach to phonics consistently implemented. A graded reading scheme is in place and books are sent home for pupils to engage in shared reading with parents. To build on the very good work already undertaken in literacy the development of a broader range of teaching approaches to include more opportunities for pupils to engage in guided, shared and independent reading and the development of other word attack strategies is recommended. The involvement of parents in school-based literacy activities is advised. The school has adopted the *First Steps* approach to writing. The quality of the pupils' penmanship is high.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning in Mathematics is very good. Features of effective practice include; very good use of manipulatives, clear explanations and maths games. Mental Mathematics activities are included in all lessons. The lack of dependence on workbooks is praised and opportunities for incidental learning are exploited very well by teachers. Pupils display positive attitudes to Mathematics and engage very well in lessons. To build on this very good practice, there is need now to differentiate more for the various ability levels. Discrete assessment of concepts as they are taught and the analysis of such assessment will help inform mathematics groupings and mathematics

activities. In the context of the school's self-evaluation process, it would be useful for the school to analyse the SIGMA T results across the strands to identify areas of strength and weakness. Consideration should be given to the involvement of parents in mathematics activities

- The quality of teaching and learning in the Visual Arts is high. A broad and balanced programme is effectively delivered. There are very good links with other curriculum areas. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on Art as a process and the development of pupils' skills. In order to ensure continuity and progression from class to class consideration should be given to the development of pupil portfolios. Pupils enjoy their art lessons and the quality of their art work is high.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- A new special educational needs (SEN) team has recently been formed. The SEN policy has been reviewed. It provides clear guidance on the specific roles of all staff members and incorporates the staged approach. The school is praised for the introduction of a range of initiatives including *Reading Recovery*, *Maths Recovery*, *Ready Set Go Maths* and in-class supports for literacy and numeracy. Lessons are carefully structured and effective teaching strategies are used in all settings. Teachers for SEN prepare carefully to meet the needs of their pupils. It is important to ensure that in all instances the targets contained in the individual plans are directly related to the learning needs of the children and are reviewed regularly. One special needs assistant and two classroom assistants work very well in collaboration with class and support teachers to meet the care and other needs of SEN pupils.
- This is an inclusive school and the general pastoral care of pupils is commendable. Staff display high levels of caring and respect for individual children.

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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 would like to thank the Inspectors for their professionalism, courtesy and support during the Whole School Evaluation process.

The report captures and encapsulates the characteristic spirit and ethos of our school. It is a welcome affirmation of the dedication and commitment of the staff to the welfare of the children in our care. It reflects the high standard of teaching and learning throughout the school.

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 has begun to review the patterns and reasons for the non attendance of pupils who have been absent for more than 20 days. A significant number of these pupils travel to the home countries of their parents for lengthy visits.

The school's attendance policies and strategies will be reviewed to promote the regular school attendance of all pupils.

Some work has already been completed on enhancing the external environment of the school. However, the Board wishes to highlight that the cessation of the Minor Works Grant and the recent cuts in the Capitation Grants have made it impossible to finance any significant changes.