

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Scoil Aindréis Naofa
Curraha, Co. Meath
Uimhir rolla: 17857J

Date of inspection: 19 October 2011



1. Introduction

Scoil Aindréis Naofa is a co-educational school which operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Meath. It is located in Curraha, near Ashbourne. At the time of the evaluation there were 103 pupils enrolled in the school.

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 board of management oversees the work of the school in a cohesive, committed and effective manner.
- School planning processes are very well developed and ensure that all policies are relevant to the needs of the school.
- The school has developed strong and beneficial links with parents and with the wider community.
- The leadership provided by the principal and deputy principal is highly commendable.
- The quality of teaching, particularly in English and Visual Arts, is very high.
- Pupils' engagement levels during lessons and their learning outcomes are very good.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Moltar go gcuirfí raon níos leithne de shaothar na ndaltaí i nGaeilge ar taispeáint tríd an scoil. *It is recommended that a wider range of pupils' work in Irish be displayed throughout the school.*
- To complement the school's detailed analysis of pupils' progress in standardised tests, it is recommended that a more concise format be developed to track individual pupils' progress.
- It is recommended that board of management accounts are audited or certified annually, in accordance with section 18.1 of the Education Act 1998.

3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management is properly constituted. The board guides the work of the school very effectively. It meets regularly and oversees the development of school policy in a focused manner. A five-year planning cycle ensures that each curriculum and organisational policy is reviewed by the board on a regular basis. Detailed minutes of board meetings are kept. The board's finances are managed prudently and detailed

accounts are presented at each meeting. It is recommended that these accounts are audited or certified annually, in accordance with section 18.1 of the Education Act 1998.

- The in-school management team consists of the principal and deputy principal. They provide very effective curriculum and organisational leadership to the school.
- Resources are managed in a prudent manner. The board of management has devised a plan for the upkeep and development of the school environment. This plan is implemented very effectively. Notable improvements to the school building and grounds have been made in recent years.
- The quality of communication with the school community is very high. A range of mechanisms is used to keep parents and the wider community abreast of current events in the school. The parents' association is fully involved in the life of the school. Parents' responses on questionnaires indicate very high satisfaction levels with teaching and learning in the school.
- The management of pupils is highly commendable. All staff are seen to interact with pupils in a caring and professional way. Pupils' behaviour is very good throughout the school. Their questionnaire responses show that they feel safe in school, that they get on well with other pupils, that they enjoy their lessons and that they feel that they are making good progress in school.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The school planning and school self-evaluation process is very well developed. Policies are formulated collaboratively by the board of management, parents and teachers. Highly commendable work has been done in recent years to develop a school plan which includes a full range of curriculum and organisational policies.
- The board of management and teachers review policy regularly. Commendable use is made of the Department's publication *Looking at our School* to guide school self-evaluation under the headings of school planning, curriculum provision, learning and teaching in curriculum areas, and support for pupils.
- The quality of classroom planning is excellent. Teachers prepare appropriate long-term and short-term plans for each curriculum area. They prepare a wide range of stimulating resources to support teaching and learning and to facilitate pupils' active participation in purposeful learning activities.
- 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 inmholta le sonrú i múineadh na Gaeilge tríd an scoil. Déanann na hoidí ullmhúchán cuí do mhúineadh na teanga. Leagtar amach clár atá fairsing agus oiriúnach.

Déantar soláthar éifeachtach do gach snáth curaclaim. Cuirtear béim inmholta ar an gcur chuige cumarsáideach le linn ceachtanna. Eagraíonn an fhoireann áiseanna tarraingteacha a spreagann na daltaí chun foghlama. Forbraítear scileanna éisteachta, labhartha, léitheoireachta agus scríbhneoireachta na ndaltaí go córasach. Múintear raon leathan de rainn agus d'amhráin agus cabhraíonn an cleachtas seo leis an bhfoghlaim a dhaingniú. Déantar monatóireacht chúramach ar rannpháirtíocht na ndaltaí i ngníomhaíochtaí foghlama agus ceartaíonn na hoidí saothar na ndaltaí go rialta. Chun tógáil ar an dea-obair a sonraíodh, moltar go gcuirfí raon níos leithne de shaothar na ndaltaí i nGaeilge ar taispeáint tríd an scoil.

- *A commendable standard is evident in the teaching of Irish throughout the school. Teachers prepare suitably for the teaching of the language. An extensive and appropriate programme is set out. Effective provision is made for each curriculum strand. Commendable emphasis is placed on the communicative approach during lessons. The staff prepares attractive resources which inspire the pupils to learn. Pupils' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are developed systematically. A broad range of poetry and songs is taught and this practice helps to consolidate learning. Pupils' participation in learning activities is monitored carefully and teachers correct their work regularly. To build on the good work that was observed, it is recommended that a broader range of pupils' work in Irish be displayed throughout the school.*
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is very high. Lessons are presented in a well-structured and focused manner. Learning activities are differentiated appropriately to cater for varying ability levels within classrooms. Collaborative learning activities are used in a very effective manner to facilitate high levels of active participation by pupils. Pupils learn and compose poetry and they read a rich variety of texts. They write in a range of genres and the quality of their written work is very good. The writing process is given appropriate attention and pupils are taught to edit and re-draft with a view to improving their work. Teachers monitor pupils' work regularly and provide them with constructive feedback on their efforts.
- Commendable emphasis is placed on the use of active learning methods in the teaching of Mathematics. Lessons are well organised and very effective use is made of resources. The quality of teacher-designed resources is very high. These resources are used purposefully to facilitate pupils' exploration of mathematics concepts. All classrooms are mathematics-rich environments. Mathematics displays throughout the school encourage pupils to explore mathematics in the immediate school environment. Pupils are taught effective strategies to solve problems.
- The Visual Arts programme in the school features appropriate provision for looking and responding to art and for making art. With regard to looking and responding, teachers use a commendable variety of examples of the work of artists to elicit pupils' emotional and imaginative response. Pupils use a range of two and three-dimensional media to produce attractive artwork. Pupils' work is displayed to very good effect throughout the school. Very good use is made of information and communications technology (ICT) to source and display artwork. The use of a scanner or camera to create digital copies of pupils' individual and collaborative artwork should be considered as an aid to the recording and reporting on pupils' progress in art.
- In each classroom very good use is made of ICT to present lessons in a stimulating fashion. Teachers source and prepare a wide range of resources to support teaching and learning. Pupil achievement levels are very good. Very effective mechanisms have been developed to assess pupils' progress across the range of the curriculum. Recent revisions to the school's assessment policy incorporate useful guidance from a range of expert sources. It is evident that newly-adopted strategies for assessment are having a beneficial impact on teaching and learning. To complement the school's detailed analysis

of pupils' progress in standardised tests, it is recommended that a more concise format be developed to track individual pupils' progress.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- The school policy on learning support is a comprehensive document which outlines the range of strategies in place to assist pupils with special educational needs. Clear principles, including early intervention, flexibility and adaptability, diagnosis of specific learning needs and the direction of resources to pupils with greatest need, guide provision in this area. Suitable screening methods are used to select pupils for support. Individual profiles and learning programmes (IPLPs) are prepared for each pupil in receipt of support.
- A broad range of effective teaching approaches and interventions is used for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are withdrawn individually and in small groups, and there is a commendable emphasis on the use of focused in-class support. The IPLPs are reviewed during the school year and are adjusted in light of pupils' progress.
- The quality of home-school partnership is excellent. Parents play an active and supportive role in the life of the school. Induction meetings are held for parents of new pupils in June each year. Formal parent-teacher meetings are held annually and there is provision for additional meetings as required. Detailed written school reports are issued to parents. Transition to post-primary school is managed effectively with the co-operation of the second-level schools in the nearby towns.

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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 of St Andrew's National School is very pleased to receive this Whole School Evaluation report which gives due recognition to the good work of the school.

We welcome in particular, the affirmation of the quality of teaching, learning, classroom planning, pupil support and pupil achievement in our school. The Board is also pleased to note that acknowledgment is given to the significant work done in the areas of school planning and school self-evaluation.

The Board also welcomes the important recognition of the strong partnership that exists between parents and staff in their shared goal, and the commitment and dedication of the whole school community.

The Board wishes to acknowledge the thorough, courteous and professional manner in which this evaluation was conducted by the Inspector. The staff found this process to be a very positive, motivating and affirming experience.

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 welcomes the contents and recommendations of the report which have been duly noted and are currently being implemented:

- Detailed analysis of pupils' progress in standardised testing, which is currently in place in the school, was recognised by the Inspector. Further to a recommendation made, the Learning Support teacher together with the class teachers are currently working on a more concise format to track individual pupils' progress.
- In addition to personal art portfolios, the recommendation for digital copies of the pupils' artwork as a form of recording and reporting on pupils' progress in art is being implemented.
- A more extensive range of the pupils' work in Irish is now being displayed throughout the school.
- Board of Management accounts will be certified annually as and from the current academic year.