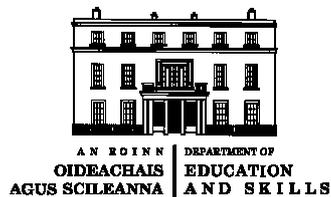


An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Scoil Carmel
Firhouse, Dublin 24
Uimhir rolla: 17899C

Date of inspection: 8 December 2011



1. Introduction

Scoil Carmel is a Catholic, co-educational junior school catering for pupils from junior infants to second class. The attendance levels of the 412 pupils are good with a small number of pupils absent for more than 20 days. During the whole-school evaluation inspectors observed teaching and learning in eight mainstream class settings and five support teaching settings. The board of management of the school 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, principal, staff and parents are commended on the supportive, welcoming and inclusive school atmosphere.
- The principal provides strong leadership and her well-developed organisational skills ensure that the school is run in an efficient and successful manner.
- The teachers are a vibrant presence in the school; they demonstrate effective teaching skills and present well-prepared and interesting lessons.
- The pupils are respectful, well-behaved and engage very well in lessons. The overall standard of their achievement is high.
- The school has an impressive range of resources which is used purposefully to support teaching and learning.
- Provision and use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is very good.
- The board of management and parent association give strong support to the school.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- An action-planning approach to monitor the implementation and impact of agreed whole-school priorities should be adopted.
- The results of assessment should be used more systematically to inform programmes of teaching and learning for the varying ability levels of all pupils.
- The range of teaching methodologies should be broadened to include more opportunities for pupils to engage in both co-operative and independent learning activities.

3. Quality of School Management

- An enthusiastic and competent board of management gives strong support to the school. The board ensures that the school building is very well maintained. It is involved in the

development of both organisational and curriculum policies. The board communicates with the school community through the issuing of newsletters and the school website.

- The principal has a long association with the school. She leads and manages the school effectively. She recognises the talents and skills of individual members of staff and allows them develop and use these talents and skills to secure school improvement. The principal is capably assisted by a conscientious and dedicated in-school management team. The willingness of all staff to take on additional duties as required is praised.
- The school has an impressive range of resources which is used effectively to support teaching and learning. Learning environments are of high quality with attractive displays of pupils' work in a number of curriculum areas in classrooms and around the school. Provision and use of ICT is very good.
- There is effective communication with parents. In the questionnaires almost all parents responded that school is welcoming of them. A very active parent association gives very good support to the school. The association is involved in a wide range of fundraising and school events during the year.
- The management of pupils is very good. Rules, routines and expectations are explained clearly. Pupils are very well behaved and demonstrate respectful attitudes toward each other and their teachers. Civic responsibility is fostered successfully through the school's participation in the *Green Schools Initiative*

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- Effective approaches and systems for the development of whole-school and classroom planning are in place. A wide range of organisational policies has been developed. These give good guidance on the operation of the school. Curriculum plans state the objectives from the curriculum and suggest learning activities to support the achievement of these objectives. Extension of this approach to include an increased focus in planning on the specific learning outcomes for pupils and the methodologies to be used is advised.
- The school has some very good self-evaluation practices including, cluster meetings for planning, the introduction of a number of agreed programmes of learning, analysis of standardised test results and the identification of priority areas for future development. An action plan should now be developed for addressing the agreed priority areas.
- 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

- Ar an iomlán tá múineadh agus foghlaim sa Ghaeilge ar chaighdeán maith. Tá dearcadh dearfach ag na daltaí le haghaidh an Ghaeilge agus is léir go mbaineann siad taitneamh as na gceachtanna. Baintear dea-úsáid as raon maith d'acmhainní agus straitéisí i rith na gceachtanna. I ranganna áirithe tugtar deiseanna do na daltaí obair i mbeirteanna agus an foclóir agus struchtúir na teanga a chleachtadh go minic. Sna ranganna sin tá dul chun cinn deas le feiscint i gcumas cumarsáide na ndaltaí. Tá raon maith de rannta, dánta agus amhráin ar eolas ag na daltaí i ngach rang. Moltar anois béim níos mó a chur ar an gcumarsáid trí deiseanna a thabhairt do na daltaí páirt a ghlacadh i

bhfíorchumarsáid go rialta i ngach rang tríd an scoil. Tá comhthathú éifeachtach ann idir an obair ó bhéal, ar thús an léitheoireachta agus an scríbhneoireachta.

- *The overall teaching and learning in Irish is of a good standard. Pupils display positive attitudes to Irish and it is evident that the pupils enjoy their lessons. Effective use is made of a good range of resources and strategies. In some classes opportunities are afforded to pupils to work in pairs and to practise vocabulary and language structures frequently. In these classes there is good progress in the pupils' ability to communicate in Irish. Pupils in all classes have knowledge of a good range of rhymes, poems and songs. More emphasis on the communicative approach through affording the pupils opportunities to communicate in real-life situations consistently through the school is advised. There is very good integration of oral work, early reading and writing.*
- The standard of teaching in English is high. The school plan for English contains guidance for teachers on oral language ideas and topics for discussion are identified for each class level. It is evident from interactions with pupils that there is a broad range of oral language competence. In order to meet the broad range of language needs it is recommended that specific strategies for the development of discrete, receptive and expressive language skills are identified and implemented at each class level. The overall standards in reading are very good. The school's promotion of positive attitudes to reading is praised. Almost all parents think the school is helping their children progress in reading. A range of strategies is employed purposefully to develop pupils' reading skills. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics, sight vocabulary is taught systematically and pupils' independent reading skills are developed through the use of supplementary readers. The quality of pupils' penmanship is high. Pupils' work is carefully corrected by teachers and positive feedback given.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning in Mathematics is good. The school has identified teaching and learning in Mathematics as a priority area for development. Specific targets for improving mathematics attainment have been devised based on data. Ability groups for Mathematics have been formed. A number of whole-school approaches have been agreed. The implementation of these programmes in a planned and structured manner will support the achievement of improved learning outcomes. Lessons are characterised by clear explanation of concepts and the purposeful use of resources. The use of a broader range of methodologies will enable pupils to participate in a more in-depth exploration of maths concepts and facilitate more independent learning
- The teaching of Social, Personal and Health Education ((SPHE) is of a high standard. Lessons are well structured and teachers make very good use of a range of appropriate methodologies such as circle time, story and scenarios relevant to the pupils' own lives to teach the strands of the SPHE curriculum. Pupils engage convincingly in lessons.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the Visual Arts is high. There is a clear focus on the development of skills by the pupils across all strands of the Visual Arts curriculum. Some very fine examples of the pupils' work are displayed in individual classrooms and around the school. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to look and respond to their own work, the work of others and the work of recognised artists. Pupils display high levels of interest in the Visual Arts. Portfolios of the pupils work are maintained
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. Features of effective practice include clear explanation of concepts, purposeful use of resources and the consistent promotion of pupils' interest in learning. Some effective opportunities are provided for pupils to work collaboratively. Extension of the provision for collaborative group work while also allowing pupils to engage in independent learning activities is recommended. Teachers are commended on the introduction of team-teaching. The standard of pupils' achievement is high. Teachers use a range of assessment modes to monitor pupil

progress. This good practice should now be extended to include the use of the data to inform specific programmes of teaching and learning for the varying ability levels of pupils. The presentation of pupils' work is of a high standard.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- Staff demonstrate high levels of commitment to meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs ((SEN) and pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL). There is a highly collaborative approach to the development of Individual Education Programmes (IEPs). All support teachers prepare individual plans and use these to inform their programmes of support. The learning targets are based on pupils' strengths and areas for development. The quality of teaching observed in support settings is very good. Pupils participate well in sessions and positive learning outcomes are achieved. The care support provided by the special needs assistants (SNAs) is lauded.

Published October 2012

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 and Staff of Scoil Carmel, Firhouse wish to thank the reporting inspector and her team for their professionalism and courtesy during our recent whole school evaluation. Their visit was a positive experience for the whole school community and we are pleased that the report acknowledges the commitment and dedication of the Principal, Staff, Board and Parents Association as all elements work together for the good of the pupils.

This report is an affirmation of the good work and high standards in our school. We were pleased that the behaviour and engagement of our pupils in their learning was acknowledged.

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 congratulated the Principal and her staff on this report. Our school is actively involved in the process of self evaluation and in this regard we take on board the recommendations mentioned in the report.

- We will formulate an action plan to tackle agreed priority areas.
- We will use our assessment data to set targets for the future as well as informing our planning.