

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

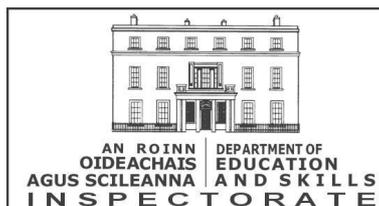
Department of Education and Skills

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

REPORT

**Mount Anville Primary School
Lower Kilmacud Road, Stillorgan County Dublin
Uimhir rolla: 17979A**

Date of inspection: 14 April 2015



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Mount Anville Primary School in April 2015. This report is based on a selection of lessons observed in a range of learning settings in the school, interaction with pupils and review of their work, meetings with the principal, board and parent representatives, the in-school management team, the special education needs team and literacy and numeracy co-ordinators, completed parent and pupil questionnaires, and a selection of school documents. The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

Mount Anville Primary School is situated in Stillorgan, County Dublin. It is a Catholic all-girls school that operates under the trusteeship of the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the patronage of the Catholic archbishop of Dublin. The attendance of the 467 pupils on roll is very good.

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

- The ethos and core values of the Sacred Heart Society very evidently underpin the leadership and management of the school, relationships and teaching and learning.
- Learning achievements and pupil engagement are very good.
- The overall high quality of teaching is high with some excellent teaching practices evident.
- A safe, secure and positive learning environment is provided for the pupils.
- The principal provides highly effective leadership.
- The Parents' Association and the wider parent body give meaningful and effective support to the school.
- The board of management provides commendable strategic leadership to the school.
- The school's self-evaluation process has had an effective impact on teaching and learning.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- A range of practices should be further developed in all classes to enable pupils to effectively monitor and comment on their own progress and to reflect constructively on their own learning styles and approaches to learning.
- It is recommended that ICT be further integrated into pupils' learning across the curriculum in order to develop, support and extend their learning.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall quality of learning achievements for pupils is very good including those of pupils with special educational needs. The majority of pupils surveyed indicated that they enjoy their lessons and learning. This is clearly reflected in the interest and the high levels of engagement in learning shown by the pupils during the evaluation. Learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy in the infant classes are generally very good.
- Pupils' overall achievements in reading are excellent and pupils' comprehension skills are being comprehensively developed. The provision of reading material at instructional level is a key feature of the reading programme in the school. The consistent implementation of this approach is advised. Writing and oral language standards do not consistently reflect the very high standards of achievement in reading. This warrants further attention.
- The quality of pupil achievement in the performance strand of the music curriculum is very good and commendably all pupils participate in the performance activities. To supplement the music programme consideration should be given to the teaching of a musical instrument through the school.
- Project work across the curriculum is excellent, particularly in the SESE subjects.

- Tá dearcadh dearfa ag na páistí i leith na Gaeilge. Tá caighdeán maith á bhaint amach acu sa Ghaeilge labhartha tríd an scoil agus i ranganna áirithe tá cumas cainte agus scríbhneoireachta thar barr acu. Aithníonn pobal na scoile go bhfuil gá dóibh feabhas a chur ar chaighdeán Ghaeilge agus tá sé seo idir lámhe ag an bhfoireann faoi láthair.
- *The pupils display a positive attitude towards Irish. A good standard of spoken Irish is being achieved through the school and in some classes a very high standard is evident. The school community is aware that there is a need to improve the standards being achieved in Irish and plans are in train to address this.*
- There are good achievement levels evident in Mathematics with some pupils achieving at very high levels. The learning in Mathematics is particularly good where the focus is on making the mathematics learning visible and enabling the pupils to learn from each other.
- Pupils experience a spiral learning programme across all strands in the Visual Arts and looking and responding is placed to the fore of their visual explorations.
- Some very good work on pupil self-assessment is being undertaken. This aspect of provision is worthy of further development in all learning settings. Furthermore, good examples of pupil-led learning are evident and in some settings high quality formative feedback is given to pupils.

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is high with some excellent teaching approaches in use. All parent respondents indicated their satisfaction with the quality of the teaching in this school and agreed that their children are doing well. Similarly, the majority of pupils agree that their teachers explain things clearly and that they help pupils to improve their work. Among the very good teaching practices in place are the explicit teaching of skills and concepts, the focused preparation and planning for lessons, the wide range of resources in use and the evident progression in provision from class to class. A number of classroom environments are outstanding and are used very effectively as a teaching tool.
- Some very effective practices are in use in the infant classes. These include meaningful and regular monitoring processes and focused thematic teaching. The planned implementation of *Aistear: the Early childhood curriculum framework* will support more pupil-led learning, more play methodology and more active engagement at this level.
- A number of new teaching initiatives have been introduced in recent years and the integrity and commitment with which these have been implemented is a credit to the principal and staff. These initiatives include a move towards more team-teaching, which has been successful in a number of classroom settings. To maximise the benefits from the team-teaching, the model in place should be reviewed and developed further.
- Currently, the school staff members are experimenting on a small scale with using ICT as a learning tool. It is recommended that ICT be further integrated into pupils' learning across the curriculum in order to develop, support and extend their learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs generally experience high quality teaching in both withdrawal and in-class settings. The continuum of support process has facilitated an effective staged approach to meeting pupils' needs in the mainstream classes. Significant resources, in terms of time and personnel have been assigned to early intervention initiatives and these are very successful. Very good communication exists between the LS/RT team and parents of pupils with special education needs. Individual Education Plans are drawn up for all pupils in receipt of resource hours and it is recommended that the agreed school approach to mid-year review be consistently implemented.
- A good variety of assessment practices is in use in every class setting. There were also some excellent examples of collaborative assessment in use and in these instances the teaching and learning were significantly enhanced.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- Very good support for pupils' well-being is provided by the school. One goal from the Trustees Policy Document is explored through the school on an annual basis and informs the personal, social, spiritual and emotional development of the pupils in that given year. A positive, safe and secure environment has been created and all parent respondents agreed, through the parent questionnaire, that their children feel safe in the school and that they are looked after. Equally, almost all pupils surveyed responded that they feel safe in the school and in their classes.

- Relationships at all levels are mutually respectful and pupil behaviour is excellent. Pupils' self-confidence and self-efficacy are explicitly promoted. A wide range of learning experiences and extra-curricular activities are provided to develop individual interests and abilities. Policies relevant to pupil well-being are effectively implemented, including the recently reviewed and updated anti-bullying policy. Pupils are given opportunities to engage in some decision-making through the active student council. The questionnaire returns suggest that pupils would benefit from other appropriate opportunities to express their own opinions about matters that affect them and their learning.
- 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*.

4. Leadership and Management

- The ethos and core values of the Sacred Heart Society very evidently underpin the leadership and management of the school, relationships and teaching and learning. The board of management provides commendable strategic leadership to the school. Board members are reflective, have attended regular training, are very clear about their roles and duties and adhere rigorously to legislative requirements. Effective communication is fostered between the board and members of the school community and in this context the board plans to publish an annual report.
- The principal provides highly effective leadership to the school. The school is well run and has a very positive working environment. The principal is a very visible presence in the school and she operates an open-door policy for all. Among her particular strengths are her ability to consult effectively across the school community, to foster a sense of shared purpose and to set high expectations for pupils. She is very capably supported by the deputy principal, and she devolves leadership to all levels among the staff. Consequently, members of the in-school management team and individual members of staff respond positively, are confident in contributing ideas and take on meaningful leadership roles.
- The Parents' Association and the wider parent body understand and support the leadership and basic mission of the school. Over the years a number of key initiatives have been taken by parents that have enhanced the quality of provision and care for the pupils. Parents have also been meaningfully involved in policy formulation and review. Very good communication processes are in place between home and school. According to the questionnaires, parents are kept very well informed of all school activities and feel listened to and are consulted on relevant issues. However, it is noteworthy that almost half of the parents surveyed were not familiar with the Relationships and Sexuality Education policy. It is important that this is addressed.

5. School Self-evaluation

- Teachers have embraced the school self-evaluation process with integrity and commitment and have diligently embedded new and worthwhile classroom practices. The focus to date has been on improving teaching methodologies in literacy and numeracy. The qualitative evidence informing the school improvement plan is commended as is the use of small working groups to develop and lead the teaching initiatives and approaches among the staff. Some good monitoring approaches are in place and are working well. The principal and staff should continue to use the SSE process to make decisions about what is important. To maximise the impact of the process a range of robust monitoring approaches should be developed.

Conclusion

The principal and staff supported by the board and parent body continually strive for excellence in all aspects of school life. The principal and staff have the capacity and possess the range of skills necessary to maintain the very good practices in place and to continue driving improvement into the future.