

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Whole School Evaluation
REPORT**

**Scoil Naomh Pádraig NS,
Johnstownbridge, Enfield, Co.Kildare
Uimhir rolla: 18130M**

Date of inspection: 22 May 2013



1. Introduction

Scoil Naomh Pádraig is a vertical co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. It is situated in Johnstownbridge village in County Kildare. For most of the 166 pupils enrolled, attendance levels are very good. 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:

- A collegial working environment is in evidence, and all teachers succeed in creating an inclusive learning environment.
- The pupils are respectful, courteous and well behaved.
- The board of management and parents' association are committed to supporting the work of the school.
- The management of relationships and communications with the school community is effective.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Whole-school approaches to teaching and learning should be agreed, implemented in all settings and documented in curriculum plans.
- I gcomhréir leis an-dea-chleachtas a bhreathnaíodh i gcumarsáid i nGaeilge sa seomra ranga sinsearach, b'fhiú do gach oide na trí thréimhse cumarsáide a chur i bhfeidhm sna ceachtanna. Moltar ionchar teanga cuí a roghnú agus a mhúineadh agus a dhaingniú go córasach. *In line with the very good practice observed in oral communication in Irish in the senior classroom, all teachers should implement the three phases of communication in lessons. Specific language input should be selected, taught and regularly reinforced.*
- It is recommended that the curriculum leadership role of the principal and the in-school management team be further developed. This development should focus on identifying, setting out and implementing whole-school approaches to teaching and learning.

3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management is properly constituted and is supportive of the work of the school. Roles and responsibilities are allocated, and individual members carry out their duties with praiseworthy commitment. The ongoing maintenance and development of the school's infrastructure is a priority of the board.
- The principal promotes a positive and collegial school culture. The majority of parents surveyed during the evaluation agree that there is a good atmosphere in the school.
- The in-school management team has a balanced remit of duties which are carried out capably. It is recommended that the curriculum leadership role of the principal and the in-

school management team be further developed. This development should focus on identifying, recording and implementing whole-school approaches to teaching and learning.

- The quality of the management of resources is good. An appropriate range of resources to support curriculum implementation is evident in most classrooms. A considerable investment in the installation and upgrading of information and communication technology (ICT) has recently taken place. Some very effective and purposeful learning environments have been created in individual classrooms. This should be a feature of all classrooms. Ancillary staff members carry out their duties very capably.
- The management of relationships and communications with the school community is effective. Annual parent-teacher meetings are held, and written reports on children's progress are issued to parents. The parents' association is very supportive of the work of the school. They organise fundraising events and support school celebrations. While some policies are shared with parents, there is scope to develop parental involvement in policy formation and review. Current priorities of the parents' association include traffic calming measures in the vicinity of the school and the development of a website in conjunction with the school.
- The management of pupils is commendable. They are respectful, courteous and well behaved. Responses to pupils' questionnaires administered during the evaluation indicate that all pupils know the school rules and agree that this is a good school. A very high number of pupils surveyed feel safe in the classroom and playground.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- Curricular and organisational policies have been devised. Overall, there is scope for development in the quality of whole-school planning. The recently reviewed Mathematics plans outlines appropriate guidance in relation to language, content, operations and the incremental development of the pupils' skills. This should be utilised as a template for other curriculum plans. It is recommended that an action plan be documented to guide the cyclical review of all policies. A whole-school plan should be devised for Drama. Curriculum plans should be further developed to provide guidance to teachers on whole-school strategies, teaching approaches, content and skill development and these plans should clearly reflect the multi and split class context of the school.
- Some teachers provide highly-effective classroom planning reflecting the principles and structures of the curriculum. This very good practice should be emulated by all teachers to ensure that all plans contain specific curriculum-based content objectives, and that work is differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils.
- The process of school self-evaluation has been initiated. It is recommended that the school uses this process to identify, prioritise and address areas for development in teaching and learning. This should involve the delineation of clear targets and actions. The role of the in-school management team should be more fully realised in the implementation and monitoring stage of the process.
- 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 quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is varied, and teachers' practice ranges from very good to practice that shows scope for development. In the classrooms where very effective teaching is evident, it is characterised by the skilful use of a variety of methodologies and resources, well-structured and appropriately-paced lessons and engaging learning tasks. In other settings it is recommended that aspects of teaching and learning, including practical preparation, appropriate lesson structure and pace, sustained purposeful engagement of pupils, and guidance on the presentation of the pupils' written work be addressed. Commendable differentiated teaching and learning opportunities are evident in some settings. This approach should be adopted at a whole-school level.
- Baineann éagsúlacht le caighdeán an teagasc, na foghlama agus gnóthachtáil na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge. Úsáideann na daltaí i ngach rang foclóir leathan, agus go háirithe, is imholta an raon leathain de rann agus d'amhráin atá curtha de ghleanmheabhair acu. Tá formhór na ndaltaí in ann cumarsáid a dhéanamh go han-éifeachtach, agus in ann raon briathra a úsáid go sciliúil sa rang sinsearach. I roinnt ranganna eile tá deacrachtaí ag daltaí abairtí a chumadh, ceisteanna a chur, nó labhairt go neamhspleách le muinín faoi théamaí atá cíortha acu. Sna ranganna inar gá scileanna cumarsáide a chur i bhfeidhm i ngach ceacht. Moltar ionchur teanga cuí a roghnú agus a mhúineadh agus a dhaingniú go córasach. Tá dul chun cinn cuí le sonrú sa léitheoireacht agus sa scríbhneoireacht. Moltar áiseanna breise a sholáthar don léitheoireacht, agus deiseanna breise a thabhairt do na daltaí scríbhneoireacht neamhspleách a chleachtadh, chun a n-eispéiris foghlama a leathnú.
- *The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Gaelige is varied. Pupils in all classes use a wide vocabulary and, in particular, the range of poems and songs that they know by heart is commended. Many pupils in the senior class can communicate very effectively and use a range of verbs skilfully. In some other classes pupils have difficulty composing sentences, posing questions or speaking independently and confidently about themes they have covered. In the classes where the pupils' communication skills need to be developed, teachers should implement the three phases of communication in each lesson. Specific language input should be planned, taught and regularly reinforced. Progress is evident with regard to reading and writing. It is recommended that a wider variety of reading materials be utilised and more independent writing opportunities provided to extend the pupils' learning experience.*
- In the main, effective practice is evident in relation to teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English. The majority of pupils read fluently and with good expression. They have access to a suitable range of reading materials, and benefit from a number of reading initiatives including paired-reading and buddy reading. The recent decision to commence the use of the novel on an annual basis is commended. A variety of suitable writing opportunities and language experiences are provided in some classes. It is recommended that a systematic whole-school approach to the teaching of writing and to the development of oral language skills be implemented by all teachers.
- Overall, the quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is commendable. In some settings this is characterised by the effective use of resources, careful attention to the language of mathematics, and the provision of suitable learning activities. Pupils demonstrate good recall of number facts and carry out a range of number operations competently. In particular classrooms provision for oral mathematics, number-rich environments and differentiated approaches is very effective. In other settings this good practice needs to be implemented. A consistent whole-school approach to Mathematics teaching is recommended.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is good. The teaching of SPHE is supported by the friendly atmosphere that permeates the school. Most teachers present lessons utilising an appropriate range of resources and methodologies. Programmes of work undertaken to support this curricular area include *Walk Tall*, *Stay Safe* and *Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)*. In some classes, a good understanding of health and safety issues is demonstrated by pupils' responses to questions.
- A range of good assessment strategies is in evidence. These include standardised assessment, diagnostic and teacher-designed tasks and tests. Pupils' self-assessment is in the early stages of development in some settings. This should be further developed as a whole-school model. Outcomes from assessment inform planning and teaching in some classes. It is recommended that assessment data be utilised to inform differentiated planning and teaching in all settings.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- Support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Education plans are based on reports from relevant professionals and the results of the school's own diagnostic assessments. Some plans contain specific targets for pupils. This good practice should be developed for all pupils in receipt of additional supports. Some commendable short-term planning was noted. It is recommended that all teachers should plan in accordance with the *Learning-Support Guidelines* (2000). Teaching is characterised by competent use of resources and methodologies. Provision is primarily on a withdrawal basis. The further development of in-class support models should now be considered to meet the specific needs of individual pupils.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report.

The Board wishes to thank the Whole-School Evaluation team for the cordial and professional manner in which they conducted the evaluation. The Board welcomes the overwhelmingly positive feedback received from parents during this 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

In respect of Teaching and Learning, the Board intends to incorporate suggestions made by the inspectorate into its on-going efforts at improvement in this area. This process has already begun.