

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

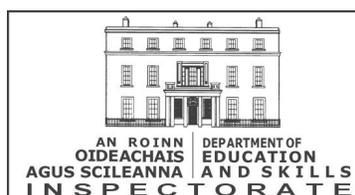
Department of Education and Skills

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

REPORT

**St. John's N.S.,
Tower Road,
Clondalkin, Dublin 22.
Uimhir rolla: 18642Q**

Date of inspection: 13 January 2016



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in St. John's National School, Clondalkin, in January 2016. This report is based on lessons observed in a range of learning settings, interaction with pupils and review of their work, meetings with the principal, deputy principal, and board and parent representatives, completed parent and pupil questionnaires, and a selection of school documents.

St. John's National School is a vertical, co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin. Attendance rates for the 103 pupils are very good. The board accepts the report as the final inspection report available for publication and wished to respond formally to the report. The Board agrees that the response submitted will be included as an appendix to the published report. The board's response is submitted below.

The evaluation has found:

- The pupils experience learning in a caring, affirming, and supportive environment, and their overall learning achievements are very good.
- Teacher-led whole-class teaching is of a high quality and there is some provision for pair and group work in lessons.
- Teachers tend to over-rely on textbooks to inform individual planning.
- All teachers maintain very comprehensive assessment records that effectively record and track individual learning achievements.
- The staged approach to support outlined in the school Learning Support policy is not implemented on a whole-school basis.
- The principal provides very strong leadership, and the board of management and parents' association actively support the work of the school.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Teaching approaches should provide more collaborative learning opportunities, and use of concrete materials.
- Teachers should more closely align individual planning to curriculum objectives, and should utilise assessment records to provide differentiated learning experiences for pupils.
- The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) *Continuum of Support* should be used to implement a staged approach to support and early intervention.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The learning achievements of pupils are very good. In questionnaire responses most pupils said they were doing well in reading and mathematics.
- Learning outcomes in literacy are very good. Pupils read at correct ability levels. Infants participate in a well-implemented *Aistear* programme. Junior classes experience well-structured station-teaching in literacy. Pupils in middle and senior classes write competently across a range of topics and genres. In all classes, pupils' oral language skills are competently developed. Pupils' writing is well-presented and teachers provide written feedback on how to improve their work.
- Learning outcomes in numeracy are commendable. An emphasis on computation and mathematical procedures ensures that pupils can competently complete mathematical operations. Pupils would benefit from opportunities to collaboratively engage in problem-solving using a wider range of resources in mathematics lessons.

- Foghlaimíonn na daltaí foclóir agus frásaí Gaeilge tré úsáid a bhaint as teács-leabhair agus acmhainní tarraingteach ar an gclár bán idirghníomhach, ach ní thugtar deiseanna dhóibh na scileanna teanga nua a chleachtadh lena chéile. Moltar úsáid a bhaint as amhránaíocht agus rainn chun a féin-mhuinín i leith labhairt na Gaeilge a fhorbairt. Moltar feidhim a bhaint as nithe réadacha chun idirghníomhaíochtaí agus cómhraí spéisiúil a spreagadh i measc na ndaltaí.
(Pupils learn Irish vocabulary and phrases using text-books and attractive interactive whiteboard resources, but are not provided with opportunities to use and practice taught language skills with each other. It is recommended that their confidence in spoken language be developed through songs and rhymes, and through use of real objects to prompt interesting interactions and conversations).
- Pupils with National Council for Special Education (NCSE) resource allocations have good quality Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and are appropriately prioritised for supports tailored to their needs. Pupils with learning needs are provided with supplementary support in literacy and numeracy.

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching is good, with some very good lessons observed, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Teaching methodologies include good quality teacher-led whole-class instruction, with some provision for pair and group work. Clear explanations and individual support are features of lessons. Teachers should include more collaborative learning opportunities for pupils, and greater use of concrete materials.
- Teachers tend to over-rely on textbooks to inform planning. Individual planning should document intended learning outcomes based on curriculum content objectives and the school plan. All teachers maintain very comprehensive assessment records that effectively track and record individual learning achievements. Assessment records should be used to provide differentiated learning experiences for pupils.
- Commendably, teachers provide a bi-monthly written report for each pupil, to inform parents of their children's learning progress and achievements. Almost all parents agree that school reports keep them well-informed, and that their children are doing well in school.
- The overall quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Models of support include withdrawal, in-class support, and very effective literacy and numeracy station teaching.

3. Support for pupils' well-being

- The quality of support for pupils' well being is very good. Pupils experience their learning in an affirming and supportive environment. Teachers and special needs assistants demonstrate a keen understanding of individual pupils, and manage their pastoral needs very effectively.
- Special education support is provided by three teachers with shared hours. Continuity is safeguarded through in-class support and station teaching. The school is advised to use the NEPS *Continuum of Support* to implement the staged approach to support as outlined in the learning support plan, to record and monitor classroom and early intervention strategies.
- 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

- Management and leadership of the school is of a very high quality. The principal is a very effective leader of learning and has initiated the development of improved whole-

school structures, and an appropriate range of good quality whole-school policies and curriculum plans. She is ably supported by the deputy principal and teachers, who work as a team to implement improvements. In questionnaire responses all parents said they were happy with the school and that it was well run.

- Good communication with the school community is facilitated through the active parent-teacher association.
- The board of management is involved in, and conscientiously supports the work of the school. The new chairperson is keen to consolidate the board's communication with the school community through the issuing of an annual report.

5. School Self-evaluation (SSE)

- The school self-evaluation process is well-progressed. Agreed targets and strategies to improve literacy and numeracy are being effectively implemented in all classes. The school is embarking on Physical Education for its third SSE subject.

Conclusion

The school's capacity to further develop is very good. Significant progress has been made in implementing recommendations from a previous inspection, and a strategic plan for improvement has been drawn up. Pupil enrolment numbers formerly in decline are steadily increasing.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

We accept the report in its entirety and believe it is fair and accurate. The teaching staff has taken on board the recommendations and are more than happy to implement them. We are happy with the findings of the Inspector.