

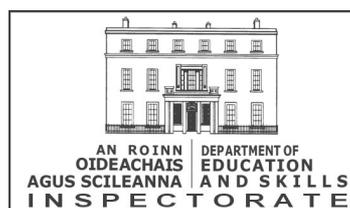
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills**

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

REPORT

**St. Canice's Girls' National School,
Finglas, Dublin 11
Uimhir rolla: 18683H**

Date of inspection: 15 January 2014



Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

Introduction

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE-MLL) was undertaken in St. Canice's Girls' National School in January 2014. 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 and with board and parent representatives, completed parent and pupil questionnaires, and a selection of school documents.

St. Canice's Girls' National School operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. It participates in Delivering Educational Improvement in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. 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.

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

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in literacy is very good.
- The principal and teachers work collaboratively to create a warm and nurturing learning environment.
- Pupils are very well-behaved, participating enthusiastically in learning activities.
- The quality of pastoral care and home school communication is of a very high standard.
- The board of management and the in-school management team demonstrate a high level of commitment to the school.
- The parents' association provides very valuable support to the school and parental involvement is having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

The following **recommendations** are made:

- A greater emphasis should be placed on in-class support approaches and early intervention in numeracy
- In the further development of pupils' numeracy skills, it is recommended that greater emphasis be placed on linkage of strands, development of problem-solving skills and use of the environment.
- The school is advised to develop an e-learning plan and to examine further opportunities for pupils to use information and communications technology as a learning tool.

Findings

1. The learning achievements of pupils

- The overall learning achievements of pupils are very good. Pupils are active in their learning and engage diligently in a variety of activities. They have very positive attitudes to learning and work is presented to a high standard. During the evaluation pupils displayed good knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.

- The quality of learning in Mathematics is high. Content is connected to the life experiences of the pupils. Resources are used to very good effect and pupils are provided with various opportunities to develop reasoning and communicating skills. A good focus is placed on the development of mathematical language. In the further development of pupils' numeracy skills, it is recommended that greater emphasis be placed on linkage, problem-solving and mathematics' trails.
- The quality of pupils' learning outcomes in literacy is very good. Pupils' reading skills are suitably developed and they engage enthusiastically in reading for pleasure. A structured approach to the development of writing skills is in place. In some instances staff should examine further opportunities for differentiation in reading.
- Ar an iomlán, tá cailíocht na foghlama sa Ghaeilge an-mhaith. Léann na daltaí go hábailta agus tá cumas labartha maith acu. Moltar úsáid a bhaint as leabhair leabharlainne shimplí, as úrscéalta Gaeilge agus as áiseanna comhaimseartha chun spéis agus spraoi a fhorbairt a thuilleadh. Moltar, freisin, níos mó deiseanna a thabhairt do na daltaí scríobh go neamhspleách. *(Overall, the quality of pupils' learning in Irish is very good. Pupils read very ably and they have good oral skills. It is recommended that more use be made of simple library books, novels and contemporary resources to further develop interest and enjoyment. It is also recommended that pupils receive more opportunities to engage in free writing).*

2. Quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching in the school is highly commendable. A range of active and collaborative teaching approaches were observed during the evaluation. However some scope exists for greater use of pair work and the sharing of learning intentions. On the whole teachers provide effective short term planning. However, in some instances, teachers are advised to delineate specific learning objectives and assessment and differentiation strategies.
- Although assessment of learning practices are well developed the staff should consider developing models of assessment for learning across all curriculum subjects.
- While the school is digitally well resourced it is recommended that an e-learning plan be prepared incorporating digital and media literacy. Teachers should afford pupils additional opportunities to use information and communications technology (ICT) as a learning tool.
- The quality of teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs is good. Interactions between teachers and pupils are supportive and affirming. Consideration should be given to the development of an early intervention programme in numeracy. The staged approach to support for pupils should be documented and attention should be given to the maintenance of progress records. Parents of pupils with special educational needs should be provided with a copy of their children's individual education plan.

3. Support for pupils' wellbeing

- Pastoral care provision is of a very high quality. Pupils are cared for and supported very effectively. They behave very respectfully and are highly commended for their very courteous and polite behaviour. Responses to questionnaires administered during the evaluation indicated that pupils feel safe in school.
- A very affirmative learning environment has been created for pupils. Strategies to promote positive behaviour among pupils are implemented successfully and have contributed to noteworthy improvements in attendance levels.

- 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 quality of the work of the board of management is very good. It has set out clear objectives ensuring that the school delivers a high quality of education for pupils. Communication between the school and the board is very good and could be further supported by the issuing of an annual report to parents on the operation of the school.
- The principal provides very effective administrative, pastoral and curricular leadership. She promotes an inclusive school culture and is currently exploring models of distributed leadership with the in-school management team. The in-school management team carries out a balance of curricular, pastoral and administrative duties capably and reviews initiatives undertaken on a regular basis.
- Communication between home and school is very good. The parents' association actively supports the school and parental involvement is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. In responses to questionnaires administered during the evaluation parents indicated that they felt welcome in the school.

5. School Self-evaluation

- The school engages in a range of evidence-based self-evaluation practices, to establish targets and action plans for improvement. Assessment for learning strategies should be further used to monitor progress.

Conclusion

The school's capacity to develop further is good. Current DEIS self-evaluation practices and routines of reflection indicate openness to change and to continuous improvement.

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 is very pleased that the Inspection Report accurately reflects the current quality of teaching and learning in St Canice's GNS together with the support for pupils' well being, the provision and use of resources and the leadership & overall management in the school.

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, in consultation with the teaching staff, is putting structures in place to implement the recommendations and other advices and suggestions of the Inspectors and progress will be monitored on a quarterly basis until such time as the report is fully implemented.