

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation  
REPORT**

**Saint Mochta's National School  
Porterstown Road, Clonsilla, Dublin 15  
Uimhir rolla: 18778S**

**Date of inspection: 8 June 2015**



**AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF  
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION  
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS**

## 1. Introduction

Saint Mochta's National School is a co-educational vertical school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The school caters for the educational needs of a growing community. Plans are well advanced for a new school building. Current enrolment stands at 881 pupils. Attendance generally is very good. During this whole-school evaluation provision for Irish, English, Mathematics and Physical Education was evaluated. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in sixteen mainstream class settings and six 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 gives very good support to the school.
- The principal provides very effective leadership to the school.
- The school supports the holistic development of the pupils through a range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- During the evaluation the behaviour of the pupils was exemplary.
- The parents' association supports the school to very good effect.
- Overall teaching and learning in the school is of a high quality.
- Teachers provide very attractive learning environments for pupils.
- There are measurable improvements in pupils' attainments in literacy and numeracy over the last few years.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Assessment data should be used systematically by all teachers to differentiate learning outcomes and tasks for the range of learners.
- Teachers should draw consistently from the whole-school plan in preparing learning plans for their particular pupils in order to strengthen implementation of whole-school approaches to teaching and learning.
- Sa Ghaeilge, moltar don scoil eispéireas léitheoireachta níos saibhre a sholáthar do na daltaí.  
*The school should utilise real books to add richness of language and additional challenge for pupils in Irish.*
- The school should review its approach to target setting in individual support plans, and to the review process, in order to further support the incremental attainments of pupils with additional needs.

### **3. Quality of School Management**

- The work of the board of management is of a very high quality. A shared sense of purpose is evident among board members regarding school development and the improvement of teaching and learning. The roles of board members are clearly defined and their broad skill base is used to ensure the school is very well maintained and resourced. The updating of the register (Clárleabhar) in relation to pupils' progression through the school should be completed in compliance with section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000).
- The principal provides very effective leadership to the school. She demonstrates a clear vision for ongoing strategic school development. The deputy principal and members of the in-school management team undertake their assigned duties in a committed and effective manner. Each team member provides an action plan to the principal regarding their post of responsibility. Building on this good practice, the curriculum leadership role of individual post-holders should be further enhanced to ensure a greater focus on curriculum implementation and review.
- The board has successfully created a very well-maintained environment within which teachers provide very attractive learning spaces. Resources are generally used very well in classrooms. Special needs assistants support the inclusion and participation of pupils with additional learning needs through the use of a range of strategies and carefully timetabled deployment. A whole-school policy should now be devised which incorporates their existing practice. The caretaker, secretaries and cleaners contribute to the smooth running of the school.
- The management of pupils is of a very high quality. During the evaluation, the pupils' behaviour was exemplary. Interactions between teachers and pupils were underpinned by very high levels of mutual respect. Pupil questionnaires, administered as part of this evaluation, indicate that the vast majority like school, and feel safe in the school environment.
- The parents' association provides very good support to the school. In a meeting prior to the evaluation, parents' representatives expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the work of the school. These positive attitudes were also reflected in questionnaires completed by parents as part of the evaluation.

### **4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation**

- Whole-school planning is of a good quality. A range of organisational policies assists in the smooth running of the school. High-quality whole-school curriculum plans give comprehensive guidance to teachers on all aspects of provision. It is advised that these whole-school plans be more readily accessible to teachers so that whole-school approaches are reflected in individual planning.
- The quality of classroom planning is good overall. All teachers provide collaborative short-term and long-term plans, along with monthly progress reports.
- The school has engaged very well with the school self-evaluation (SSE) process. School improvement plans for literacy and numeracy have been devised and implemented. The

school should continue to ensure that all targets are measurable and time-bound, and that stated actions in school improvement plans have a stronger impact on teachers' classroom practice.

- 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

- Teaching, learning and pupil achievement overall is of a high quality, and in a number of settings, practice of a very high quality was noted. In the majority of settings, teachers used a range of methodologies to deliver lessons that were well-structured and appropriately paced. In questionnaires administered during the evaluation, a significant minority of pupils indicated that they do not work in groups most days. It is advised that all teachers use collaborative teaching methodologies consistently and regularly, requiring pupils to use progressively higher-order skills through planned activities. Assessment data should be used systematically to differentiate learning activities for the range of learners.
- Tá cáilíocht an teagaisc agus na foghlama sa Ghaeilge go maith i bhformhór de na ranganna agus go han-mhaith i roinnt suímh. Tá dearcadh dearfach á chothú i measc na ndaltaí. Baineann na múinteoirí úsáid as modhanna teagaisc éifeachtach agus raon de ghníomhaíochtaí chun an teanga a mhúineadh go beacht. Ar an iomlán, cuirtear béim cuí ar fhorbairt scileanna éisteachta agus labhartha na ndaltaí. Sa chleachtas is éifeachtaí a breathnaíodh, bhí cumas ag na daltaí réimse ceisteanna a chur agus a fhreagairt agus iad ag úsáid neart stór focal agus briathra. Moltar an dea-chleachtas sin a scaipeadh go chuile rang. B'fhiú don scoil fíorleabhair a úsáid amach anseo chun saibhreas teanga agus eispéireas níos dúshlánaí a sholáthar do na daltaí sa léitheoireacht.
- *The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Irish is good in most classes, and very good in some settings. A positive attitude to Irish is cultivated among the pupils. Teachers utilise effective teaching approaches and a range of activities to teach the language precisely. In the main, an appropriate emphasis is placed on the development of pupils' listening and speaking skills. Where practice was particularly good, pupils had the ability to ask and answer questions using good vocabulary and verbs. This very good practice should be extended to all classes. The school should utilise real books to add richness of language and additional challenge for pupils.*
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is good. Most lessons offer many and varied opportunities for pupils' oral language development. In the majority of settings, pupils' reading skills are developed effectively utilising a wide range of suitable reading materials. Overall, pupils' writing skills are nurtured well, with early and emergent writing skills particularly well supported. As pupils progress through the school, a programme of sustained engagement with the writing process across the range of genres, as identified in the whole-school plan, would further enhance their writing skills.
- Teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is of a high quality. In the majority of settings, well-resourced collaborative learning was a feature of lessons. Commendable emphasis was placed on pupils' mastery of mathematics language. The pupils' utilisation of number strategies was well supported in most classes. Where teaching was very good, a strong emphasis was placed on the consolidation of key learning with the pupils more active in the consolidation process. This practice should be extended to all settings.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Physical Education is good. All lessons were effectively planned. Pupil safety was appropriately prioritised. During the school year, the pupils experience the broad range of the Physical Education curriculum. To enhance provision, teachers should place a stronger emphasis on the development of particular skills. A greater focus on the modelling of skills at the start of lessons, along with opportunities for pupils to consolidate and reflect on their skills' development, is advised.
- Standardised tests are administered appropriately and indicate steady improvements in literacy and numeracy over the last few years. A whole-school approach to recording assessment data is evident in teachers' folders. To support sustained improvement in pupils' learning outcomes, it is recommended that all teachers regularly analyse assessment data to inform planning for differentiation for the range of learners.

## **6. Quality of Support for Pupils**

- The quality of provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good overall. Support is provided flexibly in response to pupils' individual needs. In the settings observed, teaching was characterised by very positive affirming teacher-pupil relationships. The school is implementing models of in-class support in numeracy and literacy. Further use of assessment data should inform the duration and type of targeted provision planned for pupils.
- All teachers provide a range of planning to support teaching and learning for pupils with additional needs. While the overall quality of this planning is appropriate, there are some aspects for development. In constructing individual support plans, the priority learning needs of all pupils should be clearly derived from the range of assessment data. All targets relating to priority learning needs should be specific, measurable and time-bound. Reviews of individual support plans should be informed by assessment, should document pupil progress, and record revised targets. Parents should be provided with copies of individual support plans and their reviews as a means of communicating progress. The school is advised to consult the support services in relation to planning and target setting for pupils with additional needs.
- The school creates a warm, welcoming, nurturing environment, encouraging pupils to fully participate in school life through a range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Particular instances of disadvantage are supported discreetly. Effective procedures are in place to enable the smooth transition and transfer of pupils to nearby schools.

# **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 of St Mochta's National School wishes to thank the whole school staff, parents and local community for their on-going hard work and commitment in striving to provide high quality learning opportunities for our pupils. The Board welcomes the very positive report on the Whole School Evaluation. The inspection process was very beneficial in affirming the strengths of our school. The board is pleased that the report acknowledges and affirms that the principal delivers effective management to our school and our active parents' association offers great support to our school. The board is pleased that the report recognises the excellent behaviour of our students during the evaluation and that St. Mochta's National School continues to support the holistic development of our pupils through our activities. The board is also delighted that the report recognises the high quality of teaching and learning within the school and the attractive learning environments provided for our pupils. The report also acknowledges the measurable improvements in pupils' attainments in literacy and numeracy over the last few years.

### **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 welcomes the reports' recommendations and endeavours to continue to build on good practice in the highlighted areas in order to further improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.

The Board wishes to affirm the teaching staff for the progress made to date on these areas of recommendations. The recommendations will inform the continuing process of self-evaluation and planning in our school.