

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Scoil Naomh Pádraig
Ballyroan, Dublin 14
Uimhir rolla: 19114T

Date of inspection: 19 September 2011



1. Introduction

Scoil Naomh Pádraig operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. It caters for boys and girls to first class and for girls only to sixth class. The staff comprises an administrative principal, sixteen mainstream class teachers, three full-time (and three part-time) learning support/resource teachers and one language support teacher. The 468 pupils have a good attendance record. During the whole-school evaluation, inspectors observed teaching and learning in Irish, English Mathematics and History in nine mainstream class settings and three support-teaching settings. The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix to this report.

2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

The following are the **main strengths** of the work of the school:

- The school's policies, procedures and practices promote the inclusion of all pupils and the atmosphere is very positive and supportive.
- The pupils are articulate, respectful and very well behaved.
- The principal and staff are very committed and work with the pupils in a respectful and caring manner.
- The school building and grounds are very well maintained and provide a safe and secure environment for the pupils.
- The administration and organisation of the school is very good.
- The parents and the board of management are very supportive of the pupils and staff.
- The school's approach to special educational needs provision and to English as an additional language is very comprehensive and effective.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- The principal, in conjunction with the in-school management team, should further develop instructional leadership skills to improve teaching and learning and to foster and develop reflective and self-evaluative practices on a whole-school level.
- Teachers should explore how assessment information could be used to inform classroom planning, the pupils' learning experiences and learning materials.
- The school should provide a broader range of learning experiences for pupils including a focus on developing thinking skills, greater pupil engagement and adapting teaching approaches to meet individual learning needs.
- A comprehensive and systematic approach to developing skills in mental Mathematics and problem-solving is required.
- The teaching approaches and the programme provided in Irish should be reviewed to ensure the incremental learning of the language.

3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management is properly constituted, is very supportive of the school, meets regularly and works very effectively. An action plan is prepared at the beginning of the school year and an end of year report is published annually.
- The principal demonstrates effective organisational and administrative skills. Together with her staff, she works with the pupils in a respectful and caring manner. The in-school management team works conscientiously, meets regularly and sets out plans for its work on a yearly basis. It is recommended that the principal, with the in-school management team, further develop instructional leadership skills to improve teaching and learning and to foster and develop reflective and self-evaluative practices on a whole school level.
- Scoil Naomh Pádraig is very well resourced. In pupil questionnaires, all pupils indicated that they feel safe and secure in the school. The majority of pupils also stated that they do not use computers regularly. It is noted that the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) through the school has been identified as an immediate priority by the staff.
- A number of good practices for promoting communication are evident. The parent body is very supportive of the school and significant monies are raised annually to fund particular teaching and learning resources. Parents stated in questionnaires that they feel welcome in the school. It is also noted, from their replies, that further information on a number of issues is required. Fostering, maintaining and developing home-school links should be a regular feature of the management and leadership agenda.
- A positive code of behaviour permeates school life. Pupils are very well behaved, are articulate and are very respectful towards each other. The overall school atmosphere is very positive and commendable practices and procedures are in place to ensure the well-being and safety of all pupils.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The quality of the organisational plans, which give clear guidance on procedures and practices in the school, is very good. All curriculum plans have been completed to a good standard. The dissemination of these documents to members of staff is commendable. Good structures for staff collaborative planning are in place.
- While the school has outlined a timeline for review of curriculum plans, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that these are impacting positively on teachers' practice in the classroom. It is recommended that the principal and the in-school management team systematically monitor the implementation of the various school plans through a planned whole-school review process.
- All teachers engage in classroom planning. A common template is used by staff and programmes of learning are agreed at each class level. The overall quality of individual planning is good.
- School authorities provided evidence that, in compliance with Primary Circular 0061/2006, the board of management has formally adopted the Department's *Child Protection Guidelines for Primary Schools*. Evidence was provided to show that these child protection procedures have been brought to the attention of management, school staff and parents; that a copy of the procedures has been provided to all staff (including

all new staff); and that management has ensured that all staff are familiar with the procedures to be followed. A designated liaison person (DLP) and a deputy DLP have been appointed in line with the requirements of the guidelines.

5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

- Teachers cultivate a very positive atmosphere in classrooms and relationships between pupils and teachers are very good. According to the pupil questionnaires, lessons are interesting and enjoyable. Similarly, parents stated that their children liked coming to school and that they were doing well in school. Some examples of good teaching were seen during the evaluation. Learning outcomes overall are good. It is essential that pupil ability and potential are used when analysing pupil achievement. The challenge facing the school is to provide a broader range of learning experiences for pupils in a differentiated manner, ensuring a focus on developing thinking skills and optimising pupil engagement.
- Sa Ghaeilge, tá éagsúlacht ag baint le caighdeán na múinteoireachta agus foghlama tríd an scoil. Léirítear cur chuige maith sna ranganna naíonán. Cuirtear béim ar shealbhú teanga agus baintear amach torthaí foghlamtha maith ag an leibhéal seo. Baintear amach caighdeán sásúil idir Ghaeilge labhartha agus scríofa sna mean- agus sna hard-ranganna. Moltar, áfach, athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar an gclár Gaeilge agus ar na modhanna atá in úsáid tríd an scoil. Ba chóir níos mó béime a chur ar leanúnachas na foghlama, ar úsáid raon níos léithne áiseanna, agus ar chur chuige struchtúrtha chun an teanga a dhaingniú i ngach rang.

The standard of teaching and learning in Irish varies through the school. Good practice in the teaching of Irish was noted in the infant classes. Emphasis is placed on language acquisition and learning outcomes at this level are good. The standard of oral and written Irish in the middle and senior classes is satisfactory. It is recommended, however, that the teaching approaches and the school programme in Irish be reviewed. Emphasis needs to be placed on the incremental learning of the language, on using a wide range of support materials and on providing structured opportunities for the pupils to practise the language learned in all classes.

- The quality of learning outcomes in oral language in English is very good and the teaching of oral language skills through structured approaches is commendable. Consideration should be given to the teaching of a wider variety of poetry to all classes. A very good programme in early literacy is provided in the infant classes. The school is commended for the good home-school links fostered at this stage and for the ongoing monitoring of pupil progress in some classes. It is evident that the majority of older pupils are fluent readers and that skills in spelling are consistently developed. To enhance the literacy programme, it is recommended that further opportunities be given to the pupils to engage in challenging comprehension activities, that reading skills continue to be taught as needed and that pupil achievement and ability levels determine the reading material used. Provision is made for functional writing at all levels and standards are very good. Opportunities are given for independent writing in a variety of genres and some of the teaching of this process writing is very good.
- Overall pupil achievement in Mathematics is good. Three quarters of the pupils felt that they were doing well in Mathematics while over 85% of the parents felt that their children were doing well. Some of the good practice observed included engaging the pupils in the learning, using concrete materials, explaining concepts clearly and providing differentiated tasks and individual support. However, much of the teaching is whole-class directed with little reflection of the different ability levels in each class. Pupils need opportunities to think mathematically and to engage in more challenging activities. A more

comprehensive and systematic approach to mental Mathematics and problem-solving is recommended. While good use was made of the calculator in some of the senior classes, it is recommended that further use be made of ICTs in the teaching and learning of Mathematics.

- The quality of teaching in History is good and pupils are given opportunities to engage in their learning. A good range of resources is used to support teaching and learning. Commendable emphasis is placed on encouraging the pupils to work as historians. More emphasis should now be placed on the provision of a wider range of challenging activities to facilitate deeper understanding and exploration.
- Some good assessment practices are in place and a draft policy on assessment has been prepared. A range of informal and formal tests is used to determine progress. Some very good analysis of the formal tests has been carried out. It is recommended that teachers explore how the assessment information could be used to inform classroom planning, the pupils' learning experiences and the provision of learning materials. The school is commended for the development of the individual pupil profile which is a summative record of yearly progress.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- Policies, procedures and practices in the school promote the inclusion of all pupils. The school's approach to support teaching is comprehensive and effective. Consultation, collaboration and communication are hallmarks of the effective work being carried out by support teachers. Programmes of learning are prepared in consultation with class teachers, relevant expert personnel and parents. Progress is tracked and monitored carefully and team members are very aware of the achievement levels of individual pupils. Very good communication exists between class teachers and support teachers. The quality of teaching approaches ranges from good to excellent. Consideration should be given to extending the model of in-class support. The team is commended for the flexible approach adopted to meet individual pupil needs and for the positive attitude to support which has been cultivated throughout the school.

Published January 2012

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 Scoil Naomh Pádraig wishes to thank the Inspectors of the D.E.S. for the courteous, professional and affirming manner in which the evaluation was conducted.

The Board welcomes the findings of the WSE and in particular the recognition of the positive, supportive and inclusive atmosphere of the school. The Board recognises the work and commitment of all our teachers which underpins all that is delivered in the school.

The Board acknowledges the recommendations of the report and welcomes the proposed suggestions for further review. This work is in progress.

Area 2: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

Having fully considered the findings of the WSE Report we have re-commenced the process of school self evaluation, engaged in action planning while recognising our strengths and we have identified priority areas to be further developed. We are in the process of refining our literacy and numeracy targets. We have sought CPD support to strengthen our capacity to respond in a balanced, realistic manner to the variety of needs in our school in order to provide a broader range of learning experiences for pupils, in a differentiated manner.