

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Whole School Evaluation
REPORT Scoil Náisiúnta an Chroí Ró Naofa,
Killinarden, Tallaght, Dublin24
Uimhir rolla: 19543T**

Date of inspection: 03 April 2014



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

1. Introduction

Scoil Náisiúnta an Chroí Ró Naofa is a co-educational senior school, and is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. This DEIS (*Delivering Equality in Schools*) band 1 school has an enrolment of 288 pupils. It has the service of a full-time home-school-community liaison (HSCL) coordinator, and participates in the School Completion Programme (SCP). The school is highly commended for achieving the national norm for the average annual percentage of attendance in recent years. Its success in reducing the number of pupils who miss twenty days or more over a four-year period is particularly noteworthy. 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.

During the whole-school evaluation inspectors observed teaching and learning in seven mainstream class settings and five support teaching settings.

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 significantly supports the work of the school.
- The principal, who displays very good organisational and management skills, promotes positive relationships among the school community.
- Pupil management is of a very high standard.
- The pupils benefit from a holistic educational experience through the provision of a wide selection of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- Teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning in English and Mathematics is commendable.
- The extensive range of successful interventions and programmes delivered through the HSCL initiative significantly benefits the parents and pupils of the school.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- It is recommended that all teachers' short-term planning includes specific objectives, an outline of learning activities and explicit provision for differentiation.
- All teachers, including support teachers, should further develop assessment practices to build a more comprehensive profile of pupils' progress and to inform differentiated planning and teaching.
- It is recommended that teachers regularly revise and consolidate previous learning.

3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management significantly supports the work of the school. It oversees all aspects of the organisation and operation of the school in an effective and efficient manner.
- The quality of in-school management is of a high standard. The principal displays very good organisational and management skills. Almost all parents surveyed as part of the evaluation agree that the school is well run. The pupils' readiness for learning, encompassing the development of their self-esteem and sense of pride, is central to his vision. He promotes very positive relationships among the school community. Individual members of the in-school management team competently undertake a broad range of duties pertaining to their posts. They produce an annual action plan which is reviewed in consultation with the principal, and this practice is commendable. The in-school management team should meet formally at regular intervals throughout the year to agree and progress priorities for development within organisational and curriculum areas.
- The management of resources is very good. A wide range of resources to support teaching and learning is well organised and utilised very effectively. Provision for information and communications technology (ICT) is of a very high standard. The teachers are very open to engaging in and trialling new initiatives and approaches. The auxiliary staff carry out a wide range of duties competently.
- Pupil management is of a very high standard. A wide selection of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities provides a holistic educational experience for the pupils. The teachers successfully nurture a harmonious environment and cultivate an atmosphere of respect, co-operation and courtesy for pupils. Almost all pupils surveyed as part of the evaluation indicate that they feel safe in class and enjoy coming to school. The very well-organised student council gives the pupils a say in how things are done and engenders in them a sense of responsibility and leadership.
- Relationships and communications are managed very successfully. There is a wide variety of communication methods utilised to keep the whole school community involved in and informed about school life. The school's website is very effective in this regard. Parent-teacher meetings are conducted twice yearly and two written reports are issued to parents annually. Almost all parents surveyed feel welcome in the school and agree that there is a good atmosphere in the school.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- Overall, the quality of whole-school planning is good. School management has a plan for the cyclical review of organisational and curriculum policies. Administrative plans support the smooth running of the school. Curriculum plans are generally well contextualised to meet the needs of the school. Aspects for development within specific plans were discussed at the post-evaluation meetings.
- The process of school self-evaluation (SSE) is progressing well. The school has gathered and analysed data from parents, pupils and relevant school assessments in relation to spelling. The school's DEIS plan sets out specific and measurable targets for themes within DEIS which are supported by an appropriate range of actions and strategies.
- There is scope to develop the quality of individual teacher planning. Overall, teachers' long-term plans are of a good quality. It is recommended that short-term planning includes specific objectives, an outline of learning activities and explicit provision for differentiation.

- 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 overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers display proficient classroom management skills, and utilise a wide range of resources and methodologies. They explain concepts clearly and model language competently. Purposeful and stimulating displays were evident throughout the school. To ensure that pupils retain key concepts, knowledge and skills learned, it is recommended that teachers regularly revise and consolidate previous learning.
- Tá gnéithe le forbairt i múineadh agus i bhfoghlaím na Gaeilge. Chonachtas úsáid chuí de thaispeántais, d'achmainní agus de chluichí i gceachtanna. Baineann na h-oidí úsáid as obair bheirte agus drámaíocht chomh maith. Í ngach suímh áfach, tá deacrachtaí ag na daltaí cumarsáid a dhéanamh, ceisteanna a fhreagairt agus abairtí a chumadh. Moltar cur chuige uile-scoile a fhorbairt agus a chur i bhfeidhm chun treoir a thabhairt do struchtúr ceachta, chun tosaíocht a thabhairt do ionchur teanga nua i ngach ceacht agus chun deiseanna rialta a thabhairt do dhaltáí an teanga a d'fhoghlaim siad a úsáid agus a dhaingniú. Ba chóir clár teanga ar leith a chumadh agus a chur i bhfeidhm ag leibhéal cuí do gach suíomh ranga. Ina theannta sin, ba chóir níos mó béime a chur ar aithriseoireacht dánta agus amhráin.
- *There is scope for development in the quality of teaching and learning in Irish. The use of appropriate displays, resources and games was observed in lessons. Teachers also make use of pair work and drama. In all settings, however, pupils have difficulty communicating, answering questions and structuring sentences. It is recommended that whole-school approaches are developed and implemented to guide lesson structure, the prioritisation of new language input in each lesson and regular opportunities for pupils to use and revise language learned. A specific language programme should be devised and implemented at an appropriate level for each class setting. In addition, greater emphasis should be placed on the recitation of poems and songs.*
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is commendable. A positive culture of reading is promoted through the effective use of novels and digital literacy. Strong links are forged in reading between home and school through cloud-based applications. A consistent approach to the teaching of comprehension strategies is adopted throughout the school. Consideration should now be given to extending the use of differentiated parallel readers to enable pupils to practise their reading skills in an incremental way. A whole-school approach to the teaching of genres is evident in writing, and many high quality samples of writing were observed. A consistent approach to the development of penmanship throughout the school is advised. In general, there is good emphasis on exploring poetry, and in some classes a greater emphasis on recitation and memorisation of poems is required. The planned implementation of a structured oral language programme will build on the pupils' oral language competencies.
- Teaching, learning and pupil achievement is of a high standard in Mathematics. Teachers place due emphasis on the teaching of mathematical language, and the application of Mathematics concepts to the pupils' own lives in lessons. Concrete materials, the use of pair work and the creation of Mathematics rich environments are further characteristics of this effective provision. To build on this progress, it is recommended that oral and mental mathematics, problem-solving strategies and the revision of learning become a more

intrinsic feature of lesson structure. In addition, assessment practices should be further developed to inform the differentiation of learning experiences in order to challenge and support pupils at different levels of ability.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is very good. The culture and positive atmosphere in the school provides a valuable context to promote the pupils' social and personal development. Specific SPHE methodologies and varied resources are used very successfully in the presentation of lessons. Implementation of SPHE is supported by the very successful use of a wide variety of programmes and initiatives. The *Roots of Empathy* programme, which enables pupils to track progressive milestones in an infant's development, is particularly praiseworthy. The pupils display a competent understanding of themselves, the structure of society and their role as citizens.
- There is good provision for assessment *of* learning at a whole-school level. All teachers maintain appropriate assessment records, particularly in literacy and numeracy. It is recommended that existing good practice is shared and extended to other curriculum areas in order to build a more comprehensive profile of pupils' progress. The challenge for the school will be to utilise the outcomes of this assessment to further inform differentiated planning and teaching. A greater emphasis on providing for pupils at stage one of the support continuum is advised through the development of classroom support plans.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- This is an inclusive, open and welcoming school in which successful supports are put in place to ensure equality of access to, and participation in, all aspects of school life. Through the very effective work of the HSCL teacher, the SCP scheme, the teaching staff, support teacher, school counsellor, CARE team and external agencies an extensive range of interventions, clubs, courses and programmes is in place for pupils and parents.
- Overall, lessons in support settings are characterised by positive relationships, effective use of resources and methodologies, and high levels of pupil engagement. The quality of planning for pupils with special education needs (SEN) varies. It is recommended that the elements of good practice observed amongst teachers in relation to education plans be shared and adopted at SEN team level. The pupils' progress against planned targets and learning objectives should be assessed systematically and documented formally and more regularly.

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Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1

The Board of Management welcomes the report of the inspectorate and is pleased that the dedication and hard work of the school staff was both recognised and affirmed.

The Board welcomes the recognition afforded to the members of the in-school management team, which, in recent years has been effectively halved in size.

Area 2

We welcome the observations of the inspection team, all of which will be carefully considered in due course.