

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Whole School Evaluation
REPORT**

**Saint Helen's Junior National School
Portmarnock, County Dublin
Uimhir rolla:19578P**

Date of inspection: 30 September 2009



WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION

This report has been written following a whole school evaluation of St Helen's Junior National School, Portmarnock, County Dublin. It presents the findings of an evaluation of the work of the school as a whole and makes recommendations for the further development of the work of the school. During the evaluation, the inspectors held pre-evaluation meetings with the principal, the teachers, the school's board of management and representatives of the parents' association. The evaluation was conducted over a number of days during which inspectors visited classrooms and observed teaching and learning. They interacted with pupils and teachers, examined pupils' work, and interacted with the class teachers. They reviewed school planning documentation and teachers' written preparation, and met with various staff teams, where appropriate. Following the evaluation visit, the inspectors provided oral feedback on the outcomes of the evaluation to the staff and to the board of management. 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.

1. INTRODUCTION – SCHOOL CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

St Helen's Junior National School is a co-educational school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The school serves the area of Portmarnock and enrolls pupils from junior infants to second class. Enrolment figures are stable and pupils' attendance levels are good. After second class, the majority of pupils transfer to St Helen's Senior National School.

The school incorporates a special unit for children with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). This unit consists of three classes: two primary classes and a pre-school class. The autism unit is clinically supported by Beechpark Autism Services of the Health Service Executive (HSE). Pupils diagnosed to be within the autistic spectrum are recommended for enrolment by Beechpark Autism Services. Pupils may enrol in the pre-school class of the autism unit from age three and transfer to one of the primary ASD classes at age four or five. Approximately half of the pupils who formerly attended the ASD classes have transferred to mainstream classes either within the school or in other schools.

2. QUALITY OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

2.1 Board of management

The board of management is correctly constituted; it meets regularly and it fulfils its functions in accordance with the Education Act 1998. The board is to be commended for the commitment it displays to the development and the efficient organisation of the school.

In a meeting with the inspectors, the board expressed some dissatisfaction with the process of liaising with external agencies regarding the effective functioning of the autism unit. The board identified the assessment of pupils, the decision-making process regarding the mainstreaming of pupils and transport issues as particular concerns. It is suggested that a general overview of pupils' attainment levels in standardised test results be included in the principal's report to the board.

2.2 In-school management

The principal displays energy and enthusiasm in the performance of her duties. She has been successful in creating a collegial working environment between teachers and has overseen the development of an affirming, safe and ordered learning environment for pupils. In order to enhance teaching and learning within the school, the principal should develop her role as an instructional leader and ensure that standards of pupil attainment play a central role in curriculum planning.

Specific duties have been identified for each member of the in-school management team, encompassing the organisational, the curricular and the pastoral. A strong spirit of teamwork permeates the work of this management team. It is good practice that formal meetings of the team are held on a regular basis and that written reports of their work are circulated to all teachers. In order to optimise the impact of the work of the in-school management team on the development of teaching and learning, it is suggested that each member of the team develops an annual curriculum action plan prioritising for development some aspect of their curricular area of responsibility. These action plans should ensure that a broad and balanced curriculum is implemented.

2.3 Management of resources

The current staffing schedule for this school is nine mainstream teachers, two teachers in support roles and three teachers in the autism unit. The allocation of teaching staff in the school is in compliance with this schedule. Additionally, there is a part-time resource teacher for five hours to meet a specific educational need.

The school building is spacious. There are a number of rooms not required as classrooms. Three of otherwise vacant rooms have been developed by the school as a science room, a mathematics room and a computer room. The smooth running of the school and its clean and tidy appearance reflect the work of the secretary and the cleaning staff. There is a good range of resources available to support teaching and learning, with provision for learning support being particularly well-resourced.

2.4 Management of relationships and communication with the school community

The parents' association meets regularly during the school year. Its members support a range of activities within the school such as Sports Day, the Green Schools Programme, the administration of the school library and the organisation of an annual book fair. A newsletter issues from the committee to the general parent body each term. It is clear that the parents' association is committed and effective.

At a meeting with the inspectors, parents' representative expressed satisfaction with the opportunities available to them to meet with their child's teacher and with the quality of information supplied to them in the annual written report which they receive at the end of the school year.

Parents have had opportunities to contribute to policy development in areas such as anti bullying, homework and relationship and sexuality education (RSE). This is very good.

2.5 Management of pupils

Efficient organisational routines contribute to the effective management of pupils. Pupil behaviour was observed to be very good. A positive learning environment has been created and is maintained within the school.

3. QUALITY OF SCHOOL PLANNING

3.1 Whole-school and classroom planning

The quality of school planning is good. Key organisational policies required by legislation have been drawn up and ratified by the board; these include an enrolment policy, a code of behaviour and a health and safety policy. In general, policies are sufficiently contextualised and detailed to impact positively on the school. It is noteworthy that a policy of staff rotation has been put in place. This provides teachers with opportunities to teach all age ranges, thereby developing their awareness of pupils' needs at each grade level and enabling them to maintain a breadth of competence. Procedures for the mentoring of newly qualified teachers require development. Enrolment of pupils with special needs requires amendment to take account of the fact that a school may not defer the enrolment of a pupil with special educational needs pending assessment and/or the provision of resources from the Department of Education and Science.

It is good practice that curriculum plans are reviewed on a systematic and regular basis. An effective aspect of recently reviewed curriculum plans is the focus on providing teachers with ideas for lessons thereby providing for continuity and progression in pupils' learning. To optimise the impact of these plans, the school should consider expanding this focus on ideas for lessons to include guidance regarding effective teaching and learning.

A team-approach is taken to the development of long-term schemes with teachers at the same class level working together to achieve a co-ordinated programme of learning at each class level. This is effective in contributing to the teaching of a co-ordinated learning programme between classes at the same grade level. Long-term schemes also indicate that provision is being made to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum at each grade level. While a team approach is also taken to the development of short-term plans, these short-term plans are not being sufficiently contextualised to take account of the learning needs of pupils. Insufficient detail is being provided to ensure that provision is being made for appropriately challenging learning. There is insufficient planning for the development of pupils' learning in a number of curriculum areas.

Teachers are creating a monthly progress record by annotating their short-term plans. This means that a lot of information, unnecessary for its purpose, is being retained in the monthly progress records. In the interests of clarity and to enable appropriate filing, teachers should complete the monthly progress record as a separate document.

3.2 Child protection policy and procedures

Confirmation was provided that, in compliance with Department of Education and Science Primary Circular 0061/2006, the board of management has formally adopted the *Child Protection Guidelines for Primary Schools* (Department of Education and Science, September 2001). Confirmation was also provided 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.

4. QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

4.1 Overview of learning and teaching

Some aspects of learning and teaching within the school are satisfactory: classrooms are appropriately resourced, there are positive, affirming interactions between teachers and pupils and

the involvement of the learning support teachers in the mainstream class is effective. The integration of pupils from the autism unit into the mainstream class is also successful.

However, overall, the quality of teaching within the mainstream setting requires development. Lessons generally need to be more challenging in terms of the demands they make upon pupils. More imaginative and interesting introductions to lessons are required in order to enhance pupil interest levels. Greater use should be made of story as a way of engaging pupils' attention and developing their conceptual understanding. The organisation of group work needs attention in order to provide pupils with more focused teacher assistance. More emphasis must be placed on the recapitulation of learning at the conclusion of lessons. The display of pupils' work and other resources should be enhanced to provide a more effective visual focus for lessons and to create a more visually stimulating learning environment. It is recommended that attention be paid to these matters with the overall aim of improving the quality of teaching and of learning.

4.2 Language

Gaeilge

Tá caighdeán sásuil ag baint le múineadh agus foghlaim na Gaeilge, cé go mbaintear leas iomarcach as Béarla. Tá raon deas rann ar eolas ag na daltaí agus aithrisíonn siad iad go taitneamhach. Baintear úsáid mhaith as scéalaíocht chun teanga leanúnach a chur ar fáil agus is cleachtas breá é go bhfuil leabhair scríofa as Gaeilge sa leabharlann. Is cleachtas maith i roinnt de na ranganna go bhfuil na daltaí in ann ceisteanna a chur chomh maith le ceisteanna a fhreagairt. Cé go bhfuil foclóir breá ag daltaí i roinnt ranganna agus cé go gcuirtear béim mhaith ar fhuaimniú ceart, moltar go mbeadh níos mó Gaeilge leanúnach le cloisteáil ag tús ceachtanna. Chuirfeadh an cur chuige seo le cumas na ndaltaí an teanga a thuiscint agus aithris a dhéanamh ar rithim agus ar fhuaimneanna na teanga. Tá dianghá le h-eolas nua a mhúineadh i ngach ceach. Ba cóir i bhfad níos mó béime a chur ar theagasc trí mheán na Gaeilge

[Irish]

The quality of teaching and learning in Irish is satisfactory, although the frequent use of English was noted. A good range of rhymes and poems are known by the pupils and they recite these with enthusiasm. Good use is made of story-telling to provide pupils with the opportunity to hear a continuous flow of language and it is good practice that books written in Irish are available in the library. It is good practice that, in some classes, pupils are able to ask, in addition to answer questions. While pupils in some classes have a good store of vocabulary and an appropriate emphasis is placed on correct pronunciation, it is recommended that, at the beginning of lessons, a greater emphasis be placed on listening to Irish in order to develop pupils' understanding of the language and their ability to imitate the rhythm and sounds of the language. There is a definite need to ensure that new content is taught in each lesson. Also, much greater emphasis should be placed on teaching lessons through the medium of Irish.

English

The quality of teaching and learning in English is satisfactory. Pupils display very good oral language abilities. In some classes, questioning by teachers is effective at probing pupils' responses and encouraging them to elaborate upon these responses. Encouraging pupils to question each other is another good practice that is evident in some classrooms. Pupils display a good knowledge of a range of rhymes and at every class level, a commendable emphasis is placed on poetry. However, generally speaking, lessons to develop oral language abilities require clearer and more challenging objectives and need to make use of a wider variety of approaches.

An appropriately multi-faceted approach is taken to the teaching of reading. A class reader, individualised reading schemes, library books and initiatives such as paired reading with pupils from a local post-primary school provide pupils with a range of enjoyable and appropriately differentiated learning experiences. Effective routines to support the use of the library are in evidence in some classrooms. These routines include maintaining reading logs and providing pupils with the opportunity to discuss their books with their peers. In the infant classrooms, there is a need to make greater use of language experience charts to accompany displays in order to add to the print-rich environment of the classroom. While appropriate attention is paid, in some classes, to developing pupils' understanding of stories and their ability to summarise stories and while open-ended questions are effective in probing pupils' thinking, there is a need for a clearer emphasis on the teaching of specific reading skills.

Pupils demonstrate good phonological awareness skills. However, there is an over-reliance on workbooks for the teaching of spellings. The words the pupils require in their writing should be included in the spellings which they learn. Pupils also need to demonstrate greater mastery of the correct spelling of frequently occurring words and need to develop strategies for approaching the spelling of unfamiliar words. A greater emphasis should be placed on the use of visual cues in the learning of these words. The teaching of spelling is insufficiently differentiated to meet all learning needs.

It is good that younger pupils have recently begun to be provided with the opportunity to engage in independent writing. Older pupils demonstrate a good ability to write coherently on a given topic. Pupils enjoy writing poetry. It is good practice that pupils have had the opportunity to work in groups to write poetry. However, some lessons in creative writing need to challenge the thinking of pupils further in order to ensure they produce work commensurate with their ability. Written activities in a number of curriculum areas are effectively differentiated to meet varying pupil ability levels. Providing additional support to pupils during these writing activities needs to be more focused to optimise pupils' learning.

4.3 Mathematics

The quality of teaching in Mathematics is satisfactory. Effective practices include drawing pupils' attention to pattern in number and using story to contextualise the learning of number. However, while teachers' planning identifies sufficiently specific learning objectives for lessons, insufficient attention is paid to differentiating these objectives to optimise learning for all pupils. Consequently, some lessons are insufficiently challenging for pupils. It is, therefore, necessary for teachers to more carefully assess pupils' attainment levels in advance of lessons and to use this information to ensure that learning activities are pitched at an appropriate level.

Overall, the quality of pupils' learning in Mathematics is good. The majority of pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of a range of mathematical concepts that have been taught. They demonstrate a good understanding of the concept of number and number operations and a good ability to solve appropriately challenging written problems.

4.4 Social, Environmental and Scientific Education

History

The quality of teaching and learning in History is satisfactory. An appropriate variety of learning experiences is provided for pupils. In the infant classes, there is an over-reliance on stories without an historical context to develop pupils' sense of chronology. It is suggested that the school expands upon this range of stories to include more stories on the lives of people and historical events. It is also suggested that provision for personal and local History and the study of

the origin and traditions of various festivals be more specifically delineated per class level within the school plan. This would help to ensure optimum progression in pupils' learning.

Geography

The quality of teaching and learning in Geography is satisfactory. However, reviewing monthly progress records from the previous school year reveals a number of weaknesses in provision. For example, the strand unit of 'people and places in other areas' has been inadequately addressed in the infant classes while graphical skills have been insufficiently developed in first and second class. An examination of current teacher planning documentation supported the finding that some strand units need to be developed further and also this revealed some examples of duplication of topic from year to year.

There are some effective aspects of provision. For example, the school participates successfully in the Green Schools Programme. This is effective in creating a real-life dimension to learning in environmental education. It is also good practice that the school has carried out an environmental audit of the natural resources available to enrich learning. However, a review of monthly progress records from the last school year suggests that use is not being made of this audit in a progressive way as the pupils proceed through the school. This is recommended.

Science

The quality of teaching and learning in Science is satisfactory. Lesson activities are appropriate. However, because these activities are largely drawn from one textbook, they can result in a lack of variety in learning experiences. While the school plan makes provision for a broad and balanced curriculum, provision in some classrooms is not aligned with this school plan. The designing and making aspect of the curriculum is not sufficiently developed within the school's provision for Science.

4.5 Arts Education

Visual Arts

The quality of teaching and learning in the Visual Arts is satisfactory. However, the curriculum is not being implemented in a broad and balanced fashion. For example, monthly progress records from the last school year reveal that in some classrooms, no visual arts activities were carried out in the month of September. In first and second class, a greater emphasis needs to be placed on 'fabric and fibre', 'print' and 'looking and responding to the work of artists and sculptures and art in the environment.' Pupils could be provided with more opportunity to demonstrate creativity in the visual arts activities they undertake.

The school plan for the Visual Arts has been recently reviewed by teachers resulting in the provision of a richer range of learning experiences for pupils. Greater attention should be paid by teachers to identifying clear learning objectives to lessons in order to ensure progression in pupils' learning. The display of pupils' work could be made more visually appealing.

Music

The quality of teaching and learning in Music is good. A published textbook scheme forms the basis of the programme being provided for pupils. This is used effectively by teachers to provide pupils with a broad and balanced learning experience. In the teaching of singing, pupils need to be provided with a clear starting note. It is commendable that, during the last school year, pupils had the opportunity to hear a live string quartet in the school. It is recommended that the school considers how other first-hand experiences of Music could be utilised to enrich curriculum provision.

Drama

The quality of teaching and learning in Drama is satisfactory. A review of progress records from the last school year indicates that there is an over emphasis on isolated activities rather than providing pupils with coherent learning experiences encompassing the full range of the curriculum. The recently revised school plan for Drama should prove useful in addressing this shortcoming because it provides teachers with a suite of interconnected lessons which are delineated per class level and encompass a range of contexts and techniques for exploring Drama.

4.6 Physical Education

The quality of teaching and learning in Physical Education is good. Lessons in Physical Education are managed effectively and pupils engage with enthusiasm. Activities are appropriately challenging. Due regard is paid to issues of safety.

External tutors provide tuition in Irish dancing and Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) skills during the school day. At the post-evaluation meeting, it was explained that a review of provision in these two areas had taken place and that a decision had been taken to deliver Irish dancing during the weekly discretionary time which the curriculum allows. The school is advised to keep this arrangement under review in light of ensuring the best possible use of the discretionary curriculum time available.

4.7 Social, Personal and Health Education

The quality of teaching and learning in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is good. Positive teacher pupil relationships contribute to the development of an appropriate learning environment for pupils. During the inspection, circle-time was observed to be used effectively. Pupils were familiar with the concept and demonstrated a good ability to discuss emotions in an appropriate manner.

While the school plan provides for the teaching of Social, Personal and Health Education in a broad and balanced fashion, this is not being implemented in all classrooms. Teachers need to examine their provision for this curriculum area and ensure that they implement the full range of curriculum content.

4.8 Assessment

The quality of assessment is good. An appropriate range of modes of assessments is utilised throughout the school including teacher observation, teacher designed tasks and tests, standardised tests and diagnostic tests. The range of standardised and diagnostic tests has been reviewed and amended in consultation with the school psychologist. It is good practice that a tracking system for monitoring pupils' progress has been recently introduced. A variety of assessment records is used by various teachers in a variety of curriculum areas. These include anecdotal records, social interaction grids and rubrics for Irish. It would be worthwhile for these approaches to be disseminated and discussed on a school-wide basis in terms of establishing best practice and ensuring continuity of assessment as pupils proceed through the school. Pupils' written work should be monitored more carefully. More extensive use of appropriately personalised comments would add to the impact of this monitoring for pupils.

5. QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS

5.1 Pupils with special educational needs

Mainstream school

The quality of provision of learning support in the mainstream school is good and pupils are making appropriate progress. Learning support is provided in both literacy and Mathematics and is resourced effectively. Teaching is undertaken in a pleasant and affirming manner. In general, lessons are appropriately structured and sufficiently challenging with a clear correlation between activities, pupils' needs, pupils' strengths and pupils' interests. Teacher questioning encourages pupils to verbalise their thinking and this is working well. Teachers encourage pupils to review their own progress and this is effective in developing their confidence. Encouraging pupils to review their classroom work in the learning support setting would enhance the ability of pupils to connect and apply their learning in the support setting to the mainstream setting. It is important that all planning is informed by pupils' needs as identified in their psychological assessments.

For individual pupils where learning support is provided exclusively on a withdrawal basis, consideration should be given to incorporating some in-class support work particularly in terms of helping pupils to apply their learning in the mainstream setting and the development of social skills. It is good practice that there are clear procedures for discontinuing support for individual pupils when it is no longer required

Autism unit

Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) provision within the school is very well organised and managed. Policy and procedure documents have been developed and roles and responsibilities clarified. Much of the school's development planning activity in recent years has been focused on the ASD provision. The school plan contains a well-developed special educational needs (SEN) policy.

A draft policy on challenging behaviour contains useful guidance for staff, focusing on preventative and long-term strategies as well as strategies for responding to immediate difficulties. It notes staff training undertaken in this area and suggests further training, where relevant.

Effective structures for communication and collaboration within the ASD unit and between the ASD unit and the rest of the school have been put in place. The teachers in the ASD classes bring a range of valuable experience to their work. The special needs assistants (SNAs) contribute very positively to the quality of the overall provision. Teachers and SNAs collaborate effectively and interact in a caring and supportive manner with the pupils.

A well-constructed booklet provides parents and others with a useful summary of school policies and procedures, and teaching approaches related to the ASD provision. Home-school diaries facilitate regular communication between home and school. Annual school reports provide clear information about the pupils school adjustment, social development and educational progress. The individual education plan (IEP) process facilitates the involvement of teachers, parents and clinical support personnel in identifying and planning for priority needs and goals

In addition to its referral role, Beechpark Autism Services provides assessment, advice, and assistance in aspects of programme planning and staff development. The personnel involved in this support work include a psychologist, speech and language therapist and occupational therapist. Nurse advice is available to the pre-school class. It is clear that this multidisciplinary

support has contributed very significantly to the development of the school's current capacity to meet the needs of its pupils with ASD.

The accommodation allocated to the ASD classes is generous in terms of overall space. It is conveniently located. It allows access to the general school facilities and it is well maintained. The classrooms are well equipped with requisites and materials for the curricular areas, including gross-motor, fine motor and social and imaginative play. The base room for the pre-school class is somewhat confined and, although this class uses an adjacent section of the general purpose room for a range of daily activities, additional space for low-distraction activities would be beneficial. In general, finding space for out-of-classroom assessment, therapeutic and educational activities is a challenge.

Teachers in the ASD classes follow general school practice with regard to planning, preparation and recording, with additional strong emphasis being placed on differentiation for individual needs. Careful attention is given to the practical elements of planning that are important in an ASD context. These include the organisation of daily routines, sourcing, adaptation, storage and retrieval of teaching materials, along with the preparation of visual supports for communication, classroom management, behaviour management and task completion.

The level of pupil engagement in learning activities and in social interaction is commendable. Social and personal skills are developed both in set lessons and in the context of daily routines and natural interactions. There is a systematic approach to development of early literacy and numeracy skills. Physical activities, both energetic and calming, are well catered for. Good use is made of arts education activities to promote communication, social interaction and flexibility in behaviour.

In classroom organisation and lesson delivery the teachers successfully incorporate a range of methodologies that take autism-related needs into account. Structured daily routines create predictability and consistency. Predictable use of space is a marked feature. Visual supports make clear to the pupils where, when and how activities and tasks are to be completed. Visual supports are used to facilitate communication. Appropriate pupil behaviour is shaped and supported through visual prompts, positive reinforcement and social stories. Direct teaching of skills takes place in one-to-one and small group settings. Skills are taught in sequential steps, through direct, individualised instruction. This is balanced by the use of a naturalistic, interactive approach where staff members respond to signals of interest from the pupils, using incidental opportunities across a range of daily contexts to promote communication and social interaction. Commendable encouragement is given to the development of play and the use of the imagination, with staff acting as play and communication partners and encouraging pupils towards social play with peers.

In view of the particular difficulties experienced by pupils with ASD in the generalisation of learning, it is commendable that pupils are enabled to learn skills in range of contexts. Group activities promote social awareness, interaction and cooperation. The use of daily routines as contexts for learning and the teaching and reinforcement of skills in natural contexts is well developed in all classes. Transitions from activity to activity and from space to space are well managed. Across the three classes there is scope for development in relation to the promotion of independent task completion involving the repetition and reinforcement of skills without direct staff support. In some contexts there may be benefit to be gained from minimising the potential distraction from adult voices.

The school provides well-planned opportunities for pupils with ASD to be included in activities with pupils in mainstream classes. A senior staff member coordinates the development of individualised inclusion plans which are reviewed at least three times a year.

School management and staff are to be commended for the work that has been achieved in developing high quality provision for pupils with ASD. In consolidating this achievement consideration should be given to drawing up a staff development plan in relation to autism for the school as a whole. This might involve auditing previous staff training, identifying future needs and identifying internal and external resources to meet those needs. It is suggested that the school reconfigures the overall accommodation with a view to better providing for low-distraction activities and ancillary activities. It is also recommended that an increased emphasis be placed on independent task completion.

5.2 Other supports for pupils: disadvantaged, minority and other groups

The interest demonstrated by all teachers in each individual pupil's welfare ensures that the needs of pupils are identified and met with due care and sensitivity.

6. CONCLUSION

The school has strengths in the following areas:

- There is a strong spirit of community between the board of management, teachers and parents.
- School routines are organised effectively contributing to the creation of an ordered and affirming learning environment.
- An effective aspect of curriculum planning is the focus on providing teachers with ideas for lessons in a way that provides for continuity and progression in pupils' learning.
- The school has developed a range of commendable practices in the education of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders.
- The integration of pupils from the autism unit within the mainstream school is managed very effectively.

The following key recommendations are made in order to further improve the quality of education provided by the school:

- Lessons generally need to be more challenging in terms of the demands they make on pupils
- There is a need to enrich the range of learning experiences provided for pupils with less emphasis placed on textbooks and workbooks as the basis for lessons.
- Teachers' planning needs to address variations in pupils' ability levels more effectively.
- Sna ceachtanna Gaeilge, ba cóir i bhfad níos mó béime a chur ar theagasc trí mheán na Gaeilge

[During Irish lessons, much greater emphasis should be placed on teaching through the medium of Irish.]

Post-evaluation meetings were held with the staff and the board of management where the draft findings and recommendations of the evaluation were presented and discussed.

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Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The BOM and staff thank the inspectors for the unobtrusive and professional manner in which the evaluation was carried out.

The Board commends the teaching, care and ancillary staff for their dedication, and commitment to providing an affirming, safe and ordered environment for all pupils as acknowledged in the report.

The Board welcomes the affirmation of the school planning process and of the effective outcome of the systematic review of curricular plans.

The Board welcomes the endorsement of policy and procedures outlining the educational provision for children with autism in the school.

The Board commends the inclusive ethos of the school and applauds the effective manner in which pupils from the autism unit are included in the mainstream school as outlined in the report.

The Board commends the principal for her leadership and dedication to her work especially in view of the substantial extra workload involved in the administration of the autistic unit which is incorporated into the school and which caters for 18 children. We ask the inspectors to use their influence to obtain additional support to address the management and administration of this unit.

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

Short term planning documents and cuntas míósúil format have been revisited and new templates drawn up.

Táimid tar éis tacaíocht a fháil conas múineadh na Gaeilge agus plean scoile na Gaeilge a fhorbairt agus a fheabhsú.

As the school year progressed onwards from the settling in period in September, teachers provided a differentiated approach to teaching and learning and thus ensured sufficiently challenging work was presented to optimise individual student achievement.