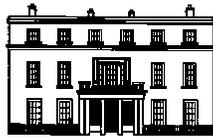


An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

St. Peter Apostle Senior National School
Neilstown Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22
Uimhir rolla: 19642V

Date of inspection: 16 January 2014



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

1. Introduction

St. Peter Apostle Senior National School is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and caters for boys and girls from third to sixth class. This DEIS (*Delivering Equality in Schools*) band 1 school has an enrolment of 238 pupils. The attendance level of the pupils is very good. The Home School Community Liaison Officer (HSCL), School Completion Co-ordinator and school staff are highly commended for the ongoing monitoring of attendance and the implementation of attendance strategies. The school's success in reducing the number of pupils who miss twenty days or more over a three-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 two 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 and parents are very supportive of the work of the school. The board is highly commended for maintaining the school to a very high standard and for supporting the acquisition of a wide range of resources to support teaching and learning.
- The work of the principal and the in-school management team is very good.
- The teachers are skilled practitioners; they present very well-structured lessons which are supported by a wide range of resources.
- The school staff is commended for achieving steady and measurable improvements in literacy and numeracy in recent years.
- The quality of English writing in terms of content and presentation is very good.
- The management of pupils is excellent. They are well behaved and respectful.
- The quality of supports for pupils with special educational needs is of a very high standard.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- To ensure that pupils retain key concepts, knowledge and skills learned, it is recommended that teachers regularly revise and consolidate previous learning.
- Í múineadh na Gaeilge, moltar don scoil clár córasach a chumadh ag leibhéal cuí do gach leibhéal ranga. Ní mór an chlár seo a chur i bhfeidhm go céimniúil, agus dul siar rialta a dhéanamh air. *In the teaching of Irish, It is recommended that the school devise a specific language programme at an appropriate level for each class level. This programme should be implemented systematically and regularly revised*

3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management is very supportive of the work of the school. Members of the board are frequent visitors to the school and enthusiastically support school events and celebrations. The board is highly commended for the enhancement of school facilities and for maintaining the school building to a very high standard.
- The quality of in-school management is very good. The principal displays very effective organisational and management skills. He has a deep knowledge and understanding of the families within the school community. He is ably supported by the deputy principal, assistant principal and special duties teachers. They successfully oversee the planning, delivery and monitoring of initiatives which have a positive impact on teaching and learning.
- The management of resources is very successful. The well-maintained classrooms and communal areas of the school host an impressive range of visually-stimulating and purposeful displays. A wide range of resources to support teaching and learning is well organised in each classroom and is expertly utilised by teachers. The auxiliary staff carry out a wide range of duties competently.
- The management of pupils is excellent. A positive, respectful atmosphere is evident throughout the school. The code of behaviour is complemented by the teachers' impressive classroom management skills. Responses to pupil questionnaires administered as part of the evaluation indicate that a very high number of pupils like school and feel safe in school and in the playground.
- The management of relationships and communications within the school community is of a very high standard. Almost all parents surveyed as part of the evaluation indicate that they are happy with the school and believe there is a good atmosphere in the school. Communication between home and school is promoted by regular newsletters and notes. Parents are regularly invited to the school to participate in parent courses and to support in-class Mathematics, reading and Science initiatives through the HSCL programme.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The quality of the school planning and school self-evaluation process is good. The school engages in a collaborative planning process which is capably led by the assistant principal, and involves staff, board of management and parents. A wide range of administrative plans is in place to support the smooth running of the school. Some curriculum plans need to be extended to reflect and disseminate current good practice in the school. In Irish, it is recommended that a systematic language programme, based on the themes of the curriculum, be devised.
- The process of school self-evaluation is well progressed. The school has produced its first school self-evaluation report, and the school improvement plans include clear targets and strategies for improvement in numeracy.
- The quality of classroom planning is commendable. Short-term plans are based on curriculum objectives, and are supported by an appropriate range of resources and

methodologies. To build on this effective practice greater consideration should be given to planning for differentiated learning outcomes, tasks and skills development in Mathematics and English. Very good planning is prepared by teachers in support settings, and, going forward, this should be presented on a weekly basis as recommended in the *Learning-Support Guidelines*.

- 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 with some very effective practice observed. The teachers, who are skilled practitioners, present well-structured and well-paced lessons. High levels of pupil participation are evident in learning activities. 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 bhfoghlaim na Gaeilge sa scoil. Tugadh faoi deara úsáid chuí as achmainní, taispeántais, amhráin, rainn agus as cluichí i gceachtanna. Í ngach suímh áfach, tá deacrachtaí ag na daltaí abairtí a chumadh, ceisteanna a fhreagairt agus cumarsáid a dhéanamh. Moltar don scoil clár córasach a chumadh ag leibhéal cuí do gach leibhéal ranga. Ní mór an chlár seo a chur i bhfeidhm go céimniúil, agus dul siar rialta a dhéanamh air. Tá na daltaí ag déanamh dul chun cinn cuí ina gcuid léitheoireachta agus ina gcuid scríbhneoireachta.
- *There is scope for development in the quality of teaching and learning in Irish in the school. The use of appropriate resources, displays, rhymes and games was observed in lessons. In all settings, however, pupils have difficulty structuring sentences, answering questions and communicating. It is recommended that the school devise a specific language programme at an appropriate level for each class level. This programme should be implemented systematically and regularly revised. The pupils are making appropriate progress in relation to their reading and writing.*
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is good. A whole-school approach to the teaching of writing genres is apparent. High quality samples of the pupils' writing were evident in copybooks and displayed in classrooms. Reading attainment has improved progressively in recent years. The school has introduced a graded reading scheme and has commenced a range of reading initiatives. To add impetus to this effective practice greater attention should be paid to teaching specific reading skills to groups of pupils in lessons. The school has identified oral language as an area for development. As part of its review the school should consider how the pupils' expressive language skills can be developed.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is commendable. The school has made steady progress in raising the pupils' achievement levels in this curriculum area over the past three years. For the most part, teachers present well-structured lessons, and utilise a variety of resources and methodologies in learning activities. Concepts are explained clearly and good levels of pupil participation and engagement are evident in lessons. The retention of knowledge and understanding of Mathematics concepts, facts and operations is a challenge for a good number of pupils. As a means of addressing this, it is recommended that teachers revise and consolidate previous learning in Mathematics on an ongoing basis.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Drama is good. The pupils display a keen enthusiasm for Drama and benefit from a balanced programme which involves exploring and making drama, and also reflecting upon it. The teachers use a variety of drama strategies and conventions to develop the pupils' empathy and to reinforce their understanding of stories and events. Greater consideration should be given to utilising drama as a methodology to develop the pupils' expressive language skills.
- Assessment practices are good. Teachers employ a wide range of assessment modes. The pupils' written work is monitored regularly and includes very good developmental feedback.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- The quality of supports for pupils with special educational needs is of a very high standard. Teaching methods and activities are very well matched to the pupils' specific needs. Clearly-defined learning targets are included in education plans, and the pupils' progress is carefully monitored. Commendably, models of in-class support are utilised throughout the school. To further develop this model of support, it is recommended that the outcomes of assessment are used to guide in-class support interventions, and that clear roles are established for support teachers and class teachers in programme planning and in the delivery of lessons.
- This is an inclusive, open and welcoming school in which successful interventions are put in place to support all pupils. The shared responsibility among the principal, class teachers, support teachers, HSCL teacher, school completion co-ordinator and special needs assistants, for ensuring that each child's educational needs are fulfilled, is praiseworthy.

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 Peter Apostle SNS would like to acknowledge the positive findings of the Whole School Evaluation. The Board is encouraged by and agrees with the identified strengths and good practices as outlined in the report.

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 also acknowledges and fully accepts the recommendations for further development as laid out in the report, and has commenced actions and procedures to ensure those recommendations are carried out as soon as possible.