

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Whole School Evaluation
REPORT**

**North Dublin National School Project
Ballymun Road, Dublin 9
Uimhir rolla: 19845M**

Date of inspection: 2 February 2012



1. Introduction

The North Dublin National School Project operates under the patronage of its own patron committee, whose function is to protect the ethos and culture of the school as a multi-denominational, co-educational, child-centred and democratically run organisation. Although it has its own Patron the school is affiliated to Educate Together and liaises with Educate Together on matters of mutual interest. There are 217 pupils enrolled in the school.

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.

2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

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

- All members of the school community share a common vision for the school and work together to promote the development of the school.
- The board of management and the patron committee are committed to the provision of high quality education for all of the pupils, and work together very effectively.
- The principal, in-school management team and all staff members give generously of their expertise, time and commitment to provide highly effective leadership in curriculum, pastoral and organisational areas.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the four subject areas observed is very good, with few areas for improvement.
- Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is very good.
- Parents, individually and through the Parents', Guardians', Teachers' Association (PGTA), are involved actively in supporting the work of the school, and regular communication facilitates strong collaboration between home and school.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- It is recommended that a more concise format be developed for monthly progress records.
- Moltar go gcuirfí samplaí de shaothar na ndaltaí i nGaeilge ar taispeáint ar bhonn níos rialta tríd an scoil chun iad a athneartú as a n-iarrachtaí. *It is recommended that pupils' work in Irish be displayed on a more regular basis throughout the school to affirm their efforts.*

3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management works as a cohesive and committed group. It plays a dynamic role in the development of school policy and displays a keen interest in all aspects of school life.
- The principal and the in-school management team work collaboratively and in a focused manner to ensure that the school operates highly effectively. Leadership roles are distributed among staff members, who all share organisational, curriculum and pastoral responsibilities.
- Resources are managed judiciously. A maintenance plan ensures that the school building and grounds are maintained in excellent condition. An excellent supply of resources is provided to support teaching and learning. Prudent financial management ensures that funding is available for the purchase of resources as required.
- The patron committee co-operates closely with the board of management. In the past, the patron committee's work has involved the acquisition and development of a site. Now that the permanent school building is complete, the committee is concentrating on protecting the school's distinct ethos and culture.
- Communication between all members of the school community is managed very effectively. Parents' responses on questionnaires indicate that they are well informed about their children's progress and school events, and that they feel welcome in the school. Pupils' questionnaire responses show that they are secure in school, that they get on well with each other and that they feel that they are making good progress.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The quality of whole school planning is very good. The planning process involves thorough deliberation on draft policies by management, staff and parents. Policies are reviewed regularly. Detailed policies have been written for all curricular areas. A wide range of organisational policies has also been developed. These policies provide specific guidance on a comprehensive range of school activities and procedures.
- Teachers' long-term and short-term plans are detailed and indicate clearly proposed lesson content, teaching methods, learning activities, differentiation practices and assessment strategies to be used. An appropriate range of resources to support learning is prepared. When the staff next reviews the format of monthly progress records, it is recommended that a more concise format be developed for these records.
- The implementation and impact of school planning and self-evaluation is overseen perceptively by the principal. Regular reflection on the impact of school policy, combined with careful analysis of assessment data and feedback from parents and teachers, ensures that all aspects of the school planning process are interrogated regularly and effectively to address the ongoing needs of the school.
- 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

- Déantar soláthar cuimsitheach do mhúineadh na Gaeilge sa scoil. Múintear na snáitheanna curaclaim uile ag na leibhéil ranga oiriúnacha agus cuirtear eispéireas saibhir sa teanga ar fáil do na daltaí. Cuireann an fhoireann béim inmholta ar mhodhanna múinte cumarsáideacha agus dearann gach oide áiseanna agus suimh chun cumarsáid a chothú. Múintear raon fairsing rann, filíocht agus amhrán i ngach rang agus aithrisíonn na daltaí iad seo le taitneamh. Eagraítear gníomhaíochtaí foghlama struchtúrtha chun scileanna éisteachta agus labhartha a fhorbairt i ngach rang, agus baineann na daltaí tairbhe as a rannpháirtíocht i gceachtanna spésiúla. Ó rang a dó ar aghaidh déantar cúram ceart d'fhorbairt scileanna léitheoireachta agus scríbhneoireachta na ndaltaí. Baintear úsáid tháirgiúil as drámaíocht agus as cluichí teanga chun deiseanna a sholáthar do gach dalta páirt ghníomhach a ghlacadh sna ceachtanna. Is léir, ó leibhéil rannpháirtíochta na ndaltaí sna gníomhaíochtaí foghlama suimiúla agus as an ábaltacht a léiríonn siad an teanga a úsáid, go bhfuil caighdeán inmholta á shroichint i nGaeilge tríd an scoil. Tá samplaí tarraingteacha de shaothar na ndaltaí ar taispeáint i bhformhór de na seomraí. Chun breis athneartaithe a thabhairt do na daltaí as a n-iarrachtaí, moltar go gcuirfí samplaí éagsúla dá saothar ar taispeáint ar bhonn níos rialta tríd an scoil, chomh maith leis na taispeántais sna seomraí ranga.
- *Comprehensive provision is made for the teaching of Irish in the school. All of the strands are taught at the appropriate class levels and a rich language experience is provided for the pupils. The staff places commendable emphasis on communicative teaching methods and each teacher designs resources and settings to foster communication. A wide range of rhymes, poetry and songs is taught in each class and the pupils recite these with enjoyment. Structured learning activities are organised to develop pupils' listening and speaking skills in all classes, and pupils benefit from their participation in interesting lessons. From second class onwards appropriate care is given to the development of pupils' reading and writing skills. Productive use is made of drama and language games to provide opportunities for each pupil to participate actively in lessons. It is clear, from the way in which pupils participate readily in the interesting learning activities and the ability they demonstrate in the use of the language, that a commendable standard is being attained in Irish throughout the school. To give pupils further affirmation on their efforts, it is recommended that varied samples of their work be displayed on a more regular basis through the school, in addition to the displays in the classrooms.*
- Pupils are making very good progress across the reading, writing and oral strands of the English curriculum. Teachers approach the development of oral language skills in a structured manner, using a wide range of contexts to develop them. The school successfully fosters a love of reading in the pupils with a very attractive school library greatly assisting the focus on reading for enjoyment. Lessons include very good provision for the development of the pupils' word attack skills and phonological awareness, with suitable emphasis on comprehension skills. Highly commendable emphasis is placed on the writing process. Pupils clearly enjoy creative writing and they write capably in a wide variety of genres. Some classes create their own books and share these with other classes. The extension of this highly commendable practice throughout the school would be worthwhile. All teachers place admirable emphasis on poetry to promote the development of pupils' language experience.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Mathematics is very high. The school is well presented as a maths-rich environment. Lesson content is linked appropriately to the experience and environment of the pupils. Very good emphasis is placed on the

development of mental mathematics and mathematical language. Lessons incorporate focused use of concrete resources and hands-on activities. Very good provision is in place for the development of pupils' problem solving skills, with collaborative activities being used to very successful effect in this regard. Very effective differentiation practices are in place for Mathematics and pupil progress is monitored carefully. Very good linkage between curriculum strands and integration with other curriculum areas is in place.

- Music education in the school is of high quality. Pupils clearly enjoy music lessons which are delivered successfully in both discrete and integrated contexts. Teachers place very good emphasis on singing and pupils sing a range of songs in English and Irish. Creative teaching approaches are used and commendable emphasis is placed on composing, improvising and creating music. The development of pupils' music literacy is addressed in a well-structured manner throughout the school. Pupils are exposed to a range of music from different styles, periods and cultures. They use instruments very well for performing and for composing creative musical compositions. Technology is used very well for recording their efforts. Pupils' work in music is linked imaginatively with other curriculum areas.
- The overall quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is very good in each of the curriculum areas evaluated. Teachers prepare a commendable variety of learning activities which facilitate high levels of pupil engagement in lessons. Stimulating resources are used effectively to provide active learning opportunities for pupils. Their work is monitored carefully and assessment practices throughout the school are very good.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent in the school. A highly collaborative approach to the development of individual learning plans for pupils is a strong feature of planning in this area. These plans are used effectively by mainstream and support teachers. Pupils' progress is assessed regularly and appropriate adjustments are made to plans as required.
- Support is provided in a variety of settings, including mainstream classes and through withdrawal of individuals and small groups. A highly commendable range of teaching approaches is used to very good effect. This is complemented by the use of varied and appropriate learning activities and useful resources. Mainstream class teachers collaborate closely with the special education teachers to ensure the effective co-ordination of pupils' work. Regular liaison among all teachers, including the principal, aids decision-making regarding the continuance of support for individual pupils.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report

On behalf of the whole school community, the Board of Management of the North Dublin National School Project, would like to thank the Inspection Team for their professionalism, courtesy and collaborative approach and the very positive report on our school. Their approach ensured that the evaluation process was a positive and worthwhile experience which will enhance teaching and learning in our school.

We are appreciative of the way in which the commitment, enthusiasm and dedication of our teachers, parents, pupils and board members have been recognised and affirmed. We are delighted to have the standards achieved by pupils and staff acknowledged in the report.

We would like to recommend that the pupil questionnaire's format might be changed as our pupils found it ambiguous.

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 and staff welcome the recommendations and have begun implementing them