

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School
Littlepace, Clonee, Dublin 15
Uimhir rolla: 20137P

Date of inspection: 4 December 2013



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

1. Introduction

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School is a co-educational school serving the Littlepace and Castaheny areas of Dublin 15. The school was established in 2001 and operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. In response to the rapidly growing, culturally diverse pupil population, the school split into a junior and senior school in 2008. Co-located on the same site, both schools continue to share the same ethos and work in a spirit of partnership and collaboration. Overall, attendance rates are very good for the majority of the 477 pupils. During the whole-school evaluation, inspectors observed teaching and learning in ten mainstream class settings and five support teaching settings. 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:

- The principal provides highly effective, visionary and reflective leadership to the school.
- The in-school management team adopt a very active and successful approach to the development of teaching and learning.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the school is of a very high standard.
- Support for pupils with additional learning needs is delivered in a collaborative, cohesive and targeted manner and results in the provision of very effective focused interventions.
- The board is commended for its role in managing the development of the school and for its strong support in promoting the school's ethos of inclusivity.
- The quality of pupils' behaviour is very good and a mutually respectful relationship has been created between pupils and teachers and among the pupils themselves.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- The provision of formative feedback to pupils in their copybooks should be adopted by teachers and embedded consistently as a whole-school practice.

3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management is correctly constituted and undertakes its work effectively. Members are commended for their role in managing the development of the school and for their strong support in promoting the school's ethos of inclusivity. It is particularly noteworthy that the board is aware of current priorities for the development of teaching and learning within the school and of its role in advancing these priorities.
- The principal provides highly effective, visionary and reflective leadership to the school. His vision for the school is grounded in the creation of a positive and caring school

climate, while at the same time seeking high standards from the pupils and from the teaching staff in its entirety. He is capably assisted by a deputy-principal and an in-school management team who adopt a very active and successful approach to the development of teaching and learning. A very good team dynamic is evident and many teachers generously share their skills as needs arise. The frequent participation of many staff members in continuing professional development successfully supports improvements in teaching and learning in the school.

- The school actively encourages the involvement of parents in its work. The parents' association, which is shared with the junior school, is very supportive of a range of school initiatives. Parents' representatives report very high levels of satisfaction with the school and the quality of education it provides for the pupils. The outcomes of parents' questionnaires, administered during the evaluation, confirm this view and also indicate very high levels of satisfaction with the school's atmosphere and its welcome for parents.
- The management of pupils is excellent. Pupils are very diligent and enthusiastic learners. They are co-operative and respectful in their interactions with teachers and their peers. They are facilitated to engage in a carefully selected range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Responses to questionnaires, issued to some pupils during the evaluation, are very positive with regard to all aspects of school life.
- The school is pro-active in the acquisition of a broad range of good quality teaching and learning resources. When completed, the new suite of support classrooms will provide very appropriate additional teaching accommodation. Currently, a mainstream classroom teacher is deployed as a support teacher. The board should review this deployment, and fully satisfy itself that the deployment is in line with Department guidelines. Ancillary staff provide very good support in their respective areas of responsibility.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The quality of school planning is very good. Organisational and curricular policies are devised collaboratively and are frequently reviewed to ensure that they reflect the context of a developing school. In the main, they provide very informative guidance on school matters.
- Very effective and consistent approaches are evident in relation to teachers' planning and preparation across all settings. In a number of instances, there is potential to specify the new language input for the teaching of Irish.
- There is clear evidence that the school is enthusiastically engaged in the review of its strengths and areas for development with regard to literacy and numeracy. The involvement of teachers, parents and pupils in this review is particularly praised. It is evident that a number of agreed strategies are in place to address prioritised areas for development. The identification of specific targets and strategies to evaluate improvements in pupils' learning will bring the self-evaluation process to full fruition.
- 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

- Teaching, learning and pupil achievement in the settings observed is of a very high standard. Teachers provide interesting and relevant learning experiences for their pupils. Lessons are lively, well structured and effectively delivered. A broad variety of teaching methodologies is deployed skilfully. The judicious use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by teachers and pupils is noted. Purposeful, attractive and supportive learning environments are evident in all settings across the school. The active engagement of pupils in their own learning is highly commended. It is evident that pupils are making very good progress in their learning. In questionnaires completed by the pupils in fourth and sixth classes, as part of the evaluation, the majority of the pupils reported that they enjoy their lessons and learning, and that their teachers explain things clearly to them.
- Tá caighdeán na múinteoireachta agus na foghlama sa Ghaeilge ar chaighdeán maith ar an iomlán. Baineann na hoidí úsáid éifeachtach as obair bheirte, cluichí agus drámaíocht chun scileanna éisteachta agus labhartha na ndaltaí a chothú agus a leathnú ó rang go rang. Léann na daltaí le luas agus le foghraíocht cheart, ach i gcásanna áirithe, b'fhiú béim sa bhreis a dhíriú ar fhorbairt tuisceanna na ndaltaí ar ábhar na léitheoireachta. Tá moladh mór tuillte ag an scoil as an nGaeilge a úsáid go rialta mar theanga bhainisteoirachta ranga agus teanga caidreamh na scoile. Ar an iomlán, cuirtear tascanna oiriúnacha ar siúl sa scríbhneoireacht.
- *The quality of teaching and learning in Irish is good overall. Teachers effectively use pair work, games and drama to foster and extend pupils' listening and speaking skills from class to class. Pupils read with appropriate pace and pronunciation, but in some instances, extra focus on developing pupils' understanding of the reading material would be worthwhile. The school is deserving of praise for the manner in which Irish is regularly used as the language of classroom management and school communication. In the main, appropriate writing tasks are provided for the pupils.*
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is commendable. Discrete oral language lessons facilitate the structured development of pupils' linguistic competence in English. There is a praiseworthy and systematic approach to the development of pupils' reading skills. In addition, the school successfully employs a range of strategies to foster the pupils' love of reading. Pupils' writing is celebrated and they write competently in a wide variety of genres.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is very good. Teachers present their lessons through the skilful deployment of very suitable teaching approaches. An agreed approach to problem-solving is consistently implemented across the school. Pupils can competently apply relevant mathematical terminology during learning activities. Through inspectors' interactions with pupils during the evaluation and a review of the school's assessment data, it is evident that the school is making very good progress in improving standards in Mathematics.
- Teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Music is of a very high quality. The effective collaboration of teachers, and the sharing of their particular skills, is instrumental in nurturing the musical potential of the pupils in terms of performance and the appreciation of music. Song-singing is of a very high quality and the school choir is a testament to the whole-school approach to promoting and fostering the pupils' love of music.
- A review of assessment strategies has added further impetus to embedding a consistent whole-school approach in this area. Pupils' written work is regularly monitored by the majority of teachers. It is recommended, however that all teachers provide feedback to pupils in their copybooks that will support improvements in their learning.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is very good. Teachers in support settings operate very successfully as a team. Support for pupils with additional learning needs is delivered in a collaborative, cohesive and targeted manner and results in the provision of very effective focused interventions. Focused leadership is evident in the organisation of this additional support.
- The quality of teaching in support settings is of a very high standard and pupils are making commendable progress in literacy, numeracy, social skills' development and in the acquisition of English as an additional language. Pupils' learning needs are carefully identified and detailed educational plans contain specific learning targets and intended teaching strategies. The special-needs assistants are supportive of pupils' independence and discharge their duties in a caring manner.
- The motto "Many cultures, one community" underpins the school's sensitive and caring response to the needs of particular pupils and their families. Very comprehensive strategies have been devised to support pupils during the transition to post-primary school.

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 Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School fully endorses this Whole School Evaluation report. The board warmly welcomes the findings of the report and is pleased that the dedication and commitment of all the stakeholders in the school has been recognised in such a positive manner.

The board of management particularly welcomes the report's findings that the quality of teaching and learning in the school is of a very high standard and that the management of pupils is excellent. This is indeed a tribute to the professionalism of the staff and the board of management fully endorses these findings.

The board is pleased that the parent and student body hold the school in such high esteem. The board is also delighted to endorse the contributions of the parents' association to the work of the school.

The board also wishes to affirm the highly effective leadership provided by the school principal, deputy principal and in-school management team, which was highlighted in the report.

This report provides affirmation to the entire school community and gives us all a renewed impetus to continue to strive for excellence. As the school progresses through the school self-evaluation process, this report provides the school with a very clear validation of progress to date, and gives us a clear sense of direction as we move to the next stage in the process.

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

As part of the school's self-evaluation process, the staff has initiated a review of the school's Assessment for Learning practices. This review will include focus on the provision of formative feedback to pupils in their copy books, in line with the report's recommendation.