

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Tyrrelstown Educate Together NS
Tyrrelstown, Dublin 15.
Uimhir rolla: 20201V

Date of inspection: 11 November 2011



1. Introduction

Tyrrelstown Educate Together National School is located in a newly constructed three-storey school building on the Hollywood Road in the new suburb of Tyrrelstown, Dublin 15. It caters for pupils from junior infants to sixth class and is under the patronage of Educate Together. Currently, there are 493 pupils in the school. It is expected that enrolments will continue to grow until there are approximately 650 pupils in twenty-four mainstream classes in the school. Pupil attendance is good. During the whole-school evaluation inspectors observed teaching and learning in eleven mainstream class settings and five support teaching settings. The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

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

- The school is managed by an enthusiastic and committed board.
- The principal and in-school management team work well with all the teachers to provide effective educational leadership in the pastoral, organisational and curriculum domains.
- The quality of school planning and self-evaluation is very good.
- The school environment and resources are of a very high quality.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Irish and English is good.
- Pupils are making good progress in Mathematics, revealing enthusiasm and a keen interest in the subject.
- Classroom management is very good with a positive rapport between teachers and pupils evident throughout the school.
- Planning to guide support for pupils with additional learning needs is of a high quality, with some very good exemplars of practice noted during the evaluation.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- It is recommended that clearer guidelines for the deployment of in-class personnel be drawn up as part of the school plan.
- It is recommended that short-term plans provide further detail about developing pupils' cognitive academic language, particularly in Mathematics and Science.

3. Quality of School Management

- The school is managed by an enthusiastic and committed board that is properly constituted and sets about its work in an organised, strategic manner. It holds meetings regularly. Minutes are taken and financial records are presented at each meeting. It is recommended that the school accounts be audited or certified on an annual basis.
- The board is centrally involved in the formulation and ratification of all school policies. One of its immediate priorities is the inauguration of the school's new Early Intervention Autism Unit.
- The in-school management team operates very effectively under the leadership of a dynamic and experienced principal. His educational vision is underpinned by an inclusive

ethos which is a highly commendable feature of the school and which contributes to a positive and caring school culture. Each member of the in-school management team has designated curriculum, pastoral and organisational responsibilities which are reviewed periodically to ensure that leadership is directed to the areas of current priority. It is recommended that the school should revert to the practice of recording the enrolment and attendance figures for boys and girls separately in the Daily Report Book. This will also facilitate the compilation of the statistical returns to the Department in October each year.

- The management of pupils is very good. All classroom interactions occur in a courteous, affirming manner and pupils engage positively in the learning activities. Pupils' questionnaire responses indicate that they enjoy their lessons and that they feel safe and happy in school; they consider that they are treated equitably and that teachers listen to their concerns.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The quality of whole school planning and self-evaluation is very good. A comprehensive school plan has been compiled which is well presented and, through the school's internal information and communication technologies (ICT) network, is readily accessible to all members of staff. In addition to a clear description of the curriculum programme for each class, the plan contains a range of suggested teaching and learning resources. The school community is fully involved in the development of policy.
- All teachers prepare long and short-term plans in which lesson content is clearly outlined. The school template for recording monthly progress is particularly effective as it provides a succinct description of work completed in each class. It is recommended that short-term plans provide further detail about developing pupils' cognitive academic language, particularly in Mathematics and Science.
- 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

- Tá caighdeán sásúil á bhaint amach i múineadh agus i bhfoghlaim na Gaeilge. Sonraítear dearcadh dearfach timpeall na scoile i leith na teanga. Eagraíonn na hoidí raon inmholta gníomhaíochtaí foghlama sna snáitheanna eagsúla curaclaim. Sa chuid is mó de na ranganna, cuirtear béim chuí ar an gcur chuige cumarsáideach agus, ina theannta sin, tugtar deiseanna do dhaltáí éisteacht leis an nGaeilge á labhairt go leanúnach ag oidí. Baintear leas tairbheach as *Seachtain na Gaeilge* agus straitéisí eile dá leithéid chun cleachtadh a thabhairt do dhaltáí an Ghaeilge a labhairt i ngnáth shuíomhanna sóisialta. I ngach rang, foghlamaíonn na daltaí rainn bheaga agus amhráin go rialta agus is fiú é sin chun a bhfoclóir agus a n-eispéireas teanga a shaibhriú. Ó rang a dó ar aghaidh, spreagtar daltaí chun léimh agus scríobh i nGaeilge agus tá ag éirí go maith san obair seo. Moltar anois raon níos leithne de theacsanna Gaeilge a úsáid chun freastal ar léibhéil éagsúla chumais daltaí, sna hardranganna ach go háirithe. Is inmholta caighdeán agus éagsúlacht na samplaí de scríbhneoireacht phearsanta na ndaltaí atá ar taispeáint sna seomraí ranga.

- *A satisfactory standard is achieved in the teaching and learning of Irish. A positive attitude towards the language is evident throughout the school. Teachers organise a commendable range of learning activities across all the curriculum strands. In most classes, an appropriate emphasis is placed on the communicative approach, and pupils are provided with opportunities to hear Irish spoken in a continuing manner by teachers. Effective use is made of "Irish Week" and other such strategies to provide practice to pupils to speak Irish in common social settings. In every class, pupils regularly learn simple rhymes and songs and this is very worthwhile as a means of enriching their language experience. From second class on, pupils are exhorted to read and write in Irish and they are succeeding well in this work. It is now recommended that a wider range of Irish texts be used to provide for the various levels of ability among pupils, particularly in the senior classes. An admirable variety and standard is evident in the samples of pupils' personal writing which are displayed in classrooms.*
- The quality of teaching and learning in English is good. The programme is underpinned by a comprehensive and well-formulated school plan and by the quality of each teacher's individual planning. An appropriate play-based approach to developing pupils' language and cognition is used in infant classes. All classrooms are presented in a print-rich, stimulating manner where pupils are exposed to a broad range of literature. A differentiated approach to developing pupils' oral, reading and writing competencies is used in most classrooms. A structured phonological programme is used effectively and pupils' word-attack and reading skills are developed systematically. Good provision is in place to scaffold pupils' writing across a variety of genres. A good range of poems is taught and pupils reveal a keen appreciation of poetry. Assessment practices in English are good and pupils' work in copybooks is appropriately monitored.
- Pupils are making good progress in Mathematics, revealing enthusiasm and a keen interest in the subject. Teachers adopt a variety of pedagogical approaches, with whole-class teaching and collaborative learning being used effectively. Lessons have a clear structure and good pace. Concrete resources are deployed effectively to develop concepts and to provide pupils with appropriate hands-on activities. In the main, content is linked effectively to pupils' experiences and to the environment, with some teachers making very good provision for this aspect of conceptual development. Good examples of integration with other curriculum areas and of the linkage of concepts were observed. Pupils are provided with frequent opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills with good emphasis on mental mathematics. A system of in-class support provided by learning-support and resource teachers is used to assist pupils experiencing difficulty. It is recommended that clearer guidelines for the deployment of in-class personnel be drawn up as part of the school plan.
- Suitable provision is in place for the delivery of the Drama curriculum in both discrete and integrated settings. Pupils are provided with appropriate opportunities to enter physically, emotionally and intellectually into the world of drama. Teachers provide pupils with a range of opportunities to engage imaginatively in Drama activities making effective use of resources, discussion, collaborative learning and story from other curriculum areas.
- In the four subjects evaluated, lessons were seen to be well planned and structured, making suitable provision for the active involvement of pupils. Pupils applied themselves to tasks with enthusiasm and the quality of their written work in copybooks, particularly in senior classes, was very good. Classroom management was very good. A good range of formative and summative assessment instruments was used and teachers gave constructive feedback to pupils on how to improve their work. Questionnaire responses from parents indicate that the great majority of them consider the school to be well run, that teaching is good and that they consider their children to be doing well in school.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- Support teachers for pupils with special educational needs and for those experiencing learning difficulties operate in a collaborative and systematic manner, providing support in numeracy, literacy and also support for pupils with English as an additional language. Overall, school and teacher planning to guide this support is of a high quality, with some very good exemplars of practice noted during the evaluation. Pupils are identified for support using a good range of diagnostic tests. The school places due emphasis on early intervention, providing well-structured learning activities for these pupils. Support is delivered in class and in withdrawal contexts. Resources are used to good effect, with pupils being provided with hands-on learning experiences. To build on current good practice, it is recommended that the school explore further opportunities for the use of in-class support, particularly using the station-teaching approach. There is potential for the development of the school's assessment approaches; systems to track the achievement of individual pupils over time are recommended.