Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Children’s Ark School
Mid-Western Regional Hospital, Limerick

Uimhir rolla: 20234N

Date of inspection: 22 March 2010
WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION
A whole-school evaluation of Children’s Ark School, Limerick was undertaken in March 2010. This report presents the findings of the evaluation and makes recommendations for improvement. The evaluation focused on the quality of teaching and learning in English, Irish, Mathematics and History. 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.

INTRODUCTION – SCHOOL CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The Children’s Ark School is located in Sunshine Ward in the Paediatric unit of the Mid-Western Regional Hospital in Limerick city. The school was established in December 2006 with one teacher to provide an educational service to the patients in the hospital who are eligible for full time education at primary and post-primary levels. In late March 2008, a second teacher was appointed to the school in order to meet the increased needs within the hospital. The hospital personnel identify children who are eligible for enrolment in the school and provide the information to the school staff each morning. As hospital patients are both admitted and discharged throughout the week, the pupil profile in the school is subject to change on a daily basis. During the period of evaluation, most of the pupils enrolled were of primary age with a small cluster at third and fourth class level. Four post-primary students were present on the ward and received attention from the teachers on an individual basis.

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<tr>
<th>Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pupils enrolled in the school</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>Teachers on the school staff</td>
<td>2</td>
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The number of daily enrolments in the school depends not only on the number of children admitted to the hospital but also their state of health, the length of their stay and their class level. The attendance in the school varies considerably from month to month; therefore it is difficult to establish average enrolment figures for the year. The mean attendance figures for January were 5.6 girls and 5.4 boys while those for February were 6.6 girls and 4.6 boys. On enrolment, contact details regarding the pupil’s base school are requested from the child or their parents and permission is requested to contact the base school to establish the pupil’s current schoolwork.

Both teachers are trained primary teachers with experience of teaching at a range of class levels. They use their previous experience, including that gained in special education contexts, to assist them in adapting lessons to meet a wide range of class levels and learning needs. The pupil cohort consists of pupils who are in hospital for a short stay and pupils who have complex medical conditions that necessitate regular hospitalisation, such as enzyme infusion, oncology or cystic fibrosis. This latter group of pupils are more likely to miss schooling on a regular basis as they may attend the hospital either on a regular basis for an assigned day for treatment or as recurrent admissions for a block of time. The school staff has established procedures to support the continuity of their schooling, with good liaison arrangements with the base schools, advance planning, when possible, to meet individual needs, and consistent instruction by an assigned teacher in order to establish a working relationship.

The school day begins at 9.00am at which time groups that have been organised for tuition attend the classroom. Patients who remain on the ward and are unable to attend the classroom are offered educational packs prepared for their class level. These packs contain a range of materials related to cross-curricular themes that change regularly throughout each school term. As the
children on the wards do not get a mid-morning break, the school staff has developed a similar practice of working through to lunch at 12.00 midday. Some of the patients in the ward are identified by the teachers for focussed support at their bedsides in the afternoons. The school day ends at 2.40pm, but this time is frequently extended by the teachers when involved in individual tuition. If the pupil is purposefully engaged with the curricular task, the teachers prefer to complete the activity with them rather than abruptly end the lesson.

Constant interruptions are a feature of the educational delivery in this school as pupils may attend the school late due to medical issues or may have to leave for x-rays, scans, physiotherapy or visits from consultants on the ward. In addition to the pupils who move in and out of the room, parents sometimes attend with the children, nursing staff monitor medical or care needs as required and catering staff sometimes need to access canteen items stored at the back of the classroom. However, the teachers continue to deliver the lessons in a professional and competent manner while working around these unavoidable intrusions. They are conscious of the need to monitor the stamina and demeanour of the pupils during the school day and refer them back to the ward if necessary. The school experiences a consistent challenge in catering for a small number of children who, because of their medical conditions and infection control measures, can only access the educational service in isolation room settings. The use of educational resources in these settings is necessarily constrained because of infection control requirements and this places limitations on the educational experiences that can be provided to these pupils.

1. **QUALITY OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT**

1.1 **Characteristic spirit, mission or vision**

The school’s stated mission is to deliver high quality educational opportunities to patients in a supportive environment that will complement the medical care being provided during their hospital stay. School staff members endeavour to ensure normality for the pupils by encouraging them to participate in and experience a regular school day. Their aim is to provide an enriching and positive experience by recognizing the uniqueness of each pupil and educating each of them according to their individual ability and learning needs. The school staff strives to provide a supportive learning environment with a range of stimulating resources across all class levels at primary level and appropriate supportive materials for post-primary students for their chosen subject areas. Teachers initiate contact personally with each new admission and with their parents, to inform them of the school service and promote attendance in the school.

The school staff firmly believes that the children attending the school have an entitlement to continue with their education, regardless of their medical circumstances. A pupil’s reintegration into school will be less problematic if they have not lost ground in academic subjects during their hospital stay. The principal and deputy principal judge the effectiveness of the educational service they provide through the pupils’ ability to engage and complete assigned work, their ability to reintegrate into their own schools and the levels of parental satisfaction with the tuition provided.

1.2 **Board of management**

The board of management is properly constituted and displays a strong commitment to the work of the school. The patron of the school is the hospital manager and hospital personnel retain a strong presence on the board of management. The roles of treasurer and secretary have been assigned to board members and the accounts of income and expenditure are audited annually in accordance with Section 18 of the Education Act (1998). The board members bring a wide range of skills, knowledge of hospital procedures and diverse expertise to their various roles on the
board. Meetings are convened on a regular basis, agenda and draft policies are circulated in advance, and clear succinct minutes are recorded.

The board has been proactive in seeking suitable accommodation for the school and has been given grant approval for a new school facility, work on which is to commence in the near future. This facility will provide custom built accommodation allowing flexible tuition spaces, office accommodation and storage facilities for educational resources.

The board of management discharges its management functions effectively. It is evident that the chairperson and the board are diligent in their commitment to the school and have engaged proactively in the development of organisational policies and curricular plans. It is advised that a review date should be clearly identified when each policy is ratified and signed by the board. This will contribute to the school self-evaluation process and assist in school development planning. Members of the board expressed satisfaction with the work of the school and the quality of the educational service being provided to the pupils. They affirmed the dedication, commitment and accessibility of the school staff. The strong commitment to staff development evidenced by the minutes of the board should be reflected in a written school policy on professional development. This policy should include details of training received by individual staff members and identify emerging training needs. Following initial discussions at the pre-inspection meeting, the board has ensured that the school’s enrolment policy has been formally ratified by the patron in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act (1998).

1.3 In-school management

The in-school management team comprises the principal and a deputy principal. The principal has been in the post since the establishment of the school. She exhibits beneficial leadership, organisational, and interpersonal skills that enable her to lead and manage the school effectively. The wider hospital community is appreciative of her dedication and professional standards and her strong vision for the future of the school. There is a strong sense of partnership, both in the working relationships of the teaching staff and in the co-operation observed with the medical staff in the hospital. The principal’s style of leadership is collegiate, and is characterised by a primary concern for the welfare of pupils and for the continuity of their education in a manner that does not compromise their medical recovery. Her primary focus is on the promotion of effective learning and teaching and how that can be best facilitated within the necessary constraints of a hospital environment. She retains a proactive role in the implementation of the curriculum at both primary and post-primary levels, and in the provision of a quality educational service by the school.

The duties assigned to the deputy principal currently represent a variety of curriculum and organisational tasks. The deputy principal has executed her duties in a professional manner making a genuine worthwhile contribution to the overall effectiveness of the school. The duties assigned to the deputy principal reflected the needs of the school when the post was established. However, it is now time to review the duties allocated to the post, and to develop termly priorities within the curricular, organisational and pastoral elements.

1.4 Management of relationships and communication with the school community

Observation of the collaborative relationships between hospital personnel and school staff during the evaluation indicated that the school has become embedded in the life of the hospital and the paediatric ward in particular. The school maintains a notice board on the corridor outside the classroom to disseminate information regarding the work of the school and to display pupils’ completed work. Pamphlets are also available for distribution in this area to alert new pupils and
their parents to the presence of the school if they are admitted outside of school opening hours. The contribution of part-time secretarial support to the school is particularly valued by the teachers for the provision of administrative support and assistance.

Due to the transient nature of the school population, no Parents’ Association is currently established in the school. The inspector met with two parents during the evaluation. Both parents had children who are recurrent admissions to the hospital and therefore are frequently enrolled in the school. They were very complimentary regarding the service provided by the school to their children and the individualised quality of the contact and feedback. Parents indicated that the teachers often assisted them by providing pertinent information regarding hospital protocols and procedures.

In this school setting there is a much closer contact with parents than would be the case in most mainstream schools. Frequently parents accompanied their children to the classroom for the initial session and remained in the room for a portion of the lesson. Once they observed that their children were positively engaged and relaxed in the classroom atmosphere, they often left the classroom. When tuition was provided on the ward, the parents were frequently present. During the course of the evaluation, both the observation of work practices and interviews with representatives of the parents revealed that the school staff had positive relationships with multi-disciplinary members of the hospital staff, with parents and with the pupils’ base schools.

The school has engaged in a number of outreach projects to widen the educational experience for the pupils in the hospital. These encounters have included visits from authors, artists in residence, the Puppet Portal project, students on placement from third level colleges, representatives from third world relief organisations and part-time teachers of Music and Visual Arts. Laudable use has been made of web cam links in the Áit Eile project to allow pupils to communicate with other hospital schools and with the web based activities that link the schools as communities through the site.

1.5 Management of pupils

The pupils were uniformly polite and courteous during the evaluation although many exhibited nervousness on their initial visit to the classroom. The presence of their parents in the classroom frequently helped to ease them into this new experience. The initial activities scheduled for the morning sessions were structured to ease the pupil’s transition to the hospital setting. The teachers displayed considerable insight and expertise in weaning pupils away from their parents and enticing them to engage in learning activities. The teachers were similarly inventive with their work on the wards, providing laptops with software and activities to pique pupils’ interest or expanding the knowledge base of post-primary pupils through access to on-line subject tuition. This web based resource enables post-primary students to access virtual on-line lessons on various aspects of their subjects, and with due regard to preparing for examinations at the end of both junior and senior cycles.

2. Quality of school planning

2.1 Whole-school and classroom planning

The school community is commended for its commitment to the school planning process and the creation of a good range of curriculum, organisational and administrative policies during the past four years. Most of the essential policies required under legislation have been devised and ratified by the board. These include policies on enrolment, attendance, pupil behaviour, and child
protection. Other policies that have particular significance in the hospital environment including hygiene, health and safety and infection control policy are in draft form awaiting additional review by relevant medical personnel.

Although only in existence for less than four years, the school has already engaged in self review by revising policies as the school staffing changed and the expansion of enrolment was possible. This process of curriculum development and review is a very positive characteristic of the school’s culture. The role of in-school management is acknowledged in this regard in much of the formation of the draft policies and curricular plans. The amount of work undertaken in developing the school plan to date is exemplary. The dissemination of the plan to the parents and wider school community is difficult given the transient nature of the school population. The notice board outside the classroom informs parents that policies are available for review. It would be beneficial if a file containing school policies could be made available for parents and other interested parties in the foyer of the new school building when it is completed.

Curricular plans have been devised for primary school class levels for Gaeilge, English, Mathematics, Visual Arts, Music, Drama, Physical Education and Social, Personal and Health Education. The Social Environmental and Scientific Education subject areas are prioritised for future development with the assistance of facilitators from the support services. The syllabi for the post-primary curriculum subjects and the assigned textbooks form the focus for curricular planning for second level students.

The school has taken an approach to classroom planning that reflects the particular enrolment situation of the school. Much of the focus on the planning area has been to ensure quick access to necessary materials, texts and resources, which is very essential in a hospital school in order to avoid loss of tuition time. Teachers provide long-term planning for the pupils who are regularly enrolled in the school when they require medical attention for conditions such as enzyme infusion or cystic fibrosis. Individual planning is provided on a flexible basis to respond to the needs of the pupils enrolled at any particular time. When teachers are aware that pupils will be enrolled for a specific timeframe, they devise a plan that reflects the needs of the pupil and mirrors the core subject coverage in the pupils’ base school. At the same time, the school staff provides long term planning on a thematic basis across the class levels, in the form of the educational packs that are prepared for dissemination to the children of primary school age on the ward. These themes and projects are carefully documented and created to meet diverse abilities and age ranges. The accompanying resource materials are compiled in folder formats in the classroom for ease of access.

The group tuition in the classroom is based on the integrated approach with a seamless transition from one subject to another. As the group composition can include a range of class levels, the teachers individualise and differentiate their questioning and expectations for each pupil and succeed commendably in including all the pupils in the lessons. Teachers decide on the group compositions once it is clear how many pupils are going to attend the morning session and they respond flexibly to additional pupils who arrive during the morning. Some subject areas are assigned to particular days in order to take advantage of the availability of part-time tuition hours for music, artist in residence or student PE teachers. Teaching on the wards necessitates one-to-one tuition and is focussed on the individual pupil’s school work and the continuation of work in their core subjects using the texts that students are using in their base schools.

Post-primary programmes are provided in accordance with the identified requirements of students when they enrol in the school. Priority is given to the core subjects or areas the students themselves identify as particularly necessary to them at the time. Post-primary pupils enrolled in
the school at the time of the evaluation were offered tuition in English at Junior Certificate level, and History and Mathematics at first year level. Active and purposeful involvement of pupils in their own learning is consistently fostered and laptops are often left with students on the ward to allow them to continue their working independently.

2.2 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. The existence of the policy is to be highlighted in the newsletter for parents on the notice board. A designated liaison person (DLP) and a deputy DLP have been appointed in line with the requirements of the guidelines.

3. QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

3.1 Language

Gaeilge

Tá pleann uile-scoile le haghaidh foillaim agus teagasc ar fáil sa Ghaeilge a chuireann comhthéacs na scoile san áireamh. Leagtar béim inmholta sa phlean scoile ar shuim agus ar mheas na ndaltaí ar an nGaeilge a chothú. Baintear feidhm éifeachtach as cuirteacha chun a dtuisint a fhógraítaí. Glacann na daltaí páirt fhonnmhar i gníomhaíochttaí labhairtha chun nuacht a thabhairt i gcomhrá na maidine. Cothaítear scileanna éisteachta na ndaltaí go hoiriúnach trí úsáid a bhaint as raing, as comhrá agus as gníomhaíochttaí eile. Tá deacrachtaí á gcuíid de na daltaí áfach a dtuairimim féin a nochadh trí mheán na Gaeilge. I rith na tréimhse cigireachta ní raibh morán léitheoireachta fhoirmiúil le sonrú i múineadh na Ghaeilge agus moltar níos mó úsáid a bhaint as leabhair mhóra agus as fiorleabhair bhun chileanna léitheoireachta na ndaltaí sa fhógraítaí. Dá tháirgeachtaí atá an féidir leis an nGaeilge a sheasadh, le linn na trí mhí a bhíodh na hoidí don leabhar a úsáideadh a thabhairt a bhfuil cáiliúil leis an spiorad a bhíodh ar fáil. Déanann na hoidí a mhúineadh le feidhmiú do na daltaí Gaeilge dáibh, i bpríomh le haghaidh, trí léiriú a smaoineann do an Ghaeilge.

Cuirtear cláracha oiriúnacha ríomhaireshachta ar fáil chun tuilleadh a thabhairt do scoláirí iarbhunscóile agus iad ag ullmhú do na scrúduithe stáit. Déanann na hoidí cabhair a bhaint as an t-áthasóir leis an nGaeilge, agus an spiorad a bhíodh le fáil, do thabhairt a bhaint as an nGaeilge.

Irish

There is a whole-school plan for the teaching and learning of Irish that takes account of this particular school’s context. Commendable emphasis is placed in the school plan on developing the pupils’ respect for and interest in Irish. Charts are used effectively to develop understanding. The pupils engage willingly in language activities to report news in a morning language session. Listening skills are appropriately developed through the use of rhymes, conversation and other suitable activities. Listening skills are appropriately developed through the use of rhymes, conversation and other suitable activities. However, some of the pupils have difficulty expressing themselves through Irish. During the inspection period little formal reading was observed in Irish and it is recommended that more use might be made of big books and real texts in Irish to develop the pupils’ reading skills.
Suitable computer programmes are made available in order to support post-primary students in preparing for state examinations. The teachers strive to provide assistance to them to continue with the work that was covered in their base schools. The teachers are commended for making very little use of translation when teaching a lesson in Irish. It would be beneficial if additional use was made of Irish as much as possible as a language of communication during the day.

English

The classroom is well resourced with copies of all relevant texts and workbooks from a range of reading schemes and supplementary extension readers. The frequent use of themes to integrate the work across the curriculum is particularly evident in the English lessons where the choice of vocabulary, poetry and other texts reflects the current theme at an appropriate level. In lessons observed, the cross-curricular approach to the development of oral language was particularly well deployed and pupils benefited from engaging in structured classroom discussions. Effective use is made of a range of material resources and teachers model the use of language well. They incorporate more challenging vocabulary and sentence structures for pupils who demonstrate particular competency in oral communication.

Suitable attention is given to phonological skills, phonemic awareness and word recognition skills for emergent readers while a language experience approach has been used to good effect for some pupils with special educational needs. The teachers foster a positive attitude to reading by affording the children opportunities to become involved in the Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) approach, by the use of a class novel and by encouraging children and parents to borrow books from the school library.

The functional and creative areas of writing are given due consideration and some good examples were observed during the course of the evaluation. Opportunities are provided to write in a variety of genres. Samples of the pupils’ writing are displayed in order to promote self esteem. Teachers create links between texts studied and pupils’ personal writing by having the pupils write from the perspective of particular characters. Pupils participate in competitions such as Make a Book and handwriting competitions as they arise during the school year. A variation on the book creation project has been developed whereby the thematic displays that have been developed in the classroom are formed into books for review by future students. The school has benefited from visits by various children’s authors to discuss how they approach the writing process, the source of their inspiration, the choice of illustrations and how the same book can be presented in different languages to appeal to various nationalities. Post-primary pupils are assisted to continue with their syllabus material at the appropriate level. Additional research materials on characters, development of plot and themes in assigned plays are provided as background material prior to the teacher attending for an individual session on the ward. This good practice serves to contextualise the subsequent interaction and invites the student to share responsibility for the lesson. Use is made of Exam Support on laptops to provide online tutorials in various aspects of the syllabus. This allows the students more time to engage with a variety of topics than would be possible in individualised tuition with the teachers.

3.2 Mathematics

The teachers are aware of the importance of continuing the pupils’ mathematical work and consolidating their knowledge of concepts and processes. The teachers use a wide range of textbooks and worksheets to provide additional work in particular strands and the school has amassed a good range of concrete materials for use as manipulatives when required. Due to the nature of the individual instruction employed in the school, new material is introduced as the
pupils progress through their textbooks rather than to an overall long-term plan. Teachers recognize the need to build on pupils’ existing mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding. When it is possible to teach a group session such as using the measurement strand, teachers ensure that the pupils work collaboratively, acquire the appropriate mathematics terminology and approach simple problems with confidence. Pupils’ comprehension is checked systematically and tasks are periodically punctuated with enjoyable mathematic-related activities. Commendable use is made of a range of software and ICT to vary the approach used for pupils in isolation areas where access to materials is prohibited due to risk of contamination or infection.

Frequently Mathematics is the most requested subject area for post-primary students as they often feel they can more catch up with other subjects through the textbooks but may require some tuition assistance with mathematics. Much of the support in this area is individualised and focussed on the student’s own texts to ensure students will continue to keep up with their class peers. The teachers are mindful of this priority area and have up-skilled in order to provide this assistance to Junior Certificate level. The school staff has routine access to primary level support services. It would be beneficial if the staff had access to in-service provision at second level to continue to meet the needs of the cohort as they present at the school, particularly in the light of changing curricula at second level.

3.3 History

Using the curriculum objectives the teachers show imagination and creativity in the lessons they deliver to the pupils. Across the class levels, the teaching is stimulating and challenging and is supported using various documents, artefacts and suitable sources. Timelines are used to support the development of pupils’ concept of chronology. Pupils show an interest in history and the project method has been used to good effect to examine specific periods in detail. A recent project on the Holocaust was linked with the Crocus Project and used source material such as the Diary of Anne Frank and photographic images. Constructive use has been made of the Internet in acquiring resources and in accessing information relevant to chosen topics.

In History, as with all the work in this school, access to the subject is differentiated for the age range and interest level of the pupils. An infant pupil had an interesting experience in working as a historian by prospecting in a tray of sand, like an archaeologist, for hidden artefacts, and bagging and labelling the finds. During the tuition with post-primary students, the teacher punctuated the reading of assigned content from the textbook with regular questions designed to focus the student’s attention.

3.4 Assessment

Pupils’ progress and achievement are assessed by a variety of methods, including review of assigned work, teacher observation, curriculum-related worksheets, work samples, portfolio and projects. Constructive and sensitive feedback is given to pupils during learning activities. Continuous formative assessment of pupils is a feature in this school. Even recurrent admissions require assessment as the teachers are unaware of what elements the students may have covered in their base schools in the period since their last discharge.

Access to the cross-curricular, thematic work is recorded on a monthly basis while more expansive notes are recorded on individual pupils’ access to subject instruction. These records reflect teacher assessment information and clearly illustrate areas requiring additional attention if the pupil is remaining in the hospital or is likely to return. The school’s practice is to open personal files on pupils on their second admission or when it is known that they are likely to be
long term patients. Notwithstanding the existence of much positive practice in relation to assessment the school has not yet developed a written policy on assessment. It is recommended that such a policy be developed, to reflect the unique characteristics of the school and the place that both diagnostic and standardised assessments will assume in the overall assessment provision.

4. QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS

4.1 Pupils with special educational needs

The school staff is particularly sensitive to the needs of pupils with special educational needs. The commitment evidenced during the evaluation to the creation of an inclusive and supportive environment should be enshrined by the school in a policy on special educational needs. Part of this policy could include requesting the base school to provide relevant information from a child’s current individual educational plan (IEP), in order to assist in maintaining a consistent approach to meeting priority educational needs. This would be particularly relevant with regard to methods of communication used with pupils with autistic spectrum disorders or behaviour support systems that have been devised for pupils with challenging behaviour.

During the evaluation one parent mentioned that her child attended resource teaching in the base school and that the hospital school teacher differentiated the work to meet the child’s needs. If pupils have a low incidence disability, specific structures should be in place to request pertinent information from their base schools to inform practice.

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

The school has established itself as a multi-denominational school and an inclusive and equitable approach is evident in all aspects of school life. The school supplies all texts, resources and activities to all pupils irrespective of socio-economic status. Activities and methodologies are adjusted to include more pictorial content for pupils who may have language competence issues and to meet the needs of children from Disadvantaged areas, Traveller pupils, and children of other cultural groups. The school has acquired the ‘Intercultural Guidelines for Primary Schools’ and resources from Integrate Ireland Language and Training. It is recommended that they should also access the post-primary guidelines published in 2006 by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment to assist in the provision of language support for post-primary students.

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The following are the main strengths identified in the evaluation:

- The board of management displays a dedication to the development of an effective educational service that will meet the diverse needs of the patient population.
- The teachers implement the key curricular principles of differentiation, integration and guided discovery learning to a commendable level.
- The close collaboration and partnership between the hospital and school staff contributes significantly to a familial, caring and productive educational environment for all the pupils.
- Pupils are universally well behaved, courteous and co-operative.
- Parents are highly appreciative of the service offered by the school and positively promote their children’s attendance.
As a means of building on these strengths and to address areas for development, the following key recommendations are made:

- It is recommended that the school continues to develop and refine the school plan. Priority attention should be given to the development of a policy on special educational needs, and an assessment policy that reflects the practice within the school.
- It is recommended that the duties assigned to the in-school management should be reviewed on an annual basis with time bound objectives identified for the various facets of the post.
- Moltar pléan uile-scoile don léitheoireacht sa Ghaeilge a leathnú, le bheim speisialta ar úsáid na scéalaíochta agus ar úsáid na leabhar mór ar mhaithe le saibhriú teanga. *It is recommended that the whole-school plan for Irish reading be extended with particular attention to the use of stories and use of big book format for language enrichment.*
- The school should request access to pertinent in-service professional training at second level for teachers, in order to continue to meet the needs of the post-primary cohort as they present at the school, particularly in the light of changing curricula at second level.

Post-evaluation meetings were held with the staff and board of management where the draft findings and recommendations of the evaluation were presented and discussed.
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 is happy that the report reflects the hard work and commitment of the teaching staff and the board members, and warmly welcomes the Inspectors’ validation of Children’s Ark School as a caring community of high quality teaching and learning. Her positive affirmation of how the teachers implement the key curricular principles of differentiation, integration and guided discovery learning to a commendable level is noted.

The Board of Management is particularly pleased that the report recognises and affirms the close collaboration and partnership between the Hospital and school staff. In this regard the Board wishes to acknowledge the invaluable and multi-faceted role the Hospital staff has played and continues to play in the day to day life of Children’s Ark School.

The Board would like to take this opportunity also to acknowledge the constant support which Children’s Ark School receives from the Hospital Schools network in Ireland.

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 of Children’s Ark School is happy to carry out the recommendations of the Inspector. To date the policies on special educational needs and infection control have been ratified.

Conclusion

The Board expresses its appreciation to the Inspector for her courtesy and professionalism in the course of the evaluation.