

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Saint David's National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Kilmore Road Artane Dublin 5
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	19919P

Date of Evaluation: 22-03-2017



WHAT IS A WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION: MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING?

Whole-School Evaluations – Management, Leadership and Learning report on the quality of teaching and learning and on the quality of management and leadership in a school. They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of educational provision in the school.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector(s) evaluated and reported under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

1. Teaching and learning
2. Support for pupils' wellbeing
3. School leadership and management

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning Report

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	22-03-2017
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with principal and deputy principal• Meeting with representatives of the board of management• Meeting with parent representatives• Meeting with teachers• Review of relevant documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to senior management team and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives

SCHOOL CONTEXT

A Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE - MLL) was undertaken in Saint David's National School, Artane, Dublin 5 in March 2017. Saint David's National School is a vertical boys' national school under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The school receives support from the School Completion Programme. There are 307 boys enrolled across twelve mainstream classrooms. Attendance rates among the pupils are very good.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- Very good enquiry-based learning is evident across the school; however, there is scope to improve learning in Irish.
- Teaching is of a commendable standard; further extension of team teaching is needed.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is commendable with some examples of outstanding practice.
- The quality of the support for pupils' well-being is very good.
- The leadership of the principal and in-school management team is highly effective.
- The school's current deployment of one teaching post does not comply with Circular SPED 02/05.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Team-teaching practices should be developed through collaborative planning, assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress.
- Ní mór scileanna teanga na ndaltaí thar snáitheanna an churaclaim Gaeilge a fhorbairt go comhsheasmhach sa scoil ina iomláine. *Pupils' language skills across the strands of the Irish curriculum should be developed consistently across the school.*
- The current deployment of a special education teaching post in a mainstream teaching role should be reviewed.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS OF PUPILS

- Overall, the quality of the learning achievements for pupils is good. Standardised test results are broadly in line with national averages in literacy and numeracy. In most instances, pupils were observed to participate enthusiastically in their learning and they have regular opportunities to work collaboratively. Many are competent and confident in discussing and presenting facts they have learned. Pupils in senior classes are engaged very effectively in enquiry-based learning. Learning in junior classes is facilitated very well through active participation in interesting lessons and play-based learning. The school facilitates pupils' involvement in a range of valuable curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Pupils with SEN make very good progress.
- Overall, learning achievements in literacy are good. Pupils engage very effectively in talk, discussion and reporting. Early literacy skills are very well developed. Pupils write well in a variety of genres, with commendable samples of procedural and explanation writing displayed. A greater emphasis on the writing process is advocated. Pupils read with expression. The recent introduction of differentiated reading materials is very commendable.
- Overall, learning achievements in numeracy are of a good standard. Pupils demonstrated a good understanding of different mathematical concepts. Very positive early mathematical learning experiences are well established. Effective differentiated learning is facilitated through group settings in other classes. Pupils regularly make mathematical connections to real life experiences. A greater whole-school focus on problem-solving challenges is needed.
- Sa foriomlán, baineann scóip chun forbartha maidir le caighdeán na foghlama sa Ghaeilge labhartha. I gceachtanna ar leith léiríodh cleachtais an-bhreátha agus ghlac na daltaí páirt go fonnmhar iontu. Bhí na daltaí ag obair laistigh de réimse teoranta de bhriathra, i gceachtanna eile áfach, níor cothaíodh comhrá go cuí i ngach ceacht agus cleachtadh aistriúchán go Béarla in amanna. Cé go léann siad le líofacht áirithe, ní mór a gcuid scileanna a fhorbairt. Cleachtann siad an scríbhneoireacht fheidhmiúil go rialta. *Overall, there is scope for development in the standard of oral language learning in Irish. In certain lessons very fine practices were seen and pupils participated eagerly. Pupils were working within a limited range of verbs in other lessons, conversation was not established appropriately in every lesson, and translation to English was practised at times. While they read with some fluency, pupils' skills should be further developed. They engage regularly in functional writing.*

2. QUALITY OF TEACHING

- Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers employ a wide range of methodologies and facilitate differentiated learning experiences. The recent introduction of team teaching is commended but needs to be extended; it requires more effective collaborative planning, assessment and monitoring to ensure optimal outcomes. Recently implemented whole-school approaches to improving pupils' behaviour are evident. There is need, however, to continue this work as, during the evaluation, some pupils were not sufficiently engaged to maximise their learning. Very high-quality educational displays are a strong feature of the school's learning environment.

- Tá caighdeán an teagaisc sa Ghaeilge go sásúil sa scoil ina iomláine, ach caithfear réimsí ar leith a fheabhsú. Nuair a breathnaíodh na cleachtais ab fhearr, cuireadh béim mhaith ar mhúnlú na teanga. Baineadh an-úsáid as scéalta. Moltar, díriú ar mhúnlú abairtí iomlána, aistriúchán agus úsáid an Bhéarla a sheachaint agus cór-aithriseoireacht a chleachtadh chun cumas agus muinín na ndaltaí a fhorbairt sa chomhrá. B'fhiú athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar an bplean scoile. *The quality of the teaching of Irish is satisfactory in the school as a whole, but particular areas need to be improved. Where the best practices were observed, good emphasis was placed on modelling of the language. Very good use was made of stories. It is recommended to focus on modelling complete sentences, avoiding translation and the use of English, and practise chorally to build pupils' competence and confidence in using the language. The school plan should be reviewed.*
- The quality of teaching provided for pupils with SEN is commendable with some examples of outstanding practice. The staged approach to supporting pupils is effectively implemented. Individual and group behaviour and support plans are in place appropriately. Target setting is too broad and needs to be more focused on achieving specific objectives and observable outcomes arising from pupils' priority learning needs. While in-class support is provided by some support teachers, the use of in-class models of support provision should be extended.
- Overall teachers' planning and practical preparation are good. More effective collaborative planning for team teaching is needed. The identification of specific differentiated learning objectives in plans should enhance the learning experiences for pupils of all abilities.
- Assessment practices are well established with a very good range of screening and diagnostic tests in place. Analysis of this data informs differentiated learning at class level. In some instances, very effective pupil self-assessment strategies are evident and lead to self-directed learning experiences. These approaches should be extended to all settings. Assessment practices associated with team teaching, especially assessment-for-learning, are not yet sufficiently established. Progressing this work should be prioritised.

3. SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELL-BEING

- The quality of the support for pupils' well-being is very good. The staff's engagement with pupils is characterised by a holistic and supportive approach to their well-being. The school has identified the need to manage pupil behaviour more effectively and positive behaviour management is being promoted with great purpose. Pupil questionnaire data indicate a lack of certainty among pupils regarding the standards of current behaviour. On-going discussion and feedback to pupils about behaviour is necessary. Tracking of improvement should be both formal and systematic. The school's emphasis on developing positive attitudes towards good health and its establishment of a pupils' council are particularly commendable. The parents' association is very effective in supporting the school. In responses to questionnaires, all parents agreed that they were happy with the school.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Overall, leadership and management are commendable with a few areas for improvement. The board of management is very committed to the on-going development of the school. However, a comprehensive strategic plan is required to ensure this progress takes place. The school's current deployment of one special education teaching post in a mainstream setting does not comply with Circular SPED 02/05. The board should review the deployment of this post accordingly. The board

should consider reporting on its work to further enhance communication with the school community.

- The highly effective leadership of the principal and in-school management team is focused on creating a positive child-centred environment, promoting leadership of learning and a culture of improvement. Other staff members contribute very effectively to enhancing teachers' collective practice. In questionnaire responses, all teachers agreed that their views are valued in decision-making and that there is a good atmosphere in 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. SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- At the time of the evaluation, the school reported that it was not engaging in the school self-evaluation (SSE) process due to industrial action at national level. Evidence available from before the industrial action shows that the school had been engaging well in the SSE process.

CONCLUSION

The school's capacity to improve is very good.

THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	Very good applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is outstanding and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	Good applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a very good standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	Satisfactory applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	Fair applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	Weak applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;