

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School Name	S N Aenghusa Sin
Seoladh na scoile/ School Address	Scoil N Aenghusa Sin Balrothery Tallaght
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	19576L

Date of inspection: 20-11-2017



WHAT IS WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION?

The Whole-School Evaluation model is used to provide whole-school evaluative information, advice and support to the school. These inspections affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of educational provision in the school. In addition to evaluating leadership and management, school planning and self-evaluation, and support for pupils, the inspectors typically examine the quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English, Gaeilge, Mathematics and one other subject.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

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

1. The quality of leadership and management
2. The quality of school planning and school self-evaluation
3. The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement
4. The quality of support for pupils

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 of the school 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.

Whole-School Evaluation

Date of inspection	20-11-2017
Inspection activities undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with principal and deputy principal• Meeting with the board of management• Meeting with parent representatives• 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 and teachers• Feedback to parent representative• Feedback to board of management

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil Náisiúnta Aenghusa Sinsearach is a co-educational school situated in Balrothery, Dublin 24. It is under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and caters for the educational needs of pupils from third to sixth class. It receives additional grants through its participation in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. Significant efforts have been made in recent years to improve overall school attendance, and the current very good attendance levels for the 209 pupils are testament to the success of these efforts. During this evaluation, teaching and learning was observed in ten mainstream settings and seven support settings, including one setting for pupils with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. Provision for Irish, English, Mathematics and Physical Education was evaluated.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- Very good quality leadership and management is provided to the school
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- While provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good, there is some scope to further refine the schools' approach to short-term planning in the support area.
- The overall quality of school planning is good with scope to enhance the quality and effectiveness of whole-school curriculum planning in particular.
- While pupils are given many regular opportunities to speak during lessons, there is scope to further develop a more structured support for the incremental development of their oral language competencies.
- The school provides very high quality supports for the holistic development of the pupils.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A comprehensive and collaborative review of curriculum planning should be undertaken to ensure the provision of contextualised clear guidance to all aspects of teachers' classroom practice in each subject area.
- All teachers should consistently plan, teach and assess very specific oral language outcomes for pupils in Irish and English.
- Short-term planning for pupils' with SEN should be prepared weekly as per the *Guidelines for Primary Schools – Supporting Pupils with SEN in Mainstream Schools (2017)*.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of school leadership and management is very good. The board of management displays a very strong commitment to the school and to its ongoing development. Meetings are regularly convened and minutes are carefully recorded. Finances are meticulously managed and the board is regularly appraised regarding teaching and learning in the school. A safe learning environment is provided for pupils. The board actively supports teachers' continuing professional development.
- The principal, who was appointed in September 2016, assiduously approaches her leadership role with a deep sense of dedication to the development of each pupil's wellbeing and potential. She is very capably supported in this mission by the deputy principal, who in turn carries out a wide range of duties. This is the extent of the in-school management team in the school at present. However, a pending increase in the allocation of posts of responsibility to the school will add significant support to formal curriculum leadership structures.
- The management of resources is very good. School corridors evidence a wide range of pupils' learning achievements. Classrooms are very well resourced and judicious use is made of information and communications technology (ICT) during lessons. The school has a central library, while classrooms are sufficiently stocked with a wide range of attractive reading material for pupils.
- The management of communications and relations with the community is very good. In the questionnaires administered to parents prior to the evaluation, all parents agreed that there is a good atmosphere in the school and that they feel welcome. The school has established very effective links with other local schools and outside agencies. Almost all teachers surveyed agree that the board of management keeps teachers informed about its leadership and management role.
- The management of pupils is very good. During the evaluation, teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interactions observed were consistently respectful. Teachers devise and use very effective management systems which promote and reward good behaviour.

2. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL PLANNING AND SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of school planning and school self-evaluation is good overall. A wide range of organisational and administrative policies effectively guides the smooth running of the school. The school should put in place a cyclical plan for the review and formal ratification of all policies.
- While curriculum plans for the subject areas evaluated offer some guidance to teachers' classroom practice, they are not sufficiently contextualised to guide teachers' practice at each class level. The school should embark on a comprehensive and collaborative review of all curriculum plans to ensure that each one clearly expresses current teaching approaches and agreed practices in the school.

- All teachers provide a range of classroom planning and monthly progress reports, and the quality of this planning is generally effective. The teachers are now advised to consistently include very specific language in their short-term planning which will enable them to support and track the incremental development of pupils' oral language competencies in Irish and English.
- The school has reported that it is not currently engaging in the school self-evaluation process due to industrial action. However, evidence available from school self-evaluation work and the school's DEIS plan indicate that the school has engaged in the SSE process and that there is evidence that agreed actions are having a positive impact on teaching and learning in classrooms. The outcomes of the school's DEIS planning process should be communicated clearly to the school community at least once annually.

3. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is very good. In nearly all settings, teachers teach well-prepared and suitably resourced lessons. Teachers provide positive and supportive learning environments, and through well-paced, well-structured lessons, ensure very high levels of pupil engagement. The consistent sharing of learning intentions, skilled use of questioning, and the provision of independent, collaborative and differentiated learning tasks, along with timely consolidation of key learning, were the hallmarks of most of the lessons observed. A notable feature of the teaching is the explicit attention given to the pupils' ability to articulate their thoughts regarding their well-being and emotions. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' learning and, as a consequence, high quality learning outcomes are in evidence in the learning environments and in the pupils' recall of past learning.
- Tá cáilíocht an teagaisc, na foghlama agus gnóthachtáil na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge go maith ar an iomlán. Is léir go bhfuil na daltaí dearfach maidir le foghlaim na teanga agus déantar cinnte go bhfuil taitneamh agus idirghníomhaíocht ag baint leis na ceachtanna. Tá go leor abairtí agus frásaí foghlamtha ag na daltaí. B'fhiú níos mó béime a chur anois ar a gcumas ceisteanna a chumadh. Cruthaítear naisc oiriúnacha idir snáithe an churaclaim le linn an teagaisc. Mar sin féin, ní mór tuilleadh ama a chaitheamh ar mhúineadh teanga sula dtéitear go dtí an obair bheirte. I roinnt suíomhanna, déantar pleanáil an-bheacht maidir le foghlaim teanga. Ba chóir go soláthrófaí pleanáil den saghas sin i ngach suíomh ranga. Léann na daltaí ar leibhéal sásúil. Téann siad i ngleic le go leor den scríbhneoireacht fheidhmiúil agus neamhspleách. Moltar amach anseo go múinfear raon teoranta seánraí scríbhneoireachta go foirmiúil.
The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Irish is good overall. It is clear that the pupils are positive regarding their language learning and it is ensured that enjoyment and interaction pertain to the lessons. Plenty of sentences and phrases have been learned by the pupils. It would be worthwhile now to put more emphasis on their ability to compose questions. Suitable links are created between the strands of the curriculum during the teaching. However, additional time should be spent on teaching language before moving to pair work. In some settings, very precise planning for language learning is prepared. This type of planning should be provided in all settings. Pupils read at a satisfactory level. They engage in a range of functional and independent writing. The formal teaching of a limited range of writing genres is advised.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is very good. Teachers consistently model very high quality oral language for pupils during lessons. Pupils are given regular opportunities to construct and contribute oral language responses. The quality of their active listening is very high. To further support the incremental development of pupils' oral language competencies, all teachers should consistently plan for, teach and subsequently assess the learning of very specific oral language. In addition, they should regularly and collaboratively review their planning and teaching with a view to providing sufficient support for progression of learning as pupils move through the school. Pupils read at their assessed level of ability with fluency, confidence and understanding. Their written work in copybooks is of a consistently high quality. It is advised that pupils are provided with opportunities for a more in-depth engagement with each of the writing genres.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is very good overall. Lessons are very well-structured and include an appropriate emphasis on oral mathematics where pupils' mathematical thinking skills are consistently supported. Teachers ensure that pupils clearly understand and use in context the key mathematical language required to underpin their understanding of new concepts. Pupils demonstrate a very good knowledge of number facts and number strategies. Active and collaborative learning is a prominent feature of the lessons with very effective use made of concrete resources. In nearly all settings, teachers appropriately differentiate learning activities in response to the learning needs of the pupils.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Physical Education is very good. Lessons are very well planned and organised. Optimal use is made of the space available. There is an appropriate balance between the very effective instruction and the pupils' enthusiastic active engagement, ensuring they have ample time to practise and develop skills. Breadth and balance of provision for Physical Education is evident in teachers' planning. Some use is made of objectives-based checklists in assessing the learning in Physical Education. Further use of such assessment is advised in building a comprehensive profile of each pupil's learning in this area.
- The quality of assessment is very good. Teachers consistently monitor pupils' work in copybooks and give very good assessment for learning feedback through the comments provided. Teachers use a wide variety of assessment strategies and use this information to inform the provision of differentiated learning activities and tasks. A more fine-grained analysis of all assessment data is now advised to further inform differentiation for the more able learners.

4. QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS

- The quality of support for pupils with SEN is very good. Very high quality teaching is underpinned by very positive and affirming interactions. Drawing on the range of assessment data, teachers use a variety of approaches in addressing pupils' individual needs. A consistent emphasis is placed on nurturing the pupils' social and emotional wellbeing. The learning needs of pupils who are learning English as an additional language are catered for effectively. The high quality of this work should be reflected in the school's learning support policy. Very good provision is made for pupils with complex emotional and behavioural difficulties. Planning for the teaching of pupils with SEN is effective overall although teachers should carefully align all targets in the support plans with stated priority learning needs. In addition, weekly short-term planning is advised as per *Guidelines for Primary Schools – Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (2017)*, to better track pupils' targeted and incremental progression of learning.

- Support for the holistic development of the pupils is of a very high quality and is a particular strength of the school. The very effective and highly collaborative nature of the school's provision of Home School Community Liaison and School Completion Programmes underpins this valuable work. Commendably, the staff has engaged in a wide range of continuing professional development in relation to pupils' wellbeing.
- 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*.

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 of 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;

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 Scoil Aonghusa Senior welcomes this very positive Whole School Evaluation Report which acknowledges and affirms the dedication and commitment of our teachers, Special Needs Assistants, Special Education Teachers, in-school management team and the Board of Management. The Board welcomes the findings with regard to the very high standard of leadership and management and most importantly the very high quality of teaching and learning that exists within our school. We are particularly pleased that support for the holistic development of the children is of a very high quality and is a particular strength of our school. We will endeavour to continue to build upon our strengths to further improve teaching and learning.

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 welcomes and values the advice and recommendations made and have prioritised these with immediate effect with the following actions:

- Short-term planning for pupils with Special Educational Needs is now being prepared weekly by Special Education Teachers as per the *Guidelines for Primary Schools- Supporting Pupils with SEN in Mainstream Schools (2017)*.
- School support will be requested from PDST to assist the staff in planning, teaching and assessing very specific oral language outcomes for children in Gaeilge and English.
- A cyclical collaborative review of curriculum planning will be undertaken to ensure the provision of contextualised clear guidance to all aspects of teachers' classroom practice in each subject area.