

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School Name	Corduff N S
Seoladh na scoile/ School Address	Corduff Blanchardstown Dublin 15
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	19545A

Date of Evaluation: 02-02-2017



WHAT IS A 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 management and leadership in the school, the inspectors typically examine the quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in four subjects, including English, Gaeilge, Mathematics and one other subject. 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.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

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

1. Quality of leadership and management
2. Quality of school planning and school self-evaluation
3. Quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement
4. 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.

Whole-School Evaluation

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Corduff NS is a mixed junior primary school which shares a campus with its senior school in Corduff, Dublin 15. The school, which is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, receives additional funds through its participation in DEIS Band 1. The school has 227 pupils on rolls and also provides an Early Start pre-school. A wide range of strategies is in place to support and promote good attendance among pupils, with particular focus on the cohort of pupils who miss more than twenty days. Teaching and learning were evaluated in seven mainstream settings and four support settings.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The visionary leadership provided by the principal, board and in-school management team fosters a culture in which learning flourishes.
- The pupils' wellbeing is central to the school's work; the pupils are exemplary in their behaviour, motivation and disposition towards their learning.
- The quality of teaching and learning is commendable.
- The school provides very high quality support for pupils with special educational needs.
- While pupils are encouraged to fully participate in lessons, they are not afforded sufficient opportunities to communicate and engage in discussion on an extended basis during lessons.
- In relation to Drama, the pupils experience a range of drama activities; notwithstanding this, there is scope to provide extended opportunities for pupils to cooperate more in exploring and shaping their drama.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is need for teachers to maximise the opportunities for talking time by pupils throughout all lessons.
- The teachers should enable the pupils to have sustained engagement in making and shaping drama, with a particular focus on the elements of Drama.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The quality of leadership is highly commendable. Leadership at all levels successfully promotes a culture where learning flourishes. Board of management members carry out their roles effectively. They engage in policy formation, strategic planning, supporting staff members' professional development and working collaboratively to enhance the learning experiences of pupils. The principal's visionary leadership style is characterised by the empowerment of staff, the pursuit of high standards and her deep commitment to the wellbeing and holistic development of pupils. She fosters strong links with parents and the school community. The work of the deputy principal is highly effective and together with the in-school management team they provide excellent support to the principal and ably support school improvement.

- The management of resources is very good. Teachers use a very wide range of resources to support and enhance the pupils' learning. The school hosts an excellent library. There are high quality educational displays in all settings and on corridors. School personnel are effectively managed and staff mobility is promoted. Staff members are enabled to take an active role in school improvement through professional development, research opportunities, collaboration, mentoring and the sharing of expertise.
- The management of relations and communications with the community is very good. This inclusive, welcoming school actively promotes the involvement of parents in its work. A wide range of communication strategies is in place to inform parents about their children's education. A shared parents' association provides good support to both schools on the campus. In the Inspectorate survey conducted during the evaluation, almost every parent agreed with the following: they are happy with the school, their child is treated fairly and respectfully, and teaching is good.
- The management of pupils is outstanding. All staff members are praised for the highly skilful, respectful and supportive manner in which pupils are managed. The pupils are exemplary in their behaviour, motivation and disposition towards learning.
- 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*.

2. QUALITY OF SCHOOL PLANNING AND SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of school planning and school self-evaluation is good. The process reflects a collaborative and consultative approach, involving all stakeholders. It is responsive to the school's needs and is focused on school improvement. Organisational policies are clear and relevant. In the main, whole-school curriculum plans provide clear guidance to teachers on important aspects of provision with scope to review the drama plan to support teachers further in enabling pupils to shape and sustain their drama.
- The school undertakes strategic planning and school self-evaluation through its DEIS action-planning cycles. Agreed actions for improvement are implemented consistently at an individual and collective level by teachers. Further attention to the setting of clearly-identified targets, in addition to actions, in all priority areas is advised as the next cycle of action planning is undertaken.
- Teachers' individual planning is of very high quality and caters for all learners.

3. QUALITY OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning is competent with highly-commendable practice observed in many settings. Teachers share their learning objectives with pupils and deliver vibrant, well-structured, well-resourced lessons. They engage in explicit teaching and use a variety of

teaching approaches. Team teaching is well established. Where it was most effective, there was purposeful teacher instruction and consolidation as well as stimulating, learning activities.

Pupils are highly motivated. They are aware of themselves as learners and demonstrate pride in their achievements. The pupils' learning experiences overall are good, although there is scope for more pupil-led learning and more cooperative work. Differentiation is a strong feature of teachers' collective practice and in their detailed plans. Nonetheless, during many of the lessons observed, there was scope to adapt the learning activities more specifically to meet the pupils' needs as identified in the teachers' excellent assessment records.

- Tá cáilíocht mhaith i múineadh agus foghlaim na Gaeilge. Forbraíonn na hoidí scileanna cumarsáide na ndaltaí go rialta agus is léir go bhfuil dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge tríd an scoil. Baineann na hoidí úsáid mhaith as modheolaíochtaí spreagúla chun na heiseamláirí teanga nua a mhúineadh. Léiríonn na daltaí cumas maith ó thaobh labhairt na neiseimlárí nua i rith na tascanna. Tá scóip ann chun dul chun cinn níos soiléire i bhfoghlaim an teanga a chlárú sa phleanáil ó rang go rang. Díríonn na hoidí aird mhaith ar chothú scileanna réamh-léitheoireachta agus réamh-scríbhneoireachta. Baineann na daltaí taitneamh agus tairbhe as raon breá d'fhilíochta agus d'amhrán a aithris.
- *The quality of teaching and learning of Irish is good. The pupils' communication skills are consistently developed by teachers, and a positive attitude to Irish is evident throughout the school. The teachers use vibrant methodologies to teach the new language exemplars. The pupils demonstrate good ability in speaking Irish during their tasks. There is scope to plan for more progression in language learning from class to class. The teachers place appropriate attention on developing pre-reading and pre-writing skills. The pupils gain enjoyment and value from reciting a good range of poetry and songs.*
- There is competent teaching and learning in English. Teachers provide a very comprehensive, systematic reading programme which is supported by excellent resources, including high-quality graded-reading material. In order to further develop the early-reading skills of weaker pupils, more explicit, targeted in-class instruction for cohorts of pupils should be considered. Very good teaching of the process of writing was observed during the inspection. Where practice was most effective, there was extensive oral work by pupils before writing. Good work is underway in planning, teaching and assessing the oral language skills of pupils. While pupils are encouraged to fully participate in lessons, there is need for extended opportunities for pupils to talk, both with their teacher and among themselves. It is recommended that every opportunity be afforded to promote extended communication by and among pupils during all lessons.
- In Mathematics, there is good quality teaching and learning. Teachers' collective practice includes explicit teaching, use of concrete materials and a focus on mathematical language. A whole-school approach to solving problems is systematically taught. Consideration should be given to exploring a variety of such approaches to foster the pupils' reasoning skills. There is good linking of Mathematics to real-life contexts. While some very good practice in oral mathematics was observed, there is scope overall for greater emphasis on more intensive oral work across all strands. The widespread use of resources such as whiteboards and number fans by pupils is advised to raise their participation levels and to display their mastery of concepts and skills.
- There is appropriate provision for the teaching and learning of Drama. Lessons are integrated well with other curricular areas, and are presented in a safe and supportive environment. Pupils engage in teacher-directed drama activities in a positive and confident manner. More emphasis should be placed on supporting pupils in making drama in a cooperative manner. It is

recommended that teachers enable the pupils to have sustained engagement in making and shaping drama, with a particular focus on the elements of drama. Through *Aistear*, pupils engage in socio-dramatic and make-believe play. The role of the teacher should be further refined in supporting and facilitating this well-planned, play-based, cooperative learning approach.

- Overall, the quality of assessment is very good. A wide range of diagnostic, screening and formative assessments is used to identify the pupils' learning needs, to track progress and to inform early-intervention. All teachers are highly commended for the quality and range of their assessment records. Where learning was most effective, these records directly informed teachers' planning for differentiated and appropriately-challenging learning activities. Teachers ensure that the pupils' work is closely monitored and they provide supportive and affirmative feedback. Pupils' self-assessment practices are very well developed and pupils can talk about their learning with confidence.

4. QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS

- The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs is highly commendable. A variety of support models and early-intervention programmes is carefully planned and delivered by this highly-skilled team. Focused instruction, high-quality learning experiences and caring relationships are the hallmarks of the supports provided. Teachers prepare comprehensive student-support plans in a collaborative manner, with parents central to the process. The team liaises closely with staff members, relevant agencies and support services to ensure that the very specific needs of pupils are met. The work of the special needs assistants in supporting the pupils' care needs is praiseworthy.
- Through the effective and valuable work of the personnel involved in the provision for home-school-community liaison (HSCL) and counselling, as well as the work of all staff, the school ensures that all pupils can fully participate in a varied and rich school life. A wide range of extra-curricular learning experiences, including ballet and choral singing, as well as pre- and after-school supports is provided. There are effective practices underway to support smooth transitions for pupils. All staff members demonstrate a deep commitment to realising each child's potential and give their time and expertise generously for the benefit of the pupils. The quality of home-school partnership is excellent, and there are many opportunities given to parents to help them support their children's education, starting, most importantly, at the Early-Start pre-school.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of St Patrick's JNS welcomes the findings of this very positive evaluation. The acknowledgement that the pupil's wellbeing is central to the schools work is of paramount importance and reflects the ethos that is highly valued by our school community.

The recognition of the visionary leadership of principal coupled with the support of the deputy principal and in-school management team is commendable. The Board is pleased that the quality of teaching and learning along with the high quality of support for pupils with special educational needs has been recognised and acknowledged in the report.

The Board is particularly pleased to note that the pupils of this school are exemplary in behaviour, motivation and disposition to learning.

The Board of Management would like to commend the commitment and professionalism of our teachers, SNAs and ancillary staff.

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

The Board acknowledges the two recommendations given and commits to implementing the changes required

- All staff will be attending the Primary Languages Curriculum in-service and therefore the issue of talking time for pupils will be addressed.
- In reviewing the schools policy on Drama, particular emphasis will be given to the engagement in making and shaping of drama and the elements of drama.

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 <i>very good</i> 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;