

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	St. Vincent's Primary School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	St Philomena's Road Glasnevin Dublin 11
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	17214N

Date of inspection: 02-10-2018



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Department of
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WHAT IS WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING?

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning reports on the quality of teaching and learning and on the quality of management and leadership in a school. It affirms good practice and makes recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of educational provision in the school.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspectors evaluated and reported under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

1. The quality of pupils' learning
2. The quality of teaching
3. The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing
4. The quality of leadership and management
5. The quality of school self-evaluation

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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.
4. The Child Safeguarding Statement meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.
5. The records of the last three board of management meetings record a child protection oversight report that meet the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2017.
6. The board of management has ensured that arrangements are in place to provide information to all school personnel on the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2017
7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE, Wellbeing).
8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

Dates of inspection	02 October 2018
Inspection activities undertaken	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with principal and in-school leadership team • 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 principal, deputy principal and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Saint Vincent’s Primary School is an all-boys’ school catering for pupils from infants to sixth class. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST). Current enrolment stands at 288 pupils, enrolled across eleven mainstream classes. There are five special education teachers based in the school and the school has access to one shared special education teacher. The school works proactively to promote regular attendance and punctuality and this has contributed to significant improvements in pupils’ attendance patterns.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of pupils’ learning outcomes and experiences is good overall; while careful consideration is given to ensuring that pupils with special educational needs (SEN) have positive learning experiences, the quality of these could be further enhanced by reviewing the multiplicity of arrangements for organising provision that are currently in place at each class level.
- The overall quality of teaching is good with some instances of very good practice observed.
- Assessment data is not used sufficiently well to inform teaching and learning.
- Support for pupils’ wellbeing is very good; pupils’ sense of identity and belonging is nurtured in a positive, calm and well-ordered learning environment.
- The overall quality of leadership and management is very good; the principal has fostered a collaborative culture in the school community that is focused on pupils’ wellbeing and learning.
- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE) is very good with improvement initiatives impacting positively on classroom practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To build on the good quality provision for pupils with SEN, arrangements for pupils in receipt of additional support should be reconfigured and regularly reviewed to enhance their impact on pupils’ learning experiences.
- Increased use should be made of assessment data to inform teaching and learning across the curriculum.

- There is a need for teachers to place a greater emphasis on planning for and implementing differentiated learning experiences for pupils.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

- Pupils' learning is good overall. Pupils demonstrate very positive learning dispositions and high levels of engagement. They listen attentively to their teachers and classmates and complete assigned tasks carefully. The standard of pupils' handwriting and written work is consistently very good.
- Pupils are articulate and can engage in extended discussion on a wide range of topics. In particular, they demonstrate a notable enthusiasm for and knowledge of local history and geography.
- Pupils were noted to read fluently and with appropriate expression during the in-class support sessions focused on guided reading. They would benefit from having additional experiences of this form of targeted activity.
- Interactions among pupils support a cooperative and affirming learning environment; pupils work both independently and collaboratively in a purposeful and productive manner. Commendable examples of pupil-led projects incorporating digital technologies were noted. There remains scope to extend opportunities for pupils to engage in learning tasks and activities that will foster their higher-order thinking skills.
- Pupils with SEN benefit significantly from the high quality of provision that meets their needs in a holistic manner; teachers endeavour to optimise pupils' learning, confidence and self-esteem. Teachers have worked collaboratively to establish a range of models to support pupils with SEN. While valuable interventions are in place, a more strategic deployment of support teachers would better support pupils with additional learning needs as it would streamline and, thereby, enhance the quality of their learning experience. Therefore, where possible, the number of teachers involved in providing support to individual pupils with SEN should be reduced.
- Teachers place a very good emphasis on the development of pupils' skills in Physical Education (PE).

2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

- The overall quality of teaching is good with some instances of very good practice observed. Lessons are well-structured with an appropriate emphasis on engaging pupils in activity-based learning and discussion. In parental questionnaire responses, almost all parents agreed that teaching is good and that their child enjoys school and is making good progress in reading and Mathematics.
- Assessment practices are good overall. Teachers demonstrate good questioning skills and provide constructive verbal feedback. Pupils' written work is monitored regularly with a few examples of exemplary formative feedback noted. While analysis of pupils' standardised assessments in Mathematics is undertaken, there is potential to make greater use of assessment data to inform teaching and learning across the curriculum. Teachers recognise the need to source and use diagnostic assessments to support pupils' learning. A few very good examples of effective pupil self-assessment were observed during the evaluation and this practice should be extended to all settings.
- Classrooms are very well equipped with resources to support teaching and learning. The number of textbooks and workbooks currently in use should be reviewed as they are

detracting from teachers' capacity to provide consistently challenging learning experiences for pupils.

- Teachers show a keen awareness of the diversity in pupils' needs and interests. However, greater consideration needs to be given to differentiation in planning and in practice; in particular, a greater range of instructional reading material is required for pupils at all class levels. While pupils engage in a suitable range of writing genres in English during the year, a more systematic whole-school approach to the development of pupils' independent writing and spelling would enhance provision.
- Léiríonn na hoidí dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge agus spreagann siad na daltaí chun cumarsáid a dhéanamh. Cuirtear béim ar ábhar cinnte a mhúineadh go céimniúil. Ní chuirtear sách béime ar thréimhse iarchumarsáide de na ceachtanna comhrá; b'fhiú deiseanna níos rialta a thabhairt do na daltaí a scileanna labhartha a úsáid go neamhspleách i gcomhthéacsanna éagsúla. *Teachers display a positive attitude towards Irish and they encourage pupils to communicate. An emphasis is placed on the progressive teaching of specific content. An insufficient emphasis is placed on the post-communicative phase of language lessons; more regular opportunities should be given to pupils to practise their speaking skills independently in a variety of contexts.*
- Teaching in Mathematics is particularly attentive to developing pupils' mathematical thinking across a broad range of strands. Very good examples of teacher facilitation of collaborative problem-solving activities were noted during the evaluation.
- Teachers in infant classes are commended for introducing *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*; pupils actively engage in both independent and collaborative play-based learning activities.
- Teachers place a very good emphasis on the local environment to facilitate pupils' learning in History and Geography.

3. THE QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELLBEING

- Support for pupils' wellbeing is very good. A very positive school culture has been established which nurtures pupils' holistic development and fosters a strong sense of identity as an individual and as a member of the school community.
- The consistent implementation of the Code of Behaviour as observed during the evaluation contributes to the very well-ordered learning environment. Interactions among pupils and between pupils and teachers are very respectful and positive, and conducive to wellbeing. Pupils' wellbeing is enhanced by their engagement in enriching programmes such as the Green Schools Programme and the Junior Entrepreneur Programme. In their responses to questionnaires, the majority of pupils reported that they like school and all pupils reported that they feel safe in their class.

4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The board of management discharges its duties very effectively and ensures the ongoing upkeep of school resources and facilities. The board has developed and implemented clear policies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils.
- The principal has fostered a collaborative culture in the school community that is focused on pupils' wellbeing and learning. His engagement with school self-evaluation priorities and his leadership of learning in the school is very effective. He affords a very high priority to pupils'

wellbeing and inclusion. He is ably supported by the Deputy Principal and the in-school management team. The work of the in-school management team facilitates the professional development of colleagues. In a number of instances, effective monitoring of curricular initiatives has been established; there is potential to extend this practice.

- The staff of the school reported that it regularly provides placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and is included among the standards in the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers as it can provide valuable professional benefits for teachers, student teachers, pupils and the teacher education institution.

5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- The quality of SSE is very good. The cyclical process of SSE has been established and priority areas for development have been identified. Clear actions for improvement have been delineated at whole-school and classroom level. The positive impact of these actions on learning and on classroom practice is very evident.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

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

- i. We are currently exploring different assessment tests with a view to further informing teaching and learning across the curriculum. We have started using the B.I.A.P. in a targeted fashion and will shortly start to use the M.I.S.T. in the same fashion.
- ii. We are investigating suitable books/schemes to build up our supply of guided reading books and are actively fundraising to finance this.
- iii. In our regular S.E.N. meetings we continue to assess and monitor our arrangements to ensure maximum impact for all our pupils – especially those with S.E.N. We will be changing and adapting these arrangements as needs arise.
- iv. We have undertaken a review of the use of workbooks with a view to rationalising and minimising their use.

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 of 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;