

St. Kevin's National School Pearse Street Sallynoggin Co. Dublin

School Self-Evaluation Report

Evaluation period: September 2017 to June 2018

Report issue date: 29th June 2018



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1. Introduction

The focus of the evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in St. Kevin's was undertaken during the period of September 2017 to June 2018. During the evaluation, teaching and learning in the following curriculum areas were evaluated:

- i. Literacy (new language curriculum; English, Gaeilge; oral language strand)
- ii. Numeracy
- *iii.* Other curriculum area Science
- iv. Attendance
- v. Area Partnerships

This is a report on the findings of the evaluation.

School context

St. Kevin's National School is a school that serves the parish of Our Lady of Victories and the surrounding environs in the community of Sallynoggin. The present school is an amalgamation of three schools originally established in 1967, a boys' school, a girls' school and an infants' school. Amalgamation was undertaken in 1993 and the school remains on the site of the original boys' and girls' schools. In June 2018 – 27^{th} June – we celebrated the '50 Year Jubilee' of St. Kevin's N.S. There was an exhibition of old photographs (we have some great snaps rescued from the archives!!) and memorabilia associated with the school in the school hall. In addition, there was a celebration, with a little speechifying and song, with pupils both past and present, at an outdoor ceremony attended by all former principals. This celebration commemorated many years of education in St. Kevin's and was followed by afternoon tea, coffee and sandwiches in the yard, accompanied by Paul and his band (again former pupils of the school).

St. Kevin's serves one of the most socio-economically disadvantaged communities in Ireland (it is a designated DEIS Band 1 urban primary school) and provides an education for a cohort of pupils who often face significant challenges in their daily lives. St. Kevin's upholds the highest standards of teaching and learning as each aspect of the curriculum is delivered. Indeed, the teaching in St. Kevin's is dedicated, creative, attentive, and sensitive to the academic, social and pastoral needs of all pupils. Holistic education and personal development pervades in every classroom.

Our school crest includes the words 'Sapere Aude', Latin words that are understood as 'Dare to Know'. In origin, these words are ascribed to the Roman poet Horace. 'Dare to Know' is the motto of St. Kevin's National School.

In St. Kevin's National School, 'Dare to Know' lives in our attitude and our ethos. Both teachers and pupils question what we know and dare to know more. Our motto ensures we are never afraid to learn or show what we have learned. We dare to know all that our talents and abilities can achieve. 'Dare to Know' says we should never be afraid to be seen as different, intelligent, talented, strong and proud.

At the time of writing our enrolment stands at 181 pupils, with a projected enrolment of 195 pupils for September 2018.

2. The findings

The quality of practice in relation to the aspects of teaching and learning were evaluated in conference with members of staff, the broader school community and relevant agencies. The instruments of evaluation are in the appendices. In addition, the school received an incidental inspection, on Thursday 10th May 2018, from Inspector Edel Corcoran. Three teachers were observed, including the subjects of English, Maths, SESE, SPHE, PE and Gaeilge. She also spoke to me in the office and examined our Child Protection documentation.

The inspector was very happy with the school noting;

a) Pupils are enjoying learning; pupils are content and comfortable and open in their interactions with the teachers and staff

b) Pupils are motivated and want to please teachers. Pupils are supported and engaged and stay on task.

c) There are respectful interactions between the teachers and pupils, pupils and SNA's and between all members of staff.

d) There is a lovely emphasis on creativity throughout the school, which is to be commended.

e) The subject knowledge of teachers is also to be commended as is the planning, this is particularly evident with respect to writing and genres – recount etc.

f) Planning of teachers links well to DEIS plans and Whole School Plans

g) The range of teaching methodologies employed is admirable, including group work and pair work and teachers are well prepared

h) The classrooms are organised with good displays

i) There is also a high degree of pastoral care among all members of staff for the well-being of each pupil, encouraging learning and attendance, participation in school activities and excellent behaviour and conduct. All relationships are respectful. This cannot be underestimated in a DEIS Band 1 urban primary school (where many pupils endure significant and daily challenges). It is a pertinent strength as we aspire to mould pupils that are empathetic, law-abiding and culturally aware as much as pupils that are literate and numerate.

i. Literacy

In June 2016 68% of our pupils attained a score above the 50th percentile while 16% scored Sten 1-3. In June 2017 60% of our pupils attained a score above the 50th percentile while 20% of pupils scored Sten 1-3. In June 2018 64% of our pupils attained a score above the 50th percentile while 21% of our pupils scored Sten 1-3. We will endeavour to maintain or increase the percentage of pupils achieving above the 50th percentile and decrease the percentage of pupils scoring in the Sten 1-3 range. We will continue to implement throughout all classes a progressive plan that supports the implementation of the new language curriculum with an emphasis on comprehension and reading skills. The implementation of the new oral language curriculum in Junior Infants to Second Class will continue, along with the implementation of the new language curriculum. This implementation is concurrent to maintaining the First Steps writing plan in our senior classes, before replacing the programme in the coming academic years.

ii. Numeracy

In June 2016 69% of pupils performed above the 50th percentile while 16% scored Sten 1-3. In June 2017 67% of pupils performed above the 50th percentile while 15% of pupils continued to score Sten 1-3. In June 2018 61% of pupils performed above the 50th percentile while 26% of pupils continued to score Sten 1-3. This indicates an increasing number of pupils in our younger cohort struggling with maths. We will endeavour to decrease the percentage of pupils scoring in the Sten 1-3 range through a range of actions. We feel our whole school approach to maths operations, maths language and word problems will continue to progress. Both the instruction of tables and practical problems will be supplemented by 'Snackbox', 'Brainbox', Planet Maths, Maths Challenge, Dropbox Tables Resources, IWB activities and Tables games.

iii. Attainment of curriculum objectives

The attainment of curriculum objectives is managed in keeping with the expectation of each pupil. With respect to our additional curriculum area of Physical Education, we maintain strong belief in the importance of physical literacy – healthy in body, healthy in mind, and so promote physical literacy in our school. Physical Literacy is a fundamental and valuable human capability that can be described as a disposition acquired by pupils encompassing the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding that establishes purposeful physical pursuits as an integral part of their lifestyle. We have a structured timetable and introduction of additional activities has ensured all pupils receive requisite time in this subject (weekly Gaelic coaching, weekly P.E. classes, weekly rugby coaching, weekly swimming lessons, weekly dance classes, increased participation in national Gaelic and soccer competitions, basketball, futsal and 'Cuala All-Stars'blitzes, extra-curricular classes for basketball, volleyball, badminton, sailing, golf and football have all been introduced and enhanced).

In conference with members of staff, we consolidated Science for the academic year 2017/2018, for the third consecutive academic year, as one other curriculum area, to allow it become completely embedded in teaching and learning in the school. We will operate a whole school approach to engaging with science and maths, continue to generate an interest in investigation amongst children, and assist each other as a staff to apply the DPSM framework of inquiry based science teaching and learning and to deliver the science curriculum in a cross curricular manner, concurrent to the attainment of curriculum objectives. We have been successful in this endeavour and have now achieved our third Discover Primary Science STEM Plaque of Excellence. We will continue this in the coming year.

iv. Learning environment

The learning environment continues to be conducive to learning, created through attractive and stimulating classrooms (a number recently painted and more this July) and the effective classroom management skills of teachers and ancillary staff. The professionalism of all staff is noted in this respect and each year a number of teachers complete their probationary year successfully. In this academic year, two teachers were successfully probated with the guidance of the principal and teaching colleagues and support of the school inspector Edel Corcoran. This is testament to the professionalism and collegiality of all staff. There remains a high degree of pastoral care among all members of staff towards the pupil body too, ensuring a very positive learning environment. With respect to additional areas reviewed as part of this evaluation, namely attendance and area partnerships, the positive learning environment promotes attendance and all members of staff foster a welcoming relationship to agencies and partnerships working with the school, to the edification of our pupils, both socially and academically.

v. Pupils' engagement in learning

There is a very positive code of conduct, behaviour and discipline, effectively implemented by each member of staff. In addition there are very high standards of behaviour and levels of motivation among pupils. Incidents of a serious nature are singular and atypical. Primarily, it is the support of parents, and interesting, varied approaches in teaching, that ensure there is a high level of engagement by all pupils. Pupils' engagement with learning improves with increased attendance, and partnership with outside agencies promotes pupils' engagement with learning. Additional supports include Homework Club and the various initiatives, activities and programmes funded by the School Completion Programme, our H.S.C.L. teacher and outside agencies (for example, weekly Gaelic coaching, weekly P.E. classes, weekly rugby coaching, weekly swimming lessons and weekly dance classes improve pupils physical health and inclination to attend – it should be noted in many instances it is not the reluctance of the pupil to attend school that undermines attendance rates but rather issues at home – that impact upon punctuality and attendance). Please see our Parental Involvement and Partnership DEIS Action Plans for a further list of these extensive activities and supports, in place to, in due course, to increase our pupils' engagement in learning.

vi. Preparation for teaching

Teachers are well prepared and deliver well-structured, objectives-based lessons and employ, where apposite, a team teaching approach and use of resources. Teachers are punctual, empathetic, and give cooperatively of their time. Pupils are well supported in their learning. As noted by our inspector Edel Corcoran, the subject knowledge of teachers is also to be commended as is the planning, this is particularly evident with respect to writing and genres and the planning of teachers links well to DEIS plans and Whole School Plans.

Records of teaching are transparent and presented monthly. There is a timetable in each class, and the resources available to the school are optimised through professional collegiality, resources itineraries, classroom support and school supports (see NEPS Continuum of Support and Personal Pupil Plans where apposite). With respect to the additional areas reviewed as part of this evaluation, attendance and area partnerships, the support of pupils by teachers and non-teaching staff is very beneficial towards improving attendance. In summation, teachers are well prepared as teaching professionals and very welcoming to agencies and partnerships that work with our classes.

vii. Teaching approaches

Naturally, there are a range of teaching approaches across the school (as a profession, teaching approaches are not easily divested from personality). However, all teachers are empathetic and favour a clear, instructive approach, supported by more focused, responsive teaching once the lesson objective is imparted. Collegial in-class support is available to the mainstream class teacher, through the Learning Support Team / Special Education Team, and withdrawing pupils is also provided where apposite (e.g. Reading Recovery). All objectives, where apposite, are in sympathy with the school's DEIS action plans. All teachers ensure the engagement of pupils and employ a range of methodologies, from 'active learning' station teaching, to peer instruction, individual withdrawal and

support and mixed ability grouping. In addition, a range of in-class initiatives such as 'power hour' for literacy and numeracy, First Steps writing strategies, collective 'Brain Snack' problem solving, mental maths, DPSM framework and support team teaching are in place and working very well.

viii. Management of pupils

The school action plan with respect to literacy and numeracy can be a useful tool to inform teachers' individual planning with respect to the curriculum and needs of the school, and to enable teachers to monitor individual pupils' progress based on the planned learning outcomes. The analysis of standardised test scores is also beneficial to this planning. There are very high standards of behaviour and levels of motivation among pupils (each class teacher uses a number of classroom management strategies) and the engagement of pupils with local partnerships (for example, visiting art therapists and play therapists from Mounttown NYP) is also very useful in managing behaviour and attendance in school. Teachers liaise regularly with the principal and deputy principal with respect to pupils of concern or pupils to be commended.

ix. Assessment

The ongoing analysis of assessment data will guide the development of whole-school targets across the curriculum. Individual assessment of pupils is also undertaken in conference with the in-class team, the learning support team and the school principal. This is reviewed at apposite intervals in the school year. Formal assessment is undertaken twice during the academic year, to establish a profile of each pupil, to establish areas of attention, to measure gains or diminutions in a pupils' advancement and evaluate the strength of particular teaching approaches.

3. Progress made on previously-identified improvement targets

- *i.* Literacy scores continue to improve (In June 2017 60% of our pupils attained a score above the 50th percentile and in June 2018 64% of our pupils attained a score above the 50th percentile)
- ii. The objective in numeracy scores is to endeavour to decrease the percentage of pupils scoring in the Sten 1-3 range through a range of actions.(In June 2017 67% of pupils performed above the 50th percentile while 15% of pupils continued to score Sten 1-3. In June 2018 61% of pupils performed above the 50th percentile while 26% of pupils continued to score Sten 1-3. This indicates an increasing number of pupils in our younger cohort struggling with maths.)
- iii. The variety of the curriculum in Physical Education has been improved and enhanced. Physical literacy is promoted as a fundamental and valuable human capability that can be described as a disposition acquired by pupils encompassing the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding that establishes purposeful physical pursuits as an integral part of their lifestyle. The invested approach of all teachers ensures that this physical literacy has been developed. We have introduced structured lessons in the following areas; Gaelic football (thrice weekly through Cuala coaching; teachers taking after-school coaching, Damien as visiting coach and league participation), tag rugby, swimming, in-school soccer coaching, dance and Irish dancing. Additional ventures have been listed above. We feel that pupils made commendable efforts towards physical literacy and shall continue to do so, through continued participation and interest, which the school endeavours to foster in each pupil.

- iv. A third year of emphasis on the DSPM framework has allowed Science become a regular, consistent and laudable aspect of teaching and learning in the school. The DPSM framework of inquiry based science teaching and learning and to deliver the science curriculum in a cross curricular manner, concurrent to the attainment of curriculum objectives. We have been successful in this endeavour and have now achieved our third Discover Primary Science STEM Plaque of Excellence. We will continue this in the coming year. We will operate a whole school approach to engaging with science and maths for a fourth academic year, continuing to generate an interest in investigation and scientific skills amongst children.
- v. There has been significant improvement in area partnerships and parental involvement. With respect to additional areas reviewed as part of this evaluation, again attendance and area partnerships; pupils' engagement with learning improves with increased attendance, and partnership with outside agencies promotes pupils' engagement with learning. This was apparent in initiatives such as Maths for Fun, Parent and Pupil Shared Reading, our '50 Year Jubilee Exhibition', Parent and Pupil Gardening Club, P.O.T.H.O.L.E.S. and the 'Lads n' Dad' Club, Adventure Club, Chess Club, our 'STEM Showcase' and the initiatives run by our Parents' Association – cakes sale, fun day, Communion breakfast reception etc., all of which assisted the learning of our pupils. We also linked with Baxter Healthcare and Business in the Community, linking with Zurich, Blackrock, for the 'Time to Read' literacy initiative. In the academic year 2018/2019 we will continue these activities.

4. Summary of school self-evaluation findings

4.1 Our school has **strengths** in the following areas: (List the main strengths of the school with regard to teaching and learning)

- i. There is evidence of outstanding teaching and learning in this DEIS Band 1 urban primary school – the professionalism of each teacher remains, evident, quantitatively, in test scores and, qualitatively, in the breadth of teaching approaches and methodologies and structure of each lesson. This was noted by our inspector Edel Corcoran throughout the probation process and the incidental visit of May 10th, 2018. There is a high level of professional collegiality in St. Kevin's. The professional development of teachers has continued, ensuring the commendable evidence of teaching and learning by our pupils remains consistent.
- *ii.* There is a high degree of pastoral care among all members of staff for the well-being of each pupil, which supports the attendance, welfare and learning of our pupils.
- *iii.* There is a high degree of parental involvement and engagement with area partnerships, to the edification of both teaching and learning in the school community.

4.2 The following areas are prioritised for improvement:

i. Continue to implement throughout all classes a progressive plan that supports the implementation of the new Language Curriculum. The school follows will follow an annual plan, introducing the new elements of the language curriculum in both English and Irish, while covering all strategies in writing and reading in the senior classes (3rd to 6th). The new language curriculum will focus on oral language, and now the reading and writing strands from Junior Infants to 2nd Class, following staff CPD (facilitated by

PDST), in both the English and Irish curricula, combined with ongoing elective support were possible.

- ii. In order to continue to progress our numeracy practice and scores, ten minutes of oral maths will continue to preface the beginning of every numeracy lesson, endorsing the development of lateral thinking and consistency in language where appropriate. There will also be an emphasis on the learning of tables, using a range of methodologies. These areas remain prioritised for improvement along with consistency in a spiralled approach to maths language. Problem solving will continue to be addressed through 'Brain Snack' as an integral approach to each daily lesson.
- iii. Engage with the new Stay Safe programme as an aspect of the SPHE curriculum.
- iv. We will integrate technology into the student experience and foster an environment of support and innovation in learning. School leadership will provide resources and cultivate a supportive and collaborative teaching and learning environment for integrating technology as a meaningful and effective part of the educational process. Students will leave our school as active, engaged and productive users of technology as a tool for learning and understand the impact of those technologies on society. With respect to the dimension of Teaching and Learning, we will chose the domain of leaner outcomes and aspire to the first two standards; namely that students enjoy their learning are motivated to learn and expect to achieve as learners, and that students have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes required to understand themselves and their relationships.
- v. The target for 2014/2015 was to increase the attendance rate and maintain an attendance rate at this increase, ideally at 93.5%. The school did not succeed. The target for 2016/2017 was to increase this attendance rate and maintain an attendance rate at this increase, ideally at 93.5%. The attendance for 2017/2018 is reported at 89%. However, further analysis indicates that while attendance is at 93% for the months of September and October, it falls to an average of 89% in December, April, May and June. These months will be targeted specifically, to endeavour to maintain the attendance rate of 93% evident at the beginning of the academic year. Pupils who have missed more than 20 days in the preceding academic year will also be purposely targeted (59 pupils have missed 20 days or more).

4.3 The following legislative and regulatory requirements need to be addressed: (Specify the aspects that need to be addressed)

- i. The annual review of our Health and Safety Policy
- *ii.* The annual review of our Anti-Bullying Policy
- iii. The annual review of our Child Protection Policy
- iv. The annual review of our Child Safety Statement
- v. The annual review of our G.D.P.R. policies

Appendix to School Self-Evaluation Report: legislative and regulatory checklist

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Time in school - Length of school year - minimum of 183 days - Length of school day 4 hours 40 minutes (infants); 5 hour 40 minutes (1 st -6 th classes)	Circular 11/95	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Arrangements for parent/teacher and staff meetings	Circular 14/04	Yes No	
Implementation of Croke Park agreement regarding additional time requirement	Circular 0008/2011	Yes No	
Standardisation of school year	Circular 034/2011	Yes No	
Valid enrolment of pupils	Section 9(1), 15(2) and 23 Education Act 1998 Sections 20 and 21, Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Rules 55, 64, 108 and 123, Rules for National Schools Circular P24/02 Staffing Schedule for current school year	Yes No	
Retention of pupils	Rule 64 Rules for National Schools Circular 11/01 Circular 32/03	Yes No	
Development of school plan	Section 21, Education Act 1998	Yes No	
Appointments to posts of responsibility	Circular 07/03 Circular 053/2011	Yes No	

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Time for literacy and numeracy - assessing and reporting literacy and numeracy achievement	Circular 0056/11 Initial Steps in the Implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy	Yes No	
Exemption from Irish	Circular 12/96	Yes No	
Implementation of child protection procedures	Circular 0065/2011 Please ensure the following in relation to child protection	YesNo	
	 Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE Number of cases where a report 	-	
	involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE and the school board of management informed	-	
	 Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made Number of cases where the DLP 		
	• Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made and the school board of management informed	-	
Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate	Complaints Procedures, Section 28 Education Act Primary Boards of Management Information Manual November 2007	Yes No	
	<i>Please consider the following in relation to complaints</i>		
	Number of formal parental complaints		

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular		Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed	
	received • Number of formal complain • Number of formal complain processed by the end of this so	ets not fully			
Refusal to enrol	Section 29 Education Act 19 Please provide the following in relation to appeals taken is accordance with Section 29 a school during this school year	information n gainst the		N/A	
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school Number of cases processed at informal stage				
	Number of cases heard Number of appeals upheld Number of appeals				
Suspension of students	dismissedSection 29 Education Act 1998Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year				
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school Number of cases processed at informal stage Number of cases heard				

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular		Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed	
	Number of appeals upheld				
	Number of appeals dismissed				
Expulsion of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year				
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school				
	Number of cases processed at informal stage				
	Number of cases heard				
	Number of appeals upheld Number of appeals dismissed				

Policy	Source	Has policy been approved by the board of management?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed.
Enrolment policy	Section (15)(2)(d) Education Act 1998	Yes No	
Code of behaviour ¹ including anti-bullying policy	Circular 20/90 DES Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour 1993 NEWB Guidelines Section 23, Education Welfare Act 2000	Yes No	
Attendance and participation strategy ²	Section 22 Education Welfare Act 2000 Equal Status Acts 2000-2011	Yes No	
Health and safety statement	Section 20 Health and Safety Act 2005	Yes No	
Data protection	Data Protection Act 1988 Data Protection (Amendment Act) 2003	Yes No	
Special education needs policy ³	Education Act 1998 Equal Status Acts 2000- 2011 Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (EPSEN) ⁴ 2004 Disability Act 2005	Yes No	
Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy	Relationships and Sexuality Education: Policy Guidelines (1997)	Yes No	
Child protection policy	Circular 0065/2011	Yes No	
Parents as partners	Circular 24/91	Yes No	
Public service (Croke Park) agreement – special needs assistants	Circular 71/11	Yes No	

¹ Under the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) (section 23) the school's code of behaviour should conform to the specifications stated. ² Under the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) (section 22), the school's attendance strategy should conform with the provisions stipulated.

³ Section 9 of the Education Act (1998) requires a school to "use its available resources" to identify and provide for the educational needs of those "with a disability or other special educational needs." ⁴ The ERSEN Act requires that schools be inclusive of and provide an appropriate education for pupils with special educational needs.