

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School Name	St Kevins N S
Seoladh na scoile/ School Address	Pearse Street Sallynoggin Co. Dublin
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	19979K

Date of inspection: 08-11-2019



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agus Scileanna
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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 inspectors 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.

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

Date of inspection	04-11-2019
Inspection activities undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with principal and in-school management team• 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 in-school management team and teachers• Feedback to parent representatives• Feedback to board of management

SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Kevin's National School is a co-educational school with 197 pupils enrolled from infants to sixth class. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. There is an administrative principal, nine mainstream class teachers and four special education teachers, one of whom is part-time. The school has a home-school-community liaison (HSCL) coordinator who is shared with another school and implements the School Completion Programme. The school works proactively to promote attendance and punctuality. Commendably, the number of pupils who have missed more than twenty days in a year has reduced. The school continues to monitor and support these pupils. Provision for English, Irish, Mathematics and Science was evaluated during the inspection.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of support for pupils is very good and is enhanced by a safe, welcoming and positive learning environment; communal areas throughout the school are used to very good effect to display pupils' work and promote a sense of community and inclusion.
- The quality of leadership and management is very good; school leaders have effectively prioritised pupils' wellbeing, learning and community relationships all of which impact positively on pupils' learning experiences.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is good with teachers promoting high levels of enjoyment and engagement in learning; additional challenges for more able learners should be provided in all settings.
- The quality of school planning including School Self-Evaluation (SSE) is very good overall; detailed plans are in place which are based on a range of evidence sources.
- Pupils' attainment in English is good and whole-school approaches to writing are very effectively implemented; pupils present as confident and enthusiastic communicators but their ability to use topic-specific vocabulary would benefit from an additional focus.
- Pupils' learning in Mathematics is good overall with some pupils attaining very well across the strands of the Mathematics Curriculum; although pupils displayed an appropriate

understanding of Irish vocabulary, their ability to construct sentences independently requires further development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Higher-order questioning and use of appropriately challenging tasks linked to learner outcomes, should be extended to all settings.
- Chun feabhas a chur ar thorthaí foghlama sa Ghaeilge labhartha, ní mór do na h-oidí cumas na ndaltaí abairtí iomlána a structúru go neamhspleách, a fhorbairt. *In order to improve learning outcomes in Irish, the teachers should develop the pupils' ability to construct full sentences independently.*
- A greater focus should be placed on identifying target language across the curriculum and developing pupils' ability to use this target language independently.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The board of management meets regularly, and discharges its financial, legislative and leadership duties very effectively. The board is very focused on the needs of the school and its pupils and is highly supportive of the principal and school staff. The board should review its enrolment policy in light of Circular 13/17 with a view to better reflecting the school's inclusive practice.
- The principal has established a highly collaborative school culture. He has created a welcoming and stimulating school environment with particular attention paid to communal areas within the school. The principal demonstrates a deep commitment to inclusion and the holistic development of each pupil; he ensures that the pupils are provided with a broad range of rich learning experiences. In response to questionnaires, all teachers agreed that there is a good atmosphere in the school, that there is good communication among the staff and that the school is well run.
- The in-school management team work in a highly collegial manner with the principal. The responsibilities of the team are reviewed regularly reflecting the school's priority needs. To further develop leadership structures, members of the in-school management team should provide an annual report to the board of management outlining their work and achievements.
- The management of pupils is highly commendable. Extremely respectful and positive interactions were observed in all settings during the evaluation. All staff members are praised for their skilful implementation of the whole-school approach to positive discipline. In response to questionnaires, almost all pupils indicated that they feel safe in the classroom and that there are very clear rules against hurting each other by what they say or do.
- A range of media is used to communicate effectively with parents: these included letters, text and a school website. All parents surveyed indicated that they feel welcome in the school, know who to talk to if there is a problem, and that their child is doing well in school.
- The school provides placement experience for teachers in initial teacher training and this reflects the school's concept of itself as a professional and learning organisation.

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

- The overall quality of school planning and SSE is very good. The school has prepared detailed plans for school improvement which reflect priority needs and is underpinned by evidence, collaboration and consultation.
- A wide range of organisational policies guides the smooth running of the school. The curriculum plans for Mathematics, English, Irish and Science provide guidance to teachers on learning outcomes. Where curriculum plans have most impact, they give clear guidance to teachers on all relevant aspects of curricular provision; this is most notable within the English plan. Curricular policies could be enhanced by the inclusion of agreed target language at each class level.
- During the lessons observed all teachers provided long-term planning; almost all provided appropriately detailed short-term planning. Monthly progress reports are completed by all teachers. In the settings where planning is most effective, target language and differentiated-learning outcomes are clearly stated. This approach to planning should be extended to all settings to ensure that the learning outcomes in teacher short-term planning are more closely focused on the needs and abilities of all pupils in their particular class.
- Where effective planning for pupils with special education needs was observed, priority learning needs of pupils were clearly identified, targets for progress were set and monitoring of pupil progress was consistent. It is recommended that all special education teachers prepare progressive weekly plans for individual pupils and groups who have identified learning needs.

3. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is good overall. Pupils generally demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of what they have been taught. A wide range of interesting and worthwhile learning experiences is provided for pupils leading to positive, productive learning environments throughout the school.
- All teachers demonstrated very effective classroom management skills and whole-school approaches to promoting positive behaviour for learning are implemented consistently throughout the school. During the evaluation, pupil behaviour was of a very high standard and pupils presented as enthusiastic and positive learners.
- During the evaluation, good teaching was observed in almost all lessons and very good teaching was evident in a significant minority of lessons. Very good teaching was characterised by clearly-identifiable learning outcomes suited to the range of pupils' needs, the use of stimulating higher-order questioning and the use of challenging tasks which optimised pupils' interest and engagement in learning.
- Classroom environments present as organised learning spaces for pupils. There is potential in some settings to develop wall displays to support pupil learning and to aid language recall in Mathematics, literacy and Science.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is good. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and follow direction diligently. In a few settings, pupils' capacity to listen purposefully to their peers and their ability to use subject-specific language independently should be developed further. Additional use of pair-work, small group work and use of identified target language is advised.
- In general, the pupils are attaining well in reading. Pupils have access to an appropriate range of reading material suited to their ability level. Teachers monitor pupils' reading progress diligently. Whole-school approaches to the teaching of writing have had a very positive impact on pupils' learning outcomes. Pupils write regularly and during lessons, quality samples are provided by teachers to model writing in agreed genre. Commendably, pupils

engage regularly and with enthusiasm in free writing. Nonetheless, there is some variation in the quality of presentation and range and quality of content. A review of agreed approaches to free writing is advised to ensure consistent outcomes.

- Tá cáilíocht an teagaisc, na fhoghlama agus ghnóthachtáil na ndaltaí sa Ghaeilge go sásúil ar an iomlán. Is léir go mbaineann na daltaí taitneamh as modhanna múinte gníomhacha agus go bhfuil foclóir oiriúnach ar eolas acu ar roinnt théamaí i ngach léibheal. Aithrisíonn siad dánta le muinín agus tá a scileanna léitheoirachta forbartha acu. Bíonn deis acu páirt a ghlacadh i ndramaí beaga. Tá réimse maith de scríbhneoireacht feidhmiúil bainte amach. Tá gá scileanna labhartha na ndaltaí a fhorbairt chun iad féin a chur in iúl go neamhspleách mar is cuí.
- *The quality of teaching, learning and achievement in Irish is satisfactory overall. Pupils enjoy the active methodologies used and know a suitable vocabulary in a range of themes. They recite poems confidently and demonstrate appropriate reading skills. They engage in drama and have opportunities to engage in functional writing. Further development of pupils' skills in spoken Irish is required to enable pupils to express themselves independently at an appropriate level.*
- Pupils' learning in Mathematics is good overall. They engage positively in lessons and the beneficial impact of whole-school approaches to developing mental maths and pupils' problem-solving abilities is evident. Pupils should be encouraged to apply their learning and to generate and solve their own problems. While very good support for pupils is in place with identified learning needs, all teachers should ensure more able pupils are provided with appropriately challenging tasks.
- Pupils' learning in Science is good; pupils are interested and positively disposed to Science. The quality of pupils' learning experiences is very good. Pupils are afforded opportunities to engage in a broad range of enriching science activities and active-learning methodologies. Commendably, the *Discover Primary Science* framework is used in all settings. Teachers work collaboratively to share expertise and devise suitable learning opportunities for pupils. Appropriate records of pupils' learning are maintained in all settings. While teachers explain new terminology clearly, a consistent focus should be placed on displaying this language and on enabling pupils to use this language independently in oral and written format.
- Assessment practices are effective overall. Approaches used include learner-outcome based checklists, teacher-designed tests, teacher observation and questioning. Very good systems are in place for the identification of pupils with learning needs and the assessment of some components of reading. Additional use of diagnostic assessment to ensure all components of reading are assessed is recommended.

4. QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS

- The quality of support for pupils is very good and a significant strength of the school. All staff members work cohesively to support and enhance pupils' well-being and holistic development. The school, assisted by the board, provides a very good range of additional supports to ensure that all pupils are enabled to participate fully in school life.
- The work of the HSCL coordinator is very effective in enhancing parental involvement in the school and in assisting parents to support their children's learning. All parents agree that their child is safe at school, well looked after and treated fairly and respectfully.

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. Kevin's N.S. welcomes this very positive Whole School Evaluation report which asserts and affirms the dedication and commitment of our school community; our school staff, our Parents' Association, our Special Education Team and the Board of Management. The Board welcomes the highly commendable practice evident with respect to Leadership, Management, Planning and the very high quality of support for pupils. Further, the Board welcomes the quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement evident, endorsing our commitment to our pupils.

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 welcomes the recommendations in the report which will inform our self-evaluation planning, teaching and learning in the academic year 2020/2021 and beyond.

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 <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;