



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

# Whole School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning Report

## REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	St Peter's National School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Saint Peter's Road Phibsborough Dublin 7
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	20091R
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	17/10/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	17/12/2024

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# What is a 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 inspector(s) 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.

## Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and tackle bullying

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:	
<i>Child Protection</i>	<i>Anti-bullying</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.</li><li>2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.</li><li>3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.</li><li>4. The Child Safeguarding Statement meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023).</li><li>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 (revised 2023).</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)</i> or <i>Bí Cineálta (2024)</i> and this policy is reviewed annually.</li><li>2. The school's current anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils.</li><li>3. The school has appropriate initiatives in place to promote a positive and inclusive school culture and environment in line with their current policy.</li><li>4. All teachers visited report that they have read the school's current policy on anti-bullying and that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities in preventing and tackling bullying.</li></ol>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>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, (revised 2023).</li><li>7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE).</li><li>8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.</li></ol>	
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

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# Whole-school evaluation – management, leadership and learning

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	17/10/2024
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meetings with principal and in-school leadership team</li><li>• Meeting with representatives of the board of management</li><li>• Meeting with parent representatives</li><li>• Meetings with teachers</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Pupil focus group</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of pupils' work</li><li>• Interaction with pupils</li><li>• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives</li></ul>

## School context

St Peter's National School is a co-educational primary school for pupils from junior infants to sixth class located in Phibsborough, Dublin 7. It is under the patronage of the Dublin Archdiocese. At the time of the evaluation, there were 410 pupils enrolled. Staffing comprised an administrative principal, eighteen mainstream teachers and seven special education teaching (SETs) positions. St Peter's NS participates in Band 2 of Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education for educational inclusion.

## Summary of main findings and recommendations:

### Findings

- The quality of pupils' learning was very good; pupils presented as confident and interested learners.
- The quality of teaching was highly effective.
- The quality of support for pupils with special education needs (SEN) was very good.
- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing was very good with aspects of excellence also observed.
- Enriching musical experiences had enabled pupils to perform together to a very high standard.
- The quality of leadership and management was of a very high standard.
- School self-evaluation was highly commendable.

### Recommendations

- To optimise learning for all pupils, teachers should extend their provision for open-ended, investigative learning, which will enhance the capacity of all pupils to participate effectively in lessons.
- All teachers should extend provision of formative feedback during and at the conclusion of lessons, encouraging pupils to set personal targets for their learning and inviting them to contribute to researching and selecting lesson content.

## Detailed findings and recommendations

### 1. The quality of pupils' learning

- The quality of pupils' learning was very good; pupils presented as confident and interested learners. They demonstrated a very good understanding of previous learning and successfully connected knowledge and skills to new learning. In all classrooms, pupils demonstrated the ability to work effectively in pairs or groups, as well as independently. They presented their written work very well and the whole-school approach to handwriting was evident. Pupils had a very good understanding of the different writing genres they had been studying, and samples of pupils' writing and visual arts were celebrated in all classrooms and across school corridors. In senior classes, pupils used project books to record and present their learning in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education. The use of project books allowed for the recording of a range of rich learning experiences in different formats.
- Pupils demonstrated interest and curiosity in language learning. The school's approach to developing vocabulary was evident in all classrooms. Where this was most effective, it promoted a rich representation of word meanings chosen by pupils and their teacher, focused attention on the relationships between words, and fostered a use of the words in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Progression was evident in pupils' learning in Irish. Pupils demonstrated a good ability to structure sentences independently in Irish with increasing levels of complexity as they proceeded through the school. More attention could be given to home languages to enrich the language learning environment of the classroom for all and enhance understanding, connection and appreciation.
- In some lessons observed, learning was primarily teacher-directed. In the best instances, pupils were enabled to engage in stimulating, collaborative tasks through a variety of skills including enquiry-based learning and problem-solving approaches. In these instances, teachers also ensured that the lessons were appropriately challenging, reflected high expectations and further progressed the pupils' prior learning. To optimise learning for all pupils, teachers should extend their provision for open-ended, investigative learning, which will enhance the capacity of all pupils to participate in lessons.
- The school placed a strong emphasis on developing pupils' talents through the arts. Of particular note, were the opportunities provided for pupils to be part of the school orchestra and choir. These enriching musical experiences enabled pupils to perform together to a very high standard for their school and local communities. Pupils shared how proud they were of their achievements in relation to this.

### 2. The quality of teaching

- The overall quality of teaching was highly effective; in all instances, lesson objectives were pitched appropriately. Teachers were skilful in managing a range of teaching approaches to facilitate pupils' learning. They modelled the use of rich vocabulary and enabled their pupils to engage in focused talk and discussion. The effective use of play-based methodologies was a significant feature of practice in the infant settings. In some instances, teachers skilfully synthesised and recorded the key achievements of the lesson with pupils and the aspects needing further attention. This very effective practice supported pupils to understand themselves as learners and realise their progression. There was potential across the school to enhance pupil agency in their learning through the further provision of formative feedback during and at the conclusion of lessons, through encouraging pupils to set personal targets for their learning and inviting them to contribute to researching and selecting lesson content.
- The quality of support for pupils with additional needs was highly commendable. The provision of additional support was co-ordinated very well, and highly effective systems and structures had been put in place to identify the priority needs of pupils and respond

appropriately. Student support plans were comprehensive and updated regularly. In most instances, targets were very clear and regular monitoring and review of targets demonstrated a positive impact on pupils' progression of their learning. Further support was needed to establish targets for the social and emotional development of pupils. Greater opportunities exist to share information from the support teachers and mainstream teachers to best support pupils.

- Agreed whole-school assessment approaches were implemented very effectively across the school. Commendably, the school adopted a strengths-based approach, which emphasised the abilities of each pupil while also identifying areas for development. Teachers engaged in robust analysis of data to inform developments in teaching and learning. They used a variety of worthwhile approaches to assessment in their classrooms including teacher observations, work samples, checklists and teacher-designed tasks and tests.

### 3. The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing

- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing was very good with aspects of excellence also observed. It was a significant strength of the school that pupils were active members of school leadership committees and had diligently led a number of initiatives to support the development of the school. Pupils shared a clear rationale for each of the committees they represented. The impact of the Student Council, Health and Safety committee, *Coiste na Gaeilge*, Digital Leaders and Green School Committee was visible and supported a pupil-centred culture across the school.
- This pupil-centredness was also evident in the agility of teachers to respond and adapt provision to emerging educational needs and also with regard to transitions. Teachers expanded upon the typical transition points of junior infants and sixth class where pupils might need specific support to include pupils who might arrive mid-year as well as the transition of pupils from senior infants to first class. All teachers employed effective strategies, including movement breaks or deep-breathing exercises, during the school day to support pupils as they transitioned from learning in one subject area to another. All parents who completed the survey reported that their child enjoyed school.
- Teachers affirmed and celebrated pupils' work in curricular and extra-curricular activities. It was noteworthy that teachers provided a wide and varied selection of after-school clubs including LEGO, dance, baking, handball, choir, orchestra and chess.
- All classrooms presented as organised, productive and affirming learning spaces. In a focus group meeting, pupils reported that teachers supported them well with their learning. Pupils also reported confidence that if they had a difficulty with their learning, they could seek and would receive help from teachers. While pupils reported that they could speak with and be listened to by a teacher or other adult about being bullied, they were less certain that actions taken to stop the bullying behaviour would be successful. In prioritising the area of wellbeing for school self-evaluation and in gathering the perspectives of pupils, teachers and parents, school management had already noted the uncertainty of pupils in replying to some questions about bullying.

### 4. The quality of leadership and management

- The quality of leadership and management was of a very high standard. The principal demonstrated strong commitment to leading all aspects of provision through exceptional organisational and management skills. A culture of reflection and working together was fostered and the best interests of the pupils remained central to all decision-making processes. The principal facilitated school leaders to work together in a collegial and collaborative manner to sustain professional and productive working relationships for the benefit of pupils. He was ably supported by the deputy principal and together, they engaged in frequent processes of personal reflection, identifying and working on areas of practice that required improvement.

- All teachers were facilitated to access and engage in high quality professional learning and share their individual expertise with other teachers through collaborative sessions. It was highly commendable that leadership training had been provided to the in-school management (ISM) team.
- The ISM had a very good understanding of how to lead teaching and learning and was highly capable, strategic and successful in leading positive change across the school. They adopted a strategic approach to ensuring teachers were supported to implement school priority and curricular changes. The roles and responsibilities of the ISM team were aligned with the priorities of the school. These roles and responsibilities were regularly reviewed, which is helpful in ensuring that duties remain relevant and tasks remain manageable for individual post holders commensurate to their assigned level of responsibility.
- The board of management had a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. It was very well-informed regarding school developments and achievements in teaching and learning. Members of the board worked collaboratively to ensure that the school was a safe and well-maintained learning environment.
- School management was supported by a very proactive and recently established parents' association. The parents' association was aware of the need to represent the full school community and had undertaken a survey with parents to better understand the interests and needs of families. They had a vision to respond to the patterns identified from the survey to build more connections within the parent community. It would be helpful for a teacher representative to attend the parents' association meeting. This representation role could be incorporated into the planned review of middle management duties.
- All teachers and almost all parents who responded to the surveys, conducted as part of the evaluation, reported that there was a good atmosphere in the school and that it was well run.
- The school reported that it regularly provided placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome.

## 5. The quality of school self-evaluation

- School management demonstrated an insightful understanding of the SSE process which was very clearly evident in the school's very high quality planning process.
- School leadership had adopted a collaborative approach to informing school improvement by consulting with pupils, parents and teachers in identifying areas for development. Teaching and learning across the themes for DEIS action planning included prioritising areas for development, involving stakeholders' information and viewpoints through surveys, and analysing data. Leadership's capability to analyse data informed the development of clear targets for improvement, most notably in the areas of literacy, numeracy and attendance. A very comprehensive improvement plan had been devised, clearly delineating targets with corresponding actions, and included monitoring systems to ensure full and appropriate implementation.
- The impact of previous improvement plans was evident in standardised testing results, samples of pupils' work, and whole-school teaching and assessment approaches.

# **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. Peter's National School welcomes this positive and affirming report and is particularly pleased that the inspectorate confirmed that:

- The school met all the requirements for Child Protection and Anti Bullying procedures.
- The quality of pupils' learning was very good; pupils presented as confident and interested learners.
- The school placed a strong emphasis on developing pupils' talents through the arts.
- The overall quality of teaching was highly effective.
- The quality of support for pupils with additional needs was highly commendable.
- Agreed whole-school assessment approaches were implemented very effectively across the school.
- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing was very good with aspects of excellence observed.
- All classrooms presented as organised, productive and affirming learning spaces.
- The quality of leadership and management was of a very high standard- team members displayed a very good understanding of how to lead teaching and learning. It was highly commendable that leadership training had been provided to the in-school management (ISM) team.
- The board of management had a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- School management was supported by a very proactive and recently established parents' association.
- All teachers and almost all parents who responded to the evaluation surveys, reported that there was a good atmosphere in the school and that it was well run.
- School self-evaluation was deemed to be highly commendable.

The Board of Management would like to congratulate the long-standing commitment, diligence and enthusiasm that is evident with all staff members and clearly seen in this report. It also wishes to acknowledge all the parents and pupils who engaged so helpfully and earnestly with the inspectorate during the WSE-MLL process.

## **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 of Management and staff acknowledge the need to optimise learning for all pupils, particularly through the provision of open-ended, investigative learning which will enhance the capacity of all pupils to participate effectively in lessons.
- The Board and staff also recognise the need to extend provision of formative feedback during and at the conclusion of lessons, encouraging pupils to set personal targets for their learning and inviting them to contribute to researching and selecting lesson content.
- We have requested an advisory visit from our inspector to discuss our two recommendations so that we can implement them effectively on a whole-school basis.

- The recommendations in relation to home languages, open-ended investigative learning and pupil agency will also be explored through Teacher Professional Learning and staff discussions/collaborative meetings.
- In light of focus group discussions (where pupils reported to be less certain that actions taken to stop bullying behaviour would be successful) we will seek to educate the children on the steps we take to deal with bullying as a whole staff.
- The school will provide enhanced opportunities for SETs and class teachers to meet- utilising our Croke Park hours/collaborative planning time.
- The school teaching staff will meet shortly to develop strategies to implement the above recommendations.

## 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	Examples of descriptive terms
<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Provision that is excellent</b> is exemplary in meeting the needs of learners. This provision provides an example for other schools and settings of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Excellent; exemplary; outstanding; exceptionally high standard; with very significant strengths
<b>Very good</b>	<b>Provision that is very good</b> is very effective in meeting the needs of learners and is of a very high standard. There is potential to build on existing strengths to achieve an excellent standard.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful
<b>Good</b>	<b>Provision that is good</b> is effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to build on existing strengths in order to address the aspects to be developed and achieve a very good standard.	Good; of good quality; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; strengths outweigh the shortcomings; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist
<b>Requires improvement to achieve a good standard</b>	<b>Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard</b> is not sufficiently effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is good or better.	Fair; less than effective; less than sufficient; evident weaknesses that are impacting on learning; experiencing difficulty; shortcomings outweigh strengths; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
<b>Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard</b>	<b>Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard</b> is not meeting the needs of learners. There is immediate need for significant action to address the areas of concern.	Weak; poor; ineffective; insufficient; unacceptable; experiencing significant difficulties; serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated; requiring significant change, development and improvement to be effective