

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Follow-Through Inspection

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/ School name	The Harold School
Seoladh na scoile/ School address	Eden Road Glasthule Co Dublin
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	20141G

Date of Evaluation: 14 December 2017



WHAT IS A FOLLOW-THROUGH INSPECTION?

Follow-through inspections evaluate the progress a school has made on implementing main recommendations made in an earlier inspection rather than the overall educational provision that the school makes. Inspectors also advise the school on strategies and actions to enable them to fully address recommendations.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated the progress the school has made in implementing recommendations made in an earlier inspection under the following headings:

1. Progress achieved to date
2. Findings
3. Recommendations

Inspectors describe the quality of the progress made in each of these areas using the Inspectorate's follow-through quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The follow-through quality continuum explains the terms used by inspectors when evaluating the school's progress in implementing recommendations.

ORIGINAL INSPECTION DETAILS		FOLLOW-THROUGH INSPECTION DETAILS	
Types: 1) WSE-MLL 2) Follow-Through Evaluation of WSE-MLL Dates of Inspections: 1) 11 June 2014 2) 27 November 2015 Reports Published? Yes		Date of Inspection: 14 December 2017	
Follow-through inspection activities			
<p>The following activities took place in the course of the follow-through inspection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with Principal • Interview with members of in-school management team • Conversation with relevant teachers/members of staff • Review of school documentation and records and pupils' work • Review of resources and facilities • Observation of teaching and learning • Interaction with pupils • Meeting with representatives of the board of management • Meeting with representatives of the school's parents' association 			
Recommendation in original inspection report		Progress achieved to date on implementation of recommendation	
<p>The board should ensure that it is compliant with all regulatory, procedural and statutory requirements.</p>		<p>Very Good progress</p> <p>The board has made commendable progress in reforming its processes and procedures, and is now providing effective governance oversight to the school. The current members work as a cohesive unit, and share a common sense of purpose. Meetings are well organised, decisions and reports are carefully recorded and staff are deployed in line with relevant circulars. The board ensures that it is generally compliant with its regulatory, procedural and statutory requirements.</p> <p>At the time of the evaluation, the board had recently changed the organisation of its finances and its system for financial oversight. The absence of audited / certified accounts for several years, as highlighted in the first Follow-Through report, has now been rectified.</p>	
<p>Structures should be put in place for meaningful, participative engagement by all stakeholders in policy formation, implementation and review.</p>		<p>Very good progress</p> <p>The board has engaged in exemplary work around this recommendation. Board members have worked with all stakeholders to create a renewed sense of community and a shared vision for the school. There is regular, two-way communication between the board, parents, teachers and learners. In particular, the issuing of an agreed report simultaneously to all, following all board meetings, is praiseworthy. Stakeholders now have opportunities to engage in a meaningful way in policy formation and review.</p> <p>Further, the board is commended for effectively addressing matters that were causing considerable disharmony amongst the school community, and for finding a suitable solution.</p>	

<p>The board should review the plant, its facilities and environs, in light of the increased enrolment and take the actions necessary to ensure an environment appropriate to the delivery of a 21st century education for pupils</p>	<p>Partial progress</p> <p>While the board has continued to discuss the school's buildings and their ongoing maintenance, and have had some discussion about the future of the plant, it has not created a strategic plan for the school's site and future building needs as recommended in the first Follow-Through report.</p> <p>The board reported that recommendations one and two (above) had been prioritised and took considerable time and energy. It is now in a position to place a concerted focus on this recommendation and plans to progress it during 2018.</p>
<p>To ensure that pupils are adequately challenged in their learning, greater use should be made of differentiated teaching. This requires more effective assessment practices to track pupil progress and inform programmes of Learning.</p>	<p>Very Good progress</p> <p>Differentiation is now a more widespread, meaningful and targeted feature of teaching in the school. The teaching staff have worked hard to develop approaches that cater for the range of learners in the school. Purposeful use is made of group teaching, station teaching, differentiated-reading material, co-operative learning, Aistear and targeted in-class support to provide appropriately challenging learning experiences for pupils.</p> <p>A whole-school focus has been placed on assessment, and regular assessment and tracking are a more significant feature of practice.</p>
<p>Greater whole-school use should be made of curriculum approaches that increase pupil engagement in learning.</p>	<p>Very good progress</p> <p>This recommendation was progressed in tandem with the provision of more challenging experiences for learning. The lessons observed during this follow-through evaluation were characterised by very good learner engagement as a result of teaching that involved play-based learning, active engagement, collaborative opportunities, digital technologies and differentiated experiences.</p>
<p>A system to share effective pedagogical practices should be developed and greater opportunities for professional collaborative discussion should be provided for the teaching staff.</p>	<p>Good progress</p> <p>The regular meetings between teachers in their class groups provide opportunities for teachers to plan learning experiences, share teaching practices and discuss expectations for pupils' outcomes. Teaching and learning matters are now a very regular focus of discussion at staff meetings.</p> <p>A small group of teachers have engaged in a peer observation project and the teachers participating in the recently-commenced Droichead process have also engaged in supportive observations of teaching and learning. These early successes present an opportunity to establish professional collaborative review as part of the school's culture for all teachers.</p>
<p>The potential for in-class support should be maximised and such interventions should be more targeted.</p>	<p>Very good progress</p> <p>In-class support is a more regular feature of provision in the school. A wide and varied range of interventions has been developed and implemented in the school. They include interventions that are focused on the early years, some that target specific skills on a school-wide basis, and others that support the provision of sufficiently challenging learning experiences for pupils of varying abilities. For many of these interventions, there are good assessment and review practices in place, and the continued development of this aspect of provision is advised.</p>

Summary of findings

Overall, considerable progress is evident since the whole-school evaluation and since the first follow-through evaluation. The board of management has made significant strides in reforming its functioning and is now providing good governance oversight to the school. While the creation of a strategic plan for the school building and site, is an area to be developed by the board, it has been prioritised for focus in the coming months.

The in-school management team and the teachers have embraced the teaching and learning recommendations and have worked to develop many highly-effective teaching practices that are positively impacting on pupils' learning experiences. The leadership is committed to ongoing reflection, improvement and innovation.

The school is now very well-placed to continue to develop its governance processes and its teaching and learning practices, to ensure that all dimensions of its work are of a highly effective standard.

Recommendations

- The board should maintain and continue to embed the effective governance and communication practices that have been developed.
- In planning for the school's plant and ensuring a building that is suitable for the delivery of a 21st century education, the board should develop a strategic plan that sets out a vision for the type of infrastructure they would like to put in place. In so doing, the board is advised to examine the solutions achieved by other schools with similar building restrictions, and should engage the relevant professional expertise to support its work.
- The leadership and the teachers should continue to build on the culture of reflection on teaching and learning in the school. Shared teaching practices and interventions should continue to be reviewed and amended and the successful uses of professional collaborative review should be implemented school-wide.

CHILD PROTECTION

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

1. The school principal is aware that revised child protection procedures for primary and post-primary schools came into effect on 11 December 2017 and arrangements are in place to begin the process of implementing these procedures.
2. The name of the designated liaison person for child protection matters was prominently displayed near the main door of the school / in the school's reception area.
3. The school has a Child Protection policy in place.
4. The principal confirmed that all teachers have been made aware that they are mandated persons and that they have responsibilities in that regard.

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

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.

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 and staff of The Harold School welcome this very positive Whole School Evaluation Follow Through report which acknowledges and affirms the dedication and commitment of our staff, Parents' Association and Board of Management. The report affirms the positive learning experiences enjoyed by the pupils and highly effective teaching practices that teachers have developed. The Board acknowledges the very positive response by the school community to the recommendations contained in the WSE report (2014) and the Follow Through report (2015).

The Board welcomes the report's findings which identify the:

- considerable progress made since the WSE and the first Follow through evaluation.
- exemplary work done by the Board to address effective home school communication and engagement by all stakeholders, good progress made by the Board in providing effective governance
- very good progress made by the in-school management team and teachers in developing highly effective teaching practices that are positively impacting on pupils' learning experiences.
- commitment of leadership to ongoing reflection and improvement and innovation.

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

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- As part of our ongoing commitment to collaboration and improvement we now look forward to fostering effective practice through the introduction of a whole-school focus on shared teaching practices and interventions in the context of the next phase of the School Self Evaluation process.
- The Board is now in a position to place a concerted focus on the creation of a strategic plan for the school site and future building needs as recommended in the Follow Through report (2015).

THE QUALITY CONTINUUM FOR FOLLOW-THROUGH INSPECTIONS
<i>Very good progress</i> indicates that appropriate action has been taken to address the recommendation, and that the action has fully achieved or will achieve the required outcome.
<i>Good progress</i> indicates that appropriate action has been taken to address the recommendation, and that substantial improvement has occurred, although further progress is necessary.
<i>Partial progress</i> indicates that some appropriate action has been taken to address the recommendation, and some improvement has occurred, but considerable further progress is necessary.
<i>No progress</i> indicates that no action has been taken, and that the original recommendation remains to be addressed.