

**ALTERNATIVE
EDUCATION
ASSESSMENT &
REGISTRATION**

Section 14 Education (Welfare) Act, 2000

**Assessment of Education
in places other than Recognised Schools**

**Independent School
Review Assessment Report**

Name of School	Monkstown Park Junior School
Address	Upper Mounttown Road, Dun Laoghaire
Telephone	01 2842564
Name of Principal/Director	Mr. Stephen Flood
Name of Assessor/s	Billy Lawlor
Date of Assessment	23 rd March 2023
Date of Final Report	15 th June 2023

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Section 1 Background Information

1.1. School Hours

Opening Time:	09:00		
Closing time:	15:00		
Main breaks during the day:	10:30	to	10:45
	12:00	to	13:00

Is school in operation for more than five years?

Yes

If no, please give date on which school commenced operation

00/00/0000

1.2. Name(s) of principal and/or other teacher(s) interviewed

(Normally interview should take place with the principal)

Mr. Stephen Flood

1.3. Sources of evidence on which report is based

This assessment report is based on the following sources of evidence:

- Information furnished in the annual update form R2 completed by the principal, Mr. Stephen Flood and an information pack made available to me during visit
- An interview with the principal
- Classroom visits and interaction with classroom teachers
- Examination of a sample of learning tasks completed by the pupils
- Observation of the educational materials in use
- A reading of the school's website.

Section 2 General Information and School Context

CBC Monkstown Park Junior School was opened in 1950 by the Irish Christian Brothers. Since 2014, the school is managed by a Parents Board through the not-for-profit company Certa Bonum Certamen and is now called Monkstown Park Junior School. The parent body rents the buildings from the Christian Brothers who remain the owners. This arrangement came about because of the initiative of parents who wanted the school to continue after the Christian Brothers were no longer in a position to act as its manager. The school continues to promote a Catholic ethos but the school accepts pupils from all faiths and none. The junior school is an independent co-educational school which is supported by the payment of pupil fees. Current enrolment in the school is ninety-six pupils. Eighty-four of these pupils are the subjects of this assessment as they are six years of age and over. The school is governed by a board of management.

Section 3 The Principal and Staff

Staffing in the school consists of a principal teacher and seven other class teachers. A learning support teacher is also employed as well as extra-curricular teachers in Speech and Drama, Music and Physical Education (PE). All members of staff have secured Garda vetting. The principal has overall responsibility for in-school management. He is ably supported by his deputy principal in discharging all his relevant duties. Both the principal and deputy principal play an active role on the school's board of management. The board is independently chaired and ensures there is balanced oversight of all school activities and compliance with legal obligations. There is significant parental involvement in the school and positive parental support for its work and development is encouraged. Parents are involved in managing the library and support all school events. A sub-committee of the parents' association is specifically responsible for fund raising. The school also operates a student council. Each class group from first to sixth class elects pupil to sit on this council. The council meets the principal each month and constructive discussions with the principal take place.

Section 4 Time Devoted to Education

Formal classroom instruction begins each morning at 09:00 and finishes at 15:00. A fifteen-minute break is taken at 10:30 and lunch break is taken from 12:00 to 13:00. The school observes the regular primary school year and holiday times. Pupil attendance is described by the principal as excellent.

Section 5 The Learning Environment

The school is situated on a large school campus that also houses a post-primary school. Classrooms are bright and spacious, and all contain stimulating displays of educational charts and pupils' work. The rooms are organised to facilitate different forms of learning, and a wide range of materials and resources is available. The junior school is physically connected to the senior school and some indoor and outdoor facilities are shared between the schools. Pupils therefore have access to rugby pitches and Astro-turf areas. The corridor area is bright and cheerful, with colourful displays of children's work in a range of subjects. The school also provides a dedicated music room and a comprehensive school library.

Section 6 The Educational Activities

6.1. General information

The pupils receive tuition in a range of subjects. Subject content is based on the curriculum guidelines incorporated in the Revised Primary School Curriculum. The school also places a strong emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) education. Inquiry-based learning is promoted across various subject areas of the curriculum. Critical thinking skills are therefore developed, and pupils are active participants in their own educational journey. Each pupil is assigned to a house team from the day of enrolment in the school. There are four house teams, and teams compete against each other during the year to win the House Shield. The competition is organised in a way that enables all pupils to contribute to their teams score and to use their own special skills and interests in contributing to the team effort.

6.2. Language and literacy skills

Monkstown Park places a strong emphasis on the development of language and literacy skills at each level in the school. Oral language is developed using appropriate strategies and pupils displayed competent oral skills in the classrooms visited. The *Jolly Phonics* scheme is used to support the development of initial reading skills., The Folens spelling programme is used for spelling development. Pupil interest and development in reading is encouraged in several ways. The school observes World Book Week each year. The school library is actively involved in organising this week and visiting authors speak to the pupils as part of a range of literary activities. Older pupils visit local libraries and bookshops to take part in literary workshops. A *Reading Buddies* programme is in operation in the school. Senior pupils pair with junior pupils and engage in reading activities that encourage the development of reading skills in the younger pupils. Penmanship is introduced in a structured manner and cursive writing begins in second class. Written work, including project work, reflects the efforts of the staff to promote well-presented work. Pupils also participate in the *Write a Book* competition.

6.3. Numeracy

The *Planet Maths* mathematics scheme is used to support lessons in Mathematics throughout the school. The school promotes mathematical learning under the STEAM banner, integrating it with other subjects. Classrooms contain displays of mathematical work and designated maths areas within the classroom. A maths trail has also been established outdoors.

6.4. Irish

The Irish scheme in use in the school is *Bua na Cainte*. Teachers employ varied methodologies in the teaching of Irish, ranging from traditional flashcards to online resources. Events are organised for *Seachtain na Gaeilge* in March. The *Seo Leat* readers encourage the development of formal reading and reinforce the vocabulary used during oral language lessons. Senior classes use Irish-English dictionaries to support their learning in this area.

Children attending an Independent School should be afforded opportunity for the study of Irish, however the study of Irish is not a requirement for registration under Section 14 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. Where Irish is included in the provision, an Independent School may identify students attending that they consider would qualify for an www.education.ie and/or the State Examinations Commission www.examinations.ie with regard to the requirement for Irish and/or an additional language

6.5. Other areas of learning

The content and subject divisions of *The Primary School Curriculum* inform teaching and learning in all classes in the school. The STEAM subjects of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics are integrated into the curriculum where possible but also taught as discrete subjects. There are themed weeks assigned also to the STEAM subjects. This acts as a stimulus to promoting interest in these areas. The Aistear programme is used in the junior grades. Lessons in French and German are timetabled for fifth class and sixth class. Specialist teachers provide instruction in PE, Speech and Drama and Music. All pupils have access, in their physical education activities, to a range of facilities that enables them to participate in rugby, swimming, tennis, soccer and hockey activities. Pupils are involved in an early morning run around the rugby pitches and the school forest. This takes place each morning before formal lessons begin. The school is involved in promoting the

Green School initiative. Pupils are also involved in the *Blue School* project which aims to give pupils respect for the sea and marine ecosystems. The school has been awarded green flags and blue flags for the quality of the pupils' efforts in these areas. All classes have lessons in Speech and Drama and pupils have opportunities to learn guitar, drums, ukulele and piano as part of the provision for Music. The *Stay Safe* programme is taught as an element of the Social, Personal and Health Education curriculum. Lessons in Relationships and Sexuality Education are delivered by an outside agency employed by the school. The *Grow in Love* scheme forms the basis of the religious education programme.

6.6. Special educational needs

The school employs a special needs teacher. Some pupils get additional support on a weekly basis. Support is also given to gifted pupils.

Section 7 Assessment and Record Keeping

A range of assessment strategies is used throughout the school. Formal and informal tests are administered regularly by the classroom teachers. The Micra-T standardised test is carried out in first class and the Drumcondra standardised tests are administered annually from second class to sixth class. Records are kept of all test results. All test results are used to inform classroom practice and to facilitate meeting the specific learning needs of individual pupils.

Section 8 Other Relevant Information

The school's application also provided a number of policy and certification documents. The following is a summary of documents provided:

- School calendar and timetables
- Health and Safety policy statement
- Child Safeguarding statement as required by Child Care Act 2015
- Fire safety compliance certificate.
- Insurance arrangements.

Section 9 Evaluation of the Education Provision and Recommendations

In my opinion, the education provided to the pupils in Monkstown Park Junior School can be characterised as “a certain minimum education, moral, intellectual and social”. The reasons I have formed this opinion of the educational provision in the school are as follows:

- The quality of leadership and management offered by the principal, Mr. Stephen Flood
- The range and variety of curricular provision available to the pupils
- The positive relations that are fostered in the school community
- The employment of suitably qualified staff
- The wide variety of resources available to enhance teaching and learning, both within classrooms and in the school’s campus facilities
- Displays throughout the school which highlight and celebrate the pupils’ achievements
- The provision of well-resourced and stimulating learning environments for the pupils in each class.

The findings of the assessment were discussed with the participants on the date of the assessment. The participants were advised that the decision regarding registration would be made by Tusla – the Child and Family Agency: Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service (AEARS).

Following the assessment, a draft report is provided to the principal, along with a Factual Accuracy and Feedback Form, which may be submitted within a specified timeframe, in response to the content of the draft report. The report, along with any information provided on the feedback form for consideration, is brought to the AEARS Registration Panel. The Registration Panel make decisions regarding registration of children in receipt of the education at the Independent School.

Section 10 Discussion of Finding of Report with Principal

The report was discussed with Mr. Stephen Flood, principal, and it was stated that the recommendation would be to retain the pupils of Monkstown Park Junior School on the register. The final decision regarding registration will be made by the Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service Tusla, Child and Family Agency.

Section 11 Outcome

Outcome Of Tusla Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Service Panel Regarding Requirements for Section 14 Registration of Children Attending the School

Following the Assessment, the Registration Panel decided that children attending Monkstown Park Junior School will be registered and retained on the register of children receiving an education in a place other than a recognised school as required by Section 14 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

Registration is subject to a periodic review by the Child and Family Agency