

**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

St. Kilian's Primary School

Address

Roebuck Road, Clonskeagh, Dublin 14.

Name of Principal/Director

Ms Annette Black

Name of Assessor/s

Billy Lawlor

Date of Assessment

29th February 2024

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Section 1 Background Information

1.1. School Hours

Opening Time:	08:25		
Closing time:	14:50		
Main breaks during the day:	10:25	to	10:55
	12:50	to	13:30

Is school in operation for more than five years?

Yes	

If no, please give date on which school commenced operation

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

(Normally interview should take place with the principal)

Ms Annette Black

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
- An interview with the principal
- Classroom visits and interaction with classroom teachers and pupils
- 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

St. Kilian's Primary School is a private fee-charging school. The school is situated on a large campus which it shares with other educational facilities. The site is owned by the German government and the school building is owned by the school which operates as a limited company. Enrolments in the school are governed by the school's admissions policy. The school has an overall enrolment of 397 pupils and 57 of these pupils are under the age of six. The school community is comprised of pupils of different nationalities and differing belief backgrounds. All are catered for in an inclusive environment that is characterised by the promotion of interdenominational values and cultural respect. Pupils of every religious background and none are welcomed in the school. St Kilian's is committed to creating a nurturing and caring environment, where the individual's dignity and integrity are affirmed and valued.

Parents play a prominent role in the management of the school and in supporting various school activities and fund-raising events. Members of the Board of Management includes 2 teachers and parents, and the parents have also been actively involved in supporting building projects. Science week and Maths week are also enhanced by the active support and involvement of parents in various activities.

Section 3 The Principal and Staff

An overarching principal has overall responsibility for the kindergarten, primary and secondary schools. The primary school administrative principal, Ms Annette Black, has responsibility for kindergarten and primary education provision. She effectively leads teaching and learning in the school and the management of the teaching staff. There are 16 class teachers who cater for the core curriculum areas and for the pastoral needs of the pupils. Two full-time physical education teachers are also employed along with a number of part-time and full-time specialist teachers in other curricular areas. Pupils with additional needs are supported by having access to four learning support teachers, two special needs assistants and two teaching assistants.

The management team in the school is formed by the principal teacher, two deputy principal teachers and seven teachers who hold dedicated posts of responsibility. Regular meetings are held and decisions taken contribute to the overall management and curriculum development of the school. Regular staff meetings also take place. Fifteen meetings were held in the previous school year. Communication with the school community is enhanced by the weekly issue of a newsletter to staff and to the parents.

There is particular emphasis placed on the implementation of whole school planning throughout the school. Yearly plans form the basis for curriculum planning in each class and staff members cooperate with each other in devising plans. All planning is overseen by the head of school development planning and agreement is reached among staff on school development targets. Continual professional development (CPD) for teachers is actively encouraged and facilitated. All staff, including external and part time staff have been Garda vetted, and all have completed the Children First safeguarding course module. A child safeguarding policy is in place and a designated liaison person (DLP) and deputy DLP have been nominated and assigned.

Section 4 Time Devoted to Education

St. Kilian's Primary School adheres to the standardised school year as set out by the Department of Education for holidays and mid-term breaks.

The school day begins for pupils at 08.25 and finishes at various times:

1st and 2nd Classes – 12:50 p.m. each day.

3rd and 4th Classes – 2:50 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday

12:50 p.m. Wednesday and Friday

5th and 6th Classes – 4:10 p.m. Monday

2:50 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday

12:50 p.m. Wednesday and Friday

Pupils are given two breaks during the school day. The morning break extends from 10:25 to 10:55 and the afternoon break is from 12:50 to 13:30.

Section 5 The Learning Environment

There are 12 base classrooms accommodating two classes of each standard from standard one to standard six. Pupils also have access to four resource rooms, and an assembly room that also contains a library. There is a well-equipped play area outdoors and a basketball court. All classrooms are well equipped with interactive whiteboards and concrete materials to aid investigative and cooperative learning methodologies. The classroom and corridor areas are all well maintained, and wall space is used to provide stimulating displays of pupil work.

Section 6 The Educational Activities

6.1. General information

During their six years at primary school pupils follow the content and subject strands of the Primary School Curriculum with the exception, initially, of the Irish language, and the art curriculum is that of Germany not Ireland. Lessons in Irish begin in third class. The German language is central to much of the work of the school. German classes are offered at different levels depending on whether the pupil is a native or non-native speaker. Physical Education is an integral part of the school's core curriculum.

6.2. Language and literacy skills

The English curriculum is designed to offer pupils a language experience which gives due prominence to oral language, reading and writing. Talk and discussion around curriculum topics are encouraged in each class to enhance the development of oral language skills. Importance is attached to the development of public speaking skills. Topics are debated from third class onwards and a public speaking week is held each September. The approach to reading is based on providing an integrated language experience for the pupils. Pupils experience a print-rich environment from their initial entrance into the school and all classes have ready access to books. Extensive use is made of the school library. A parent librarian supports the work in this area. A phonics-based approach to developing reading skills has proved successful with the pupils in the kindergarten classes.

The novel *Faraway Home* was being studied by the sixth pupils during my visit and pupils in all classes are encouraged to read novels that are appropriate to their reading ability and promote diversity. The ability to write clearly and expressively is developed at each level in the school. Opportunities are provided for the pupils to write in different genres, to write for audiences, and to correct, edit, and redraft their work. Samples of pupils' writing are displayed in classrooms and on corridors and competent penmanship skills were observed in the presentations.

6.3. Numeracy

The programme in Mathematics targets the understanding of concepts, the development of estimation skills and the provision of learning opportunities that promote the development of pupils' problem-solving abilities. All work is supplemented using Operation Maths and Busy at Maths standard commercial textbooks. There is also a generous availability of concrete materials and other mathematical equipment to support lesson delivery. Teachers make use of a range of active methodologies in their maths teaching. Station teaching has been introduced and the development of mathematical language in communicating ideas is also stressed. Classrooms contain mathematical areas which are used to stimulate and reinforce pupil interest in the subject.

6.4. Irish

Irish is taught from third class onwards. The communicative method is used to immerse the pupils in the language. Extensive use is made of role-playing and drama to enable pupils to use Irish in real life situations. Pupils are also encouraged to use Irish through engagement in regular conversations and when playing games. The commercial programme Bua na Cainte is used to give structure to lessons and to provide for planned lesson development. Each pupil is encouraged to use a pocket Irish dictionary, Foclóir Póca, to enhance understanding and to enrich vocabulary development. The broader Irish curriculum also aims to create an awareness of Irish culture among the pupils. Pupils have the opportunity to spend time in an Irish college as part of the programme.

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 exemption from the study of Irish. Independent Schools can make decisions in consultation with parents regarding arrangements for these children. Any arrangements made in relation to the study of Irish does not entitle students to an exemption from the study of Irish in the event of a subsequent enrolment at a Department of Education recognised school.

Parents of children attending an Independent School should be informed of and acquaint themselves with implications of not taking Irish and/or having a second language. Parents seeking information should consult with the Department of Education 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

Environmental Studies includes the study of History, Geography and Science. Science is taught as a dedicated subject in 5th and 6th Classes. Lesson delivery makes use of active learning methodologies and promotes the development of a wide range of skills leading to the formation of open, critical and responsible attitudes. Science is taught as a dedicated subject in sixth class and is separated from other elements of the environmental studies programme. The school participates in science week. St Kilian's is also a *Green School*, and pupils from each class are represented on the Green School Committee. The school took part in *Global Goals Week 2024*. Different sustainable goals were discussed and debated during the week. Science projects were also on display and pupils willingly discussed their methodologies and findings in the completion of these projects.

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is taught as an integrated subject across all curriculum areas and the Stay Safe programme is taught annually during the second term. Teachers have specific training to deliver the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) element of the programme. The school is inter-denominational, but the values and traditions of Europe's Christian civilisation are cherished. Pupils have the option of participating in sacramental preparation in Roman

Catholic religion classes outside of regular allocated curriculum time. Pupil leadership skills are enhanced through active participation in the students' council.

The German Visual Art curriculum is used in the school. Art lessons take place through the medium of German in the school. Each strand of the curriculum is used to develop the expressive and artistic competencies of the pupils. The school has colourful examples of pupil output on display in both classroom and corridor areas.

The curriculum in Music gives pupils an opportunity to develop both their listening and performing skills.

Physical Education is considered a core subject in St. Kilians. The programme is designed to encourage both individual skills and teamwork. The school gymnasium and school grounds are used extensively and the range of activities and games covered accommodates the diversity and ethnicity of the pupils' backgrounds.

6.6. Special educational needs

Pupils in need of support are identified through teacher observation, information from parents, and through assessment of needs reports. Pupils identified for support come with a wide range of additional needs. They benefit from having access to four learning support teachers, two special needs assistants and a teaching assistant. In-class support is favoured by the school, but provision is also made for the withdrawal of pupils where necessary.

Section 7 Assessment and Record Keeping

All pupils are assessed at the end of each school year using the Micra-T and Sigma-T standardised tests. Pupils are continually assessed throughout the school year in the core subjects using a variety of criteria. German standardised tests are also administered as part of the assessment programme. Information gathered is saved on the school's data base system. This information is shared with parents. A parent-teacher meeting is held once a year and a full pupil progress report is issued to parents twice a year.

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 St. Kilian's Primary 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 and her management team
- The range and variety of curricular provision available to the pupils
- The management of pupils at classroom level and the positive relations that are fostered in the school community
 - Commitment to curricular planning and preparation, as well as regular reporting to parents on pupils' learning progress
- The support provided for pupils with learning needs
- The rich variety of resources available to enhance teaching and learning
- The stimulating displays throughout the school which highlight and celebrate the pupils' achievements
- The provision of well-resourced 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 Ms Annette Black, principal, and it was stated that the recommendation would be to retain the pupils of St. Kilian's Primary School on the register. The final decision regarding registration will be made by the Alternative Education Assessment and Registration Panel - 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 Review Assessment, the Registration Panel decided that children attending St. Kilian's Primary 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