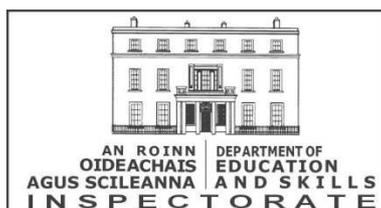


An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Follow-Through Inspection
REPORT

St. Brigid's Boys' National School,
Mart Lane, Foxrock, Dublin 18
Uimhir rolla: 16352U

Date of inspection: 6 November 2014



Date of publication/issue of original report	November 2013	Type of original report	Whole School Evaluation (WSE) - Modified	Date of FT inspection	6 November 2014
Follow-through inspection activities					
<p><i>The following activities took place in the course of the follow-through inspection:</i></p> <p>Meeting with principal Meeting with relevant teachers/members of staff Observation of teaching and learning Review of school documentation</p>					
Recommendation in original inspection report	Progress achieved to date on implementation of recommendation				
To augment the pupils' learning further, the extension of the range of opportunities for independent higher-order learning and an enhancement of approaches to assessment for learning are recommended.	<p>Partial Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some classes a range of opportunities is provided to promote independent higher-order learning. In these classes pupils' learning is extended and challenged through approaches such as sophisticated project work, regular problem solving opportunities, collaborative approaches to differentiated novels, open ended discovery tasks, challenging writing activities and debating. In these settings teachers ensure that the higher order skills are woven into learning tasks. • Some good approaches to assessment for learning are in use in some learning settings. These included the sharing of intended learning outcomes, writing self-editing checklists, success criteria for projects, mind mapping, base-line oral language assessment, use of KWL, conferencing and detailed written feedback with targets for improvement. • The positive elements of practice listed above were not features of provision in all learning setting witnessed during the evaluation. • All pupils from third to sixth class receive a weekly lesson in Scratch computer programming from a member of the learning support team. • There has been some discussion on higher-order learning and approaches to assessment for learning at staff meetings. 				
The provision for special educational needs pupils should be reconfigured to ensure more cohesion for pupil learning. The potential for in-class support and team teaching should be exploited as part of this reconfiguration.	<p>Good Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good work has taken place with regard to the progression of this recommendation. • The provision for pupils with special educational needs has been reconfigured and the needs of almost all pupils are catered for by one teacher. • In-class support and team teaching are now a more significant feature of practice in the school. Staff members have attended training events on team teaching. A number of targeted, needs driven initiatives have been developed and are being implemented throughout the school and plans are in place for the development of other in-class interventions. 				
It is recommended that the board of management review its enrolment policy, to ensure that future enrolment levels are better matched to the available classroom accommodation.	<p>No Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board of management reviewed the enrolment policy in February 2014 and made some amendments to the policy. However it did not amend the policy to ensure that enrolment levels are better matched to the available classroom accommodation. The school is still enrolling pupils that it does not have the physical space to accommodate. • In September 2014 two classes of junior infants, with 34 pupils in each class were enrolled. The same numbers are planned for enrolment in September 2015. As a result of these high levels of enrolment, the class sizes throughout the school are large and in most cases are well above the intended pupil / teacher ratio. • The school has experienced a very high level of applications for places for September 2015 and a large number of applicants have not been offered places in the school. • At the time of the WSE a seventeenth mainstream teacher had been appointed who was not being deployed in a mainstream class. This position is now being used in a team-teaching capacity in the Junior Infant classes. In September 2014, the school was granted an eighteenth mainstream teacher based on the school's enrolment. This resource is being deployed in a team-teaching capacity in the Senior Infant classes. • The board has investigated the possibility of purchasing a piece of land that adjoins the site of the school with a view to building additional classroom accommodation. However, this may not proceed for some time. As a result, the size of the school's site remains the same and as a consequence the available classroom accommodation remains the same. • In the WSE report, the board was advised to consult with the patron body about the review of the enrolment policy. At the time of the follow-through evaluation, such consultation had not occurred. 				

Summary of findings

Efforts have been made to progress the first two recommendations and overall on these recommendations there is good progress. The expertise exists amongst the staff to progress these recommendations further.

While the board has discussed the third recommendation and has explored the expansion of the site, the board has not acted on the recommendation in the original report. The levels of application for enrolment in the school remain an on-going concern for the board. The current practice of enrolling such large junior infant classes is unsustainable given the restrictions of the school's site. While there is no evidence currently to suggest that the overcrowding is impacting on pupils' levels of attainment, the large class sizes are however impacting negatively on pupils' learning experience.

Recommendations

- The range of opportunities for independent higher order learning and the approaches to assessment for learning should continue to be built upon. The existing positive practices should be shared with all teachers and should be implemented across the school.
- The board of management should amend the enrolment policy to limit the numbers of pupils being enrolled in the school to reflect the intended pupil / teacher ratio. Consultation should take place with the patron body regarding the enrolment policy as a matter of priority.
- In order to reduce class sizes and alleviate overcrowding, the seventeenth and eighteenth mainstream teachers should be deployed as mainstream class teachers as a matter of priority. School management should take whatever decisions are necessary to ensure that this happens.

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

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management welcomes the report and accepts its contents. Considering the large class sizes, the Board acknowledges and appreciates the great efforts of the staff in maintaining such high levels of attainment and also successfully undertaking the challenges that the recommendations presented.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

Due to the huge demand for places in St .Brigid's BNS, the Board accepts that balancing its duty of care to the current pupils with its responsibility to support the wider community of the patron body in the enrolment of pupils, presents great challenges. The Board is assiduously pursuing with the Dept. of Education and Skills the acquisition of additional land for extra accommodation purposes. It is also presently consulting with the patron body regarding enrolment policy and the provision of extra accommodation.