Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Scoil Bhríde
Mountnugent, Co. Cavan
Uimhir rolla: 14732U

Date of inspection: 23 May 2011
1. **Introduction**

Scoil Bhride is a co-educational primary school located in Mountnugent, Co. Cavan, and is under the patronage of the Catholic bishop of Meath. The school currently has 135 pupils who present positive attendance patterns. 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.

2. **Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development**

   The following are the **main strengths** of the work of the school:

   - The Board of Management demonstrates commendable capacity to support the management and development of the school.
   - The diligent staff works in a collegial manner and promotes high standards in teaching and learning.
   - The principal leads the school in an efficient and effective manner.
   - The dynamic parents association plays an active and purposeful role within this school community.
   - The highly motivated pupils demonstrate high levels of cooperation.
   - The quality of teaching and learning in English, Irish and Mathematics is very good.
   - The culture of school self-evaluation is well established.

   The following **main recommendations** are made:

   - A range of in-class support models should be explored to optimise the benefits of early intervention strategies and differentiated co-operative group work for pupils with special education needs.
   - Assessment practices in Physical Education should be extended to include the monitoring of pupils’ incremental development in fitness, agility, balance and dance.
   - Post-holders’ curricular duties should be reviewed to include the monitoring of aspects of curricular implementation within the school.

3. **Quality of School Management**

   - The quality of the work of the board of management is very good. The board demonstrates a keen awareness of its responsibilities and implements appropriate
procedures as required. A school extension has been successfully secured under the management of this board. Its members work collaboratively with staff and parents to ensure the provision of an attractive learning environment for pupils. The board has embraced its role in policy development and review.

- The diligent principal provides effective leadership and is committed to the holistic development of pupils. Her well-developed administrative skills ensure efficient management of the school. She is pro-active in her leadership of learning within the school through her sustained emphasis on optimising pupils’ learning outcomes.

- The deputy principal and the special duties teacher provide valuable support to the principal as they successfully collaborate on a range of management issues. Post-holders fulfil their assigned duties conscientiously. However, it is recommended that their duties should be reviewed to include the monitoring of aspects of curricular implementation within the school.

- Teaching staff are appropriately deployed and demonstrate commendable diligence in fulfilling their duties within a spirit of positive collegiality. Ancillary staff make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school. The school’s indoor and outdoor facilities are maintained to a high standard. A wide range of teaching resources are used effectively to support the pupils’ learning.

- The management of pupils is very good. Consistent whole-school implementation of an incentivised code of behaviour is in evidence. Pupils demonstrate great pride in their learning and high levels of co-operation in their interactions with adults and other pupils. Questionnaires administered during the evaluation indicated that the majority of pupils hold positive attitudes about their school experiences. Pupils’ decision-making is enhanced through their participation in the Green Schools Programme and it is recommended that other pupil fora be explored.

- The management of relationships and communication within the school community is good. The highly committed parents’ association contribute significantly to the development of the school through a range of suitable measures. Parents’ representatives attest to the effectiveness of a range of home-school communication channels and the high quality of provision for pupils within the school. Parents’ questionnaires indicate that the majority of parents are satisfied with school procedures and educational provision.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The quality of school planning and school self-evaluation is good. A suitable array of organisational and curricular policies underpins effective practice in this school. A collaborative approach to whole-school policies is reported and all plans are circulated in digital format to the parent community. While curricular plans are reviewed on a cyclical basis, it is recommended that aspects of core curricular areas are prioritised within the framework of a strategic three year plan.

- A culture of school self-evaluation has been nurtured through regular staff discourse and engagement in school improvement practices. Staff has successfully addressed a number of priorities which has impacted positively on learning outcomes. A range of assessment data has been used effectively to monitor progress and determine future priorities.
• The overall quality of individual teachers’ planning is good. All of the mainstream teachers visited during the evaluation presented detailed short-term and long-term plans in accordance with the agreed whole-school format. Comprehensive monthly reports are presented by the majority of staff. Further use of the monthly progress reports is now advised to enhance continuity and progression in pupils’ learning and to support school self-review.

• School authorities provided evidence that, in compliance with Primary Circular 0061/2006, the board of management has formally adopted the Department’s Child Protection Guidelines for Primary Schools. Evidence was provided to show that these child protection procedures have been brought to the attention of management, school staff and parents; that a copy of the procedures has been provided to all staff (including all new staff); and that management has ensured that all staff are familiar with the procedures to be followed. A designated liaison person (DLP) and a deputy DLP have been appointed in line with the requirements of the guidelines.

5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

• Tá caighdeán na múinteoireachta agus na foghlama sa Ghaeilge an-mhaith. Cothaíonn foireann na scoile dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge. Múintear ábhar teanga cinnte cúi do na daltaí sna ranganna go lèir. Uaideann na hoidhí straiteise cumarsáide éagsúla go спраугйl chun scileanna labhartha agus éisteachta na ndaltaí a fhóraí a go hoiriúnach. Léiríonn na daltaí cumas crediúnaí i struchtúr na abairtí go neamhspleách i gocmhthéacs na dtéamaí atá foghlamtha. Éiríonn leis na daltaí sna hardranganna briathra a láimhseáil go cumasach sna haimsir dhifriúla. Dirítear aird chuí ar fhóraí scileanna léitheoireachta na ndaltaí agus tá caighdeán maith sroichte a ghnóthar na ndaltaí. Faigheann siad deiseanna oiriúnacha chun scribhneoireacht a cheannann agus scribhneoireacht chruthaitheach a chleachtadh.

• The quality of teaching and learning in Irish is very good. The school nurtures a positive attitude towards Irish. Definite suitable content is taught to pupils in all classes. Teachers use various stimulating methodologies to develop pupils’ speaking and listening skills. Pupils illustrate creditable abilities in composing sentences independently in the context of various themes. Pupils in senior classes competently manipulate verbs in various tenses. Appropriate attention is given to the systematic development of reading skills and pupils have achieved an appropriate standard. They receive suitable opportunities to engage in functional and creative writing.

• The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is very good. Oral language is developed purposefully in all classes. Pupils discuss a range of poetry with confidence. Extending pupils’ language experiences to include a wider range of genre and vocabulary will further enhance pupils’ expressive language skills. An extensive range of supplementary reading material and print rich environments support the development of pupils’ literacy skills and cultivate a love of reading. Pupils engage in a wide range of writing genres and the quality of their learning outcomes is commendable.

• The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is very good. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to engage in mental mathematical activities and they demonstrate great fluidity in their manipulation of number. Consistent whole-school use of mathematical language and an emphasis on the development of pupils’ problem solving skills has contributed to the high quality of pupil learning outcomes in this area.
• The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Physical Education (PE) is good. Lessons observed during the evaluation were facilitated in a competent manner. Some external tutors support the delivery of the gymnastics and aquatics strands of the PE curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to extend the repertoire of dances introduced throughout the eight year primary programme. Some aspects of pupils’ skill development are carefully monitored. It is recommended that these assessment practices be extended to include the monitoring of pupils’ incremental development in fitness, agility and balance.

• The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers communicate positive expectations about pupils’ achievement and learning outcomes are very good. A suitable blend of methodologies is effectively employed to facilitate appropriate experiences for pupils. A commendable emphasis is placed on developing pupils’ capacity to learn collaboratively and independently through their engagement with projects. Significant efforts are made by teachers to differentiate appropriately for pupils with varying needs. Presentation of pupils’ written work is very impressive. Teachers use a wide range of assessment strategies to monitor pupils learning and to ensure that regular revision is aligned to pupils’ needs.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

• The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs is good. It is evident that pupils in receipt of supplementary tuition are making appropriate progress within affirming learning contexts. Extensive professional experience and familiarity with a wide range of resources contribute to the effectiveness of well-structured lessons. Support is provided in literacy and numeracy to pupils’ whose needs are identified through analysis of standardised test scores and collaboration with class teachers. There is scope to develop the clarity of specific learning targets for pupils within their individual plans and also within teachers’ short-term planning. Cohesive in-class support has been successfully established in a number of classes. To build on this good work it is now advised that staff extend the range of in-class support models with a view to optimising the benefits of early intervention strategies and differentiated co-operative group work in English.
Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management
Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board welcomes and accepts the Inspectorate’s very positive evaluation report on our school. We thank the inspector for the professional way she interacted with the board, parents, pupils and teachers. We intend to use the report’s findings as part of our system of school self-evaluation and continuous improvement.

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

In the current school year teachers will explore in class support models to optimise the benefits of early intervention strategies. Post-holders’ duties will be reviewed during the year. Assessment records for physical education will be further developed.