

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation**  
**REPORT**

**Scoil Mhuire, CBS,**  
**Griffith Avenue,**  
**Marino, Dublin 9**  
**Uimhir rolla: 16759E**

**Date of inspection: 19 January 2012**



AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF  
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION  
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS

## 1. Introduction

Scoil Mhuire CBS is an all-boys' senior school catering for pupils from second to sixth class. It is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools' Trust. The school is located on a large site on Griffith Avenue, Marino, Dublin 9. Current enrolment is 309 pupils and attendance levels are very good. 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 school is managed effectively by a committed board of management.
- The school benefits from the dynamic and strategic leadership of the principal and in-school management team.
- Teacher planning is clear, concise and progressional.
- A warm and affirming school culture exists where pupils are encouraged to do their best and where a concerted effort is made to provide pupils with a broad and rounded education.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Mathematics and English is very good.
- Pupils reveal a keen interest in their work, applying themselves to tasks with enthusiasm and pride.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is delivered in a warm and affirming manner.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- It is recommended that an action plan be drawn up to facilitate the ongoing review and development of school policies. It is also recommended that the plan include the further development of the special educational needs, behavioural and enrolment policies.
- In recent times the school began the use of in-class support for Mathematics. It is recommended that this practice be extended to the development of literacy skills. It is also recommended that the practice where pupils are withdrawn to attend more than one support teacher on a given day be reviewed.

## 3. Quality of School Management

- The school is managed by a strategic and committed board of management. Meetings are held regularly and school accounts are audited annually. The board's priorities

include the promotion of the school's ethos, the strategic management of resources, the upkeep and maintenance of the school building and the review of policies.

- Under the leadership of a dynamic and effective principal, the in-school management team provides purposeful direction to the school in curriculum, pastoral and organisational domains. Responsibilities of post holders are reviewed periodically to ensure that priority areas are addressed. The principal has established good relationships with pupils, teachers, the board and the wider school community. He is dedicated to high standards of achievement and the provision of a positive, caring school culture.
- Resources are managed judiciously. The school building is eighty-four years old and some of the classrooms, by modern standards, are quite small. Classroom furniture is being up-graded as resources permit. The up-keep and improvement of the school building is a priority for the board. Suitable educational resources, that are carefully managed, have been provided to support teaching and learning.
- The management of pupils is of a high standard. Teachers interact with pupils in a very warm and affirming manner. Pupils are very content and courteous and conduct themselves very commendably.
- Overall, there are good communication structures in the school. Parents are informed about school activities via memos, fliers and notices. There is scope for the greater involvement of parents in the formulation of school policies. Parent-teacher meetings are held each year with a written report on the progress of each child issued in the summer term. Data from questionnaires indicate that a very high proportion of parents think that 'teaching is good in the school' and that their 'child is doing well in school'.

#### **4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation**

- The quality of school planning is good. A wide range of practical and detailed curricular and organisational policies are in place. To assist the school's self-evaluation practices, it is recommended that an action plan be drawn up to prioritise specific areas for development within agreed time frames. It is also recommended that such a plan include the further development of the school's special educational needs, behavioural and enrolment policies.
- All teachers write long and short-term plans that are focused and make good provision for the progressional development of content. Very detailed monthly reports are also written.
- Confirmation was provided that the board of management has formally adopted the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* without modification and that the school is compliant with the requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

#### **5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement**

- Tá caighdeán sásúil á bhaint amach i múineadh agus i bhfoghlaim na Gaeilge. Sa phlean scoile, rianaítear straitéisí oiriúnacha chun an teanga a chur chun cinn. Cuirtear béim inmholta ar an nGaeilge neamhfoirmiúil agus feictear roinnt mhaith Gaeilge scríofa timpeall na scoile. Déanann na hoidí pleanáil tairbheach don obair agus baineann siad leas torthúil as raon maith áiseanna, an bord bán idirghníomhach san áireamh, chun foclóir nua a léiriú agus suim daltaí a mhúscailt. Baineann oidí dea-úsáid as an gcur

chuige cumarsáideach i ranganna áirithe. B'fhiú úsáid níos forleithne a bhaint as obair bheirte chun líofacht a chothú agus cumas cainte a scafláil. De ghnáth, bunaíonn na hoidí na ceachtanna léitheoireachta agus scríbhneoireachta ar an obair ó bhéal. Tá caighdeán sásúil á bhaint amach san obair scríofa agus déantar monatóireacht chuí ar shaothar na ndaltaí sna cóipleabhair. Chun cur leis an dea-obair, moltar raon níos leithne de rainn bheaga, scéalta agus píosaí filíochta a chur de ghlanmheabhair i ngach rang. Moltar freisin go mbeadh ionchur nua teanga i ngach ceacht Gaeilge agus go mbeadh castacht mhéadaitheach sna cluichí teanga agus san obair ó bhéal de réir mar a théann daltaí ar aghaidh tríd an scoil.

- *A satisfactory standard in the teaching and learning of Irish is being achieved. In the school plan, appropriate strategies to promote the language are outlined. Suitable emphasis is placed on incidental Irish and a good deal of print in Irish is seen throughout the school. The teachers make beneficial preparation for the work and they use a good range of resources, including the interactive white board, to illustrate new vocabulary and to stimulate pupils' interest. In certain classes, teachers make good use of the communicative approach. It would be worthwhile to make greater use of pair work to promote fluency and to scaffold oral language development. Teachers usually base reading and writing lessons on the oral language work. A satisfactory standard is achieved in the written work and appropriate monitoring of pupils' work in copybooks takes place. To add to the good work, it is recommended that a wider range of short rhymes, stories and poems would be committed to memory in every class. It is also recommended that there would be an input of new language in every Irish lesson and that there would be an increasing level of difficulty in the language games and oral work as pupils progress through the school.*
- Teachers make very good provision for the development of the pupils' oral, reading and writing skills in English. Oral language work is creatively integrated with other curricular areas. In some instances, there is potential for the wider use of pair work. Pupils display a keen interest in reading. Teachers adopt a focused approach to the development of reading skills and, in some instances, creative provision is in place for the use of drama to enhance comprehension. The school places good emphasis on poetry appreciation and poetry is frequently integrated with other curricular areas. In some instances, there is potential for making greater provision for committing poems to memory. The school is presented in a print-rich manner with many classrooms and corridors attractively displaying samples of pupils' writing across a range of genres. There is suitable emphasis on the writing process. Teachers make effective provision for the development of grammar, handwriting and spelling skills.
- Pupils engage enthusiastically and purposefully in Mathematics lessons which are presented in a lively and stimulating manner. Teachers explain new concepts in a clear and rigorous way, linking them effectively to the life experience and environment of the pupils. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions. Resources, including ICT, are used to very good effect and pupils are provided with suitable opportunities to use concrete materials. Good differentiation practices are in operation. Very good provision is in place for mental arithmetic. Teachers carefully monitor pupils' progress and, in some cases, they encourage pupils to design their own problems. It is recommended that the school investigate approaches to extending such good practice. In relation to concept developments associated with subtraction, it is recommended that the school adhere more closely to the curriculum.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Music is very good. Lessons make very good use of resources and actively involve pupils in both individual and collaborative enterprises. Very good provision is in place for the development of pupils' literacy skills and for listening and responding to music. Pupils are exposed to a range of music from different cultures, styles and time periods. In some classes, pupils are taught the recorder. It is

recommended that the school investigate opportunities for sharing the skills of these teachers with other teachers and classes. The school's choir performs to a very high standard.

- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in this school is very good. Teachers provide pupils with a stimulating and engaging learning experience, making creative and effective use of resources. Pupils reveal interest and pride in their work, applying themselves to tasks with enthusiasm. Data from questionnaire responses indicate that a high proportion of pupils think 'this is a good school'. The data also indicate that there is scope for the wider use of collaborative learning activities.

## **6. Quality of Support for Pupils**

- In providing for pupils with special educational needs in numeracy, literacy and English as an additional language (EAL), the special education needs team (SET) work collaboratively with parents, colleagues and pupils to design a programme to address the needs of pupils. Assessment tests are used to good effect and the SET's plan to further develop the use of diagnostic tests is commended. All members of the SET team write clear and focused individual profile and learning programmes (IPLPs) and individual education plans (IEPs) to guide their work.
- The school has a good selection of resources. Pupils are encouraged to engage in practical, hands-on activities and to self-evaluate. Teachers deliver support in a very affirming and supportive manner, carefully monitoring pupil progress and application. In recent times, the school began the use of in-class support for Mathematics. It is recommended that this practice be extended to the development of literacy skills. It is also recommended that the practice where pupils are withdrawn to attend more than one support teacher on a given day be reviewed.

*Published June 2012*

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

## **Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The report is well balanced, giving a thorough overview of school life, highlighting the quality of learning and high standard of behaviour of the pupils. We noted that the report recognised the huge efforts of teaching staff to provide pupils with a broad and rounded education. We believe that the thoughtful professional planning of the staff lends itself to high quality outcomes for the children. The reports observation for ongoing planning and development is noted and will inform future actions.

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

- The board of management is drawing up a detailed action plan to facilitate the ongoing review and development of school policies. Policy review will include appropriate consultation with stakeholders. Currently, the school is reviewing its policy on special education needs, enrolment and behaviour. These policy reviews will be completed by December 2012.
- We note that the report recognises that the special education needs team in the school works in an efficient manner and prepares focused individual education plans to meet the needs of individual children. We also note that the report recognises that this work is done in a warm and affirming manner. Currently the special education needs team is developing a programme to extend the in-class support approach, which has been adopted for mathematics and literacy skills. Paramount in this review will be the objective to create a flexible approach to meet the needs of the children. Priority will be given to timetabling learning support / resource teaching hours to ensure pupils do not attend more than one support teacher per day.
- Priority is being given to a review of the school's Irish curriculum plan. Particular attention will be paid to: developing pair work to promote greater fluency and to scaffold oral language development; inputting new language in every Irish lesson; using a wider range of rhymes, stories and poems; increasing the level of difficulty in language games and oral work as children progress through the school. The school will endeavour to enable existing good practice in terms of pair work to be shared between staff.
- Review of the English curriculum plan has been completed since the whole school evaluation and recommendations on the use of pair work and committing poems to memory have informed the revised curriculum plan.
- The positive comments on the teaching and learning of Mathematics in the report are welcomed. With regard to the recommendation on subtraction, the decomposition method will be phased in; starting with the junior classes. In reviewing the mathematics plan, particular consideration will be given to engaging pupils in higher-order problem investigation.
- We are delighted that the report recognises the quality of teaching and learning in Music and the school takes great pride in it's choir. To further develop and enhance the music curriculum the school is currently taking steps to ensure that the musical abilities of the school staff are used to enhance the instrumental music education of all the pupils.