

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

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

**Scoil Bhríde BNS**  
**Blanchardstown, Dublin 15**  
**Uimhir rolla: 18046A**

**Date of inspection: 21 May 2012**



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

## 1. Introduction

- Scoil Bhríde is a vertical, all-boys' school in Blanchardstown, Dublin 15. Its current enrolment is 273 pupils. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and there is evidence that its mission statement is fostered effectively. While the school has begun to address the issue of pupil absenteeism, it is recommended that the specific barriers to attendance be analysed with a view to implementing strategies for improvement. 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 and parents' association are well informed and are highly supportive of the work of the school.
- Teachers display well developed teaching skills and use a range of teaching methodologies effectively. They are generally open to advice and are committed to the on-going improvement of provision.
- There is good management and use of resources in the school.
- Pupils participate with enthusiasm in their learning activities and are respectful, polite and courteous.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- In English, a more systematic approach to oral language development, and a greater emphasis on writing for communication and expression, is recommended.
- A review of the organisation for the provision for pupils with special educational needs is recommended.
- Sa Ghaeilge, moltar clár córasach leanúnach agus modhanna múinte an churaclaim a chur i bhfeidhm. *In Irish, the implementation of a systematic, progressive programme and the teaching methodologies of the curriculum are recommended.*
- A review of curricular policies so that they provide effective whole-school guidance for planning, teaching and learning, and further development of the organisational section of the whole-school plan, is recommended.

## 3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management is properly constituted and meets regularly. It is clearly committed to the development of the school and is about to oversee the construction of a

new school building. Finances are carefully managed. The board plays an active role in policy development. Nonetheless, it should ensure that its enrolment policy fully complies with current legislation, and that the additional administrative policies, which are necessary in the context of the school, are developed.

- The principal and the in-school management team carry out their duties diligently and conscientiously. Recently, the school identified a number of issues in key areas of leadership, management and communication, which it wishes to address. A genuine commitment to engage with these is evident and processes have been established to implement new developments. In order to assist with these processes, curricular responsibilities should be reorganised regularly to reflect the evolving needs of the school. Greater emphasis should also be placed on leading the implementation and review of the school plan, particularly in regard to teaching and learning.
- The school is well resourced to implement the curriculum. Corridors are visually stimulating and most classrooms provide rich print and number environments to support pupils' learning. When the building project is completed it is recommended that dedicated and attractive library and mathematics areas are developed in each classroom. The teachers are conscientious and dedicated to their work. The majority are very open to advice and demonstrate a firm commitment to continuous improvement. Ancillary staff carry out their duties diligently.
- The management of relationships with the school community is good and most parents are kept well informed about school activities. The school should now explore ways of communicating with parents for whom English is an additional language, to enable them to have a greater input into their children's education. Questionnaire responses indicate that the vast majority of parents are happy with the school. The parents' association is very active and parents make a considerable contribution to school life.
- The management of pupils is of a high quality. They work conscientiously and co-operatively with staff and with one another, and are polite, respectful and courteous. Very good pupil-teacher relationships are evident. Opportunities are provided for pupils to participate in a range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

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

- The quality of existing whole school administrative plans is good. They are clear, concise and contextualised to the needs of the school.
- There is scope to develop curriculum plans so that they afford greater guidance on the implementation of the curriculum's content and skills, and provide for continuity and progression in pupils' learning within the school.
- The quality of individual teacher planning is good. All teachers provide regular planning, and classroom teachers compile comprehensive monthly reports of work done. The inclusion of specific provision for language and skills development is recommended.
- The school has begun the process of school self-evaluation and a comprehensive review of aspects of the school's work has taken place. Standardised test results are analysed, and time spent on literacy and numeracy is monitored. The information gathered will be useful when the school embarks on its School Improvement Plan.
- 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

- The overall quality of teaching and learning is high. Teachers display well developed teaching skills and use a variety of methodologies. Some examples of very effective teaching were observed. A variety of well-chosen resources is used effectively. Concepts are explained clearly and appropriate learning activities are organised. Overall, pupils engage well with learning tasks and, in questionnaire responses, the majority of pupils report that they enjoy their learning. On the whole, written work is well presented and regularly monitored. Further consolidation of concepts learned, and regular revision of work done, is recommended. While some lessons are differentiated through in-class support, it is recommended that classroom teachers develop this provision across the curriculum to ensure appropriate challenge or support for pupils in their learning.
- Assessment practices in the school are good. Screening and standardised tests are administered and pupils' individual results are tracked. All teachers generate assessment data on pupils, particularly in English and Mathematics. There is scope to further use this data to inform differentiation, and to extend assessment practices to other curriculum areas.
- Déantar iarracht mhácantá dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge a chothú sa scoil agus tríd is tríd, baineann na daltaí taitneamh as na ceachtanna. Tá scóp súntasach ann chun caighdeán na Gaeilge a fheabhsú, áfach. I bhformhór na ranganna, ní mhúintear a dhóthain structúir teanga agus ní thugtar a dhóthain deiseanna do na daltaí an teanga a úsáid i suímh éagsúla. Feictear freisin modh an aistriúcháin á úsáid, agus cuireann sé seo bac ar fhoghlaim na teanga. Cé go n-úsáidtear roinnt straitéisí mar rannta, cluichí agus amhráin, ní bhaintear leas fiúntach astu seo chun an teanga a dhaingniú. Tá clár córasach leanúnach d'fhorbairt teanga na ndaltaí á dhearadh ag bainistíocht na scoile. Chun é seo a chur i gcrích, comhairlaítear na modhanna múinte i leith múineadh na teanga a mholtar sa churaclam a chur i bhfeidhm.
- *An honest effort is made to promote a positive outlook towards Irish in the school and, in general, pupils enjoy the lessons. There is significant scope for improving the standard of Irish, however. In the majority of classes, insufficient language structures are taught and opportunities for pupils to use the language in various situations are not provided. The translation method is used and this restricts the learning of the language. While a range of strategies like poems, games and songs are used, they are not used beneficially to reinforce the language. School management is designing a systematic, progressive programme for language development. To implement this, the methodologies for language teaching that are recommended in the curriculum should be put into practice.*
- Pupils' levels of attainment in English reading are good and they are exposed to a variety of reading materials. Differentiated reading groups are in evidence in most classes. Teachers model language appropriately and extend pupils' thinking through effective questioning. While many pupils can discuss topics articulately, there is a need for a systematic approach to oral language development in support and mainstream class settings. A consistency in terms of themes, and regular reinforcement of language in both settings, is recommended. The standard of penmanship is good. A more structured whole-school approach to pupils' engagement with writing genres is recommended. A wider range of responses to poetry should be considered.

- Good quality teaching and learning is evident in Mathematics. Teaching is clear and focussed with procedures and concepts explained well. Lessons are well structured. Good use is made of concrete materials. Concepts are linked to everyday experiences and pupils show good understanding of many of the key concepts covered. Good provision is made for in-class support for less able pupils. A more explicit focus on the teaching of mathematical language, and greater emphasis on oral and mental mathematics are recommended. Further differentiation, to ensure that pupils are challenged at a level commensurate with their ability, is also advised.
- The quality of Science teaching observed during the evaluation was good. Lessons aroused curiosity and stimulated investigation and exploration. Valuable opportunities were provided for pupils to engage in practical activities. Possibilities for linkage and integration were exploited. In order to develop the provision further, a more consistent implementation of the skills-based approach is recommended. Greater attention should also be afforded to designing and making. The whole-school plan needs to be reviewed to ensure it reflects the breadth and balance of the curriculum.

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

- The school is well resourced to support pupils with special educational needs, and the teaching and learning observed was characterised by affirming, supportive interactions. Commendably, parents and pupils are consulted in the formulation of individual education plans (IEPs). It is advised that IEP targets be more specific and measurable, and more closely aligned to pupils' needs as outlined in reports. Short term planning should be more closely linked to these targets and should place a greater focus on learning outcomes. Regular records of progress should be maintained. Lessons are well structured and well resourced and there is a good balance between withdrawal and in-class support. To optimise the resources available to the school it is recommended that the planning and organisation of support provision be reviewed. A whole school approach to the implementation of supports for pupils at stage one of the continuum is also recommended.
- The school is proactive in supporting instances of disadvantage in the school community.

# 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 and the teachers of Scoil Bhríde Boys' NS have considered the findings of this report.

Both the Board of Management and the teachers welcome the fact that the Inspectorate witnessed the well developed teaching skills along with the effective range of teaching methodologies being undertaken within Scoil Bhríde Boys'.

The Board of Management and the teachers also welcome the observations of enthusiasm, courtesy and respect amongst the pupils along with good pupil-teacher relationships in Scoil Bhríde Boys'.

The Board of Management are particularly pleased that the report refers to an overall high quality of teaching and learning within the school with further reference being made to some examples of very effective teaching.

The report acknowledges the conscientious and dedicated nature of the teachers of Scoil Bhríde Boys'. We appreciate the fact that the majority demonstrate a firm commitment to continuous improvement with regard to the provision of teaching within the school.

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

Through collaboration with the teachers, the Board of Management will address the recommendations made in the report.

As recommended, some curricular responsibilities have been reorganised with immediate effect. This reorganisation will bring about a further review of curricular policies, in particular English and Gaeilge.

Prior to the WSE, we believed we were already optimising our resources for pupils with special educational needs. However, in line with one of the recommendations of the report, the organisation of provision for pupils with special educational needs has been reviewed.

A new system has now been implemented. The effectiveness of this system will be evaluated in June 2012 and this evaluation will determine the organisation and provision of Additional Support in the future. We are dedicated to creating a model approach to meet the needs of the children.

The Board of Management are aware of the need to explore ways of communicating with parents for whom English is an additional language, to enable them to have a greater input into their children's education. This is something that will be addressed in the future.