

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Scoil Náisiúnta Banríon na nAingeal 1
Ballyfermot
Uimhir rolla: 18585H

Date of inspection: 4 February 2015



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

1. Introduction

Scoil Náisiúnta Banríon na nAingéal 1 is a vertical school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The school is included in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) (Band 1) programme, the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. The current enrolment is 137 boys. A range of effective strategies has been implemented to improve attendance in response to the significant number of pupils missing more than twenty days. 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 provides a wide range of very good supports to enhance the holistic development of pupils.
- The dedicated principal displays effective organisational and management skills and endeavours to promote high standards.
- The teachers' management of pupils is of a very high quality.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Teachers are effective communicators, presenting well-prepared lessons resulting in very high levels of pupil engagement.
- The standard of teachers' individual planning and assessment is very good.
- The management of relations and communication with the school community is of a very high quality.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- The board should ensure it is properly constituted and that the roles and responsibilities of all officers of the board are in accordance with the requirements set out in *Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure 2011*.
- Whole-school curriculum plans should be revised to fully reflect the context and needs of the pupils and to effectively guide teaching and learning.
- The school should adopt a guided reading approach to support and develop pupils' reading skills.
- Greater clarity is advised in whole-school planning and in individual teachers' planning regarding expected learning outcomes for pupils' oral language skills in both English and Irish.

3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management is supportive of the work of the school and is committed to ongoing improvements. The board's stated priorities are to further build on strong school-community links and to maintain current positive enrolment trends.
- The board currently conducts its meetings with the board of the adjoining school. While it has undertaken to address this issue, it is recommended that the board deals with this as soon as is practicable. In the interim, the chairperson should ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the officers of the board are in accordance with the requirements set out in *Constitution of Boards Rules and Procedures 2011*.
- The principal is committed to promoting high standards in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. He displays effective management skills and promotes positive approaches to discipline through the use of appropriate systems of rewards and sanctions. He is ably supported by the deputy principal and members of the in-school management team who carry out their duties in a committed and effective manner.
- School resources are managed effectively. The school building is maintained to a high standard. Classrooms are stimulating learning environments and effective use is made of resources during lessons. The caretaker, secretary and cleaners greatly assist in the operation of the school.
- The management of relations within the school community is of a very high quality. Strong links are established with local community groups. The principal has established effective home-school links through regular meetings and newsletters. The recently formed parents' group give valuable support to the school through fund raising and involvement in school-based initiatives. In the questionnaire administered as part of the WSE, all parents stated that they feel welcome in the school.
- The management of pupils is a particular strength of the school. The pupils are exemplary in their behaviour and enthusiastic in their learning. Pupil questionnaires indicate that the vast majority of pupils like school. The school is justifiably proud of its sporting achievements and school choir.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The quality of school planning is appropriate although there are aspects for development. Comprehensive organisational policies are in place. Curriculum plans do not give sufficient direction to teachers on all aspects of provision. It is recommended that the staff undertake a collaborative review of each curriculum plan. These plans should fully reflect the context and learning needs of the pupils and ensure there is explicit guidance on all aspects of teaching and learning for each class level. Existing good practice should be recorded in curriculum plans with a view to whole-school implementation.
- The school has engaged well in planning for school improvement through its DEIS plan and the school self-evaluation (SSE) process. It should continue to refine its targets to ensure that they are specific and measurable.
- The quality of individual teachers' planning is very good. All teachers provide comprehensive planning for the range of learners. Teachers provide very useful monthly progress reports, many of which include ongoing evaluative comments on teaching and learning.

- 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

- Teaching, learning and pupil achievement is good overall with some very high quality practice observed. Where teaching was most effective it was marked by the sharing of clear learning intentions with the pupils along with high teacher expectations of pupil achievement. To build on this good work, consistent consolidation should be a stronger element of all practice. The school is incrementally raising standards in English and Mathematics. In reinforcing this trend, teachers should be afforded opportunities to share and implement effective teaching methodologies and assessment practices.
- Ar an iomlán, maidir le múineadh agus foghlaim na Gaeilge, tá gnéithe le forbairt, cé go bhfuil roinnt dea-chleachtas le sonrú. Feictear úsáid chuí as taispeántais, amhráin agus rainn i gceachtanna. Cothaítear dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge sa scoil. Sna cleachtais ab fhearr a breathnaíodh, bhí béim curtha ar an gcur chuige cumarsáideach ionas go mbeadh na daltaí in ann ceisteanna agus freagraí a chumadh. Ar an iomlán, tá dul chun cinn sásúil sa scríbhneoireacht agus sa léitheoireacht bainte amach ag na daltaí. Léann siad le dóthain cruinneas agus le tuiscint. Moltar go múinfear go docht daingean, teanga nua a thagann ó phlean scoile na Gaeilge, diaidh ar ndiaidh a chéile, agus go luaitear an teanga sin i bpleananna gearrtréimhseacha na múinteoirí. Ina theannta sin, b'fhiú breis deiseanna a thabhairt go rialta do na daltaí a gcuid scríbhneoireachta neamhspleách a chleachtadh.

(Overall, the teaching, learning, and pupil achievement in Gaeilge shows scope for development although some good practice is evident. A good range of songs, rhymes and other resources are used in the lessons. A positive attitude to the language is nurtured. Where practice was effective, the emphasis was on the communicative approach enabling pupils to ask and answer questions. Overall pupils are making satisfactory progress in reading and writing. Pupils read to an adequate level of accuracy and understanding. It is recommended that, drawing on a revised curricular plan for Gaeilge, teachers clearly identify in their short-term planning new language to be taught and that this new language is consolidated and built on over time. In addition, further regular opportunities to practise independent writing should be given to the pupils.)

- Teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is good. Early reading skills are comprehensively taught. Novels and a reading scheme are in use. To further develop pupils' reading skills, teachers should adopt a guided reading approach where materials are closely matched to pupils' assessed reading abilities. Greater clarity regarding projected oral language learning outcomes for pupils is needed. It is recommended that a whole-school approach for oral language development be agreed, documenting teachers' expectations of pupil achievement in oral language at each class level and how these expectations will be realised and assessed. The pupils are given ample opportunities to write across a range of genres in a sustained manner in line with the agreed whole-school approach. The standard of writing for many pupils in terms of content and presentation is very good. However, this is not consistent across all classes.

- Teaching, learning, and pupil achievement in Mathematics is good overall, with some very good practice evident. A good emphasis is placed on skills' development and knowledge of Mathematics vocabulary. Where learning was most effective, pupils were engaged in challenging activities linked to real-life contexts. This very good practice should be a feature of all lessons. Teachers are advised to implement a systematic approach to problem solving, strengthening the links between classroom practice and the SSE plan for Mathematics.
- Commendable practice is evident in the teaching of Geography. There is breadth and balance in the programme provided. Pupils at many class levels engage in deep learning through the range of topics taught. Good emphasis is placed on skills' development through investigating and researching topics. The local environment is used as a valuable resource for learning.
- Teachers are to be commended for the very high quality of individual records of progress maintained. The use of objectives-based checklists to record pupils' learning is particularly effective, complementing the range of standardised and diagnostic tests in use. Teachers appropriately correct pupils' written work using affirming and developmental comments. In some settings, pupil self-assessment practices are highly developed.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- Overall, the quality of supports for pupils with special educational needs is good. Lessons are delivered effectively through withdrawal and in-class support to suit the range of learning needs. Where planning was most effective, targets were clearly derived from the professional reports and the pupils' assessed needs. This good practice should be extended in addition to ensuring that all learning targets are measurable, specific, and time-bound.
- A range of effective interventions is underway to improve learning outcomes in both literacy and numeracy in infant classes. The Early Start programme provides children with high-quality play-based learning experiences supporting language and social skills development. Special needs assistants carry out their duties in a supportive and affirming manner.
- The quality of supports to meet the care needs of pupils is very high. The Home School Community Liaison teacher and School Completion Programme personnel provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities for pupils. Measures are in place to ensure pupils smoothly transition to secondary school.

Published June 2015

Appendix

School response to the report Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report.

We welcome the findings and recommendations contained in the WSE. This report has endorsed and affirmed our good practice and its recommendations have provided us with invaluable suggestions to aid us in achieving excellence. It has also provided us with useful points on which to focus during our SSE and SIP endeavours. The WSE process has strengthened our resolve to ensure the involvement of all teaching staff in any changes we make.

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

- Staff meetings to prioritise recommendations
- Literacy team is researching English policies
- Revision of whole school- curriculum plans, especially Maths and English.
- Create an oral language plan with clear learning outcomes.
- Look at guided reading and decide if and how to adopt it.