

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

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

**Saint John Bosco Junior Boys' School**  
**Navan Road, Dublin 7**  
**Uimhir rolla: 18632N**

**Date of inspection: 15 January 2015**



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

## 1. Introduction

Saint John Bosco National School is a junior school catering for boys from infants to first class. The school is located on the Navan Road in Dublin 7 and is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. It shares a campus and general-purpose room with the local senior primary schools. There are currently 247 boys enrolled in the school 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 board of management and staff ensure that a high quality education is provided for all pupils.
- Pupils' attainment in both literacy and numeracy is very good.
- The principal provides strong leadership and successfully nurtures team work.
- The in-school management team effectively leads improvements in learning.
- All staff members share a deep commitment to realising each child's potential and they work together in an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual support.
- The quality of home-school partnership is a significant strength of this inclusive and welcoming school.
- The pupils are very content and engage enthusiastically in their learning.
- Special educational interventions are delivered in a highly structured and focused manner.
- Support for pupils' well-being is very good.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- The school improvement plan should be refined and evidence-based targets identified to effectively guide school improvement.
- It is recommended that early intervention initiatives, in-class support and play-based learning be extended, particularly in junior-infant classrooms.
- The school is advised to develop an e-learning plan and to examine opportunities to use information and communications technology as a teaching and learning tool.

## 3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management functions very effectively. A strong sense of common purpose is evident among its members. The board meets regularly and matters of finance, school

organisation, safety and policy development are discussed regularly. School accounts are certified annually. Consideration should be given to the circulation of an annual report to ensure that all parents are informed of the work and achievements of the board. The code of behaviour should be reviewed to make more explicit reference to all procedures.

- The principal leads and manages the school in a very competent manner promoting a caring and inclusive school environment. She has successfully developed a culture of distributive leadership and collaborative working relationships throughout the school. The in-school management team effectively leads curriculum development. The willingness of all staff to take on additional duties, as necessary, is commendable. In questionnaires, administered during the evaluation, all parents reported that teaching is good in the school.
- The school is well resourced and well maintained. There are stimulating classroom environments and corridor displays throughout the school. Prudent investment has been made in a good range of resources to enhance teaching and learning. Ancillary staff contributes significantly to the efficient functioning of the school. While the school is digitally well resourced, it is recommended that an e-learning plan be prepared which outlines opportunities to use information and communications technology (ICT) to support teaching, enhance learning and communicate with the wider school community.
- The management of pupils is very good and an atmosphere of mutual respect is cultivated across the school. The teachers are clearly committed to both the pastoral care and holistic development of pupils. Well-established routines contribute to a sense of order throughout the school. In questionnaires, almost all parents indicated that their children feel safe and are well looked after in the school.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and provide useful and practical assistance, participating in several school-based activities. The school operates a range of formal and informal modes of communication. Parents acknowledged the accessibility of staff as a key strength of the school.

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

- The overall quality of whole-school planning is good and commendable collaborative approaches to planning are established. A comprehensive whole-school plan, that incorporates relevant administrative, organisational and curriculum policies, has been devised. Overall, policies and plans give good guidance to teachers in formulating their classroom planning and ensure the smooth operation of the school. It is recommended that the school improvement plan be refined and evidence-based targets, which are more closely aligned to pupil learning, be identified. Systems should be established to monitor and track the impact of these improvement initiatives on pupils' learning.
- The quality of classroom planning is very good. Content is delineated clearly in a progressive manner. Differentiation and assessment practices are well defined. In some instances more specific learning objectives are required in short-term planning for languages. A common approach to the recording of monthly progress records has been established and these records are used to enable staff review and to refine school planning.
- 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 quality of teaching and learning is highly commendable. Teachers present well-structured and differentiated lessons. They use a variety of teaching methodologies and organise purposeful learning activities. In some instances greater use of pair work should be employed. Classroom interactions are of a high quality and a positive atmosphere permeates all learning settings. Lessons make regular provision for the consolidation and revision of learning. Pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy is commendable. Some very good examples of assessment, including peer and self-assessment by pupils, were observed in some classes. Consideration should now be given to sharing and extending this good practice across all curricular areas.
- Baintear caighdeán an-mhaith amach i múineadh agus i bhfoghlaim na Gaeilge. Úsáidtear straitéisí foghlama gníomhacha chun an teanga a mhúineadh. Tá timpeallacht shaibhir cruthaithe don teanga sa scoil. Tá foclóir cuí ag na daltaí agus éiríonn leo abairtí simplí a chumadh agus ceisteanna a chur agus a fhreagairt. Baintear feidhm an-éifeachtach as filíocht agus as amhráin chun taithí a thabhairt do na daltaí ar fhuaimneanna agus ar struchtúr na teanga. Is inmholta mar a aithrisíonn na daltaí ar fad raon leathan de rainn agus d'amhráin. Forbraítear scileanna réamh-léitheoireachta agus réamh-scribhneoireachta go héifeachtach, ach moltar taithí léitheoireachta na ndaltaí a shaibhriú trí úsáid a bhaint as leabhair móra. Ní mór an Ghaeilge a úsáid go neamhfhoirmiúil níos rialta ar fud na scoile.
- *The teaching and learning of Irish is of a very good standard. Active-learning approaches are used to teach the language. A rich language environment is established in the school. Pupils have acquired an appropriate vocabulary and succeed in composing simple sentences and asking and answering questions. Very effective use is made of poetry and songs to give pupils experience of the sounds and structure of the language. It is commendable that all pupils recite a wide repertoire of rhymes and songs. Pre-reading and pre-writing skills are effectively developed. However it is recommended that the pupils' reading experiences be enriched through the use of large storybooks. Irish should be used informally on a more regular basis throughout the school.*
- The quality of teaching and learning in English is very good. The teachers make very good provision for the development of phonological awareness. Highly effective use is made of poetry and rhymes to foster and develop language. Well-structured and differentiated reading programmes are in place. Thematic approaches are employed appropriately in the development of pupils' oral language skills. To further extend pupils' oral language abilities, attention should be given to the identification and teaching of subject specific language. Writing skills are developed systematically across a range of genres. Pupils' fine motor skills are being developed effectively. Their handwriting and work presentation are very good. Play-based learning approaches are employed successfully in some senior infant classrooms through the use of the *Aistear Framework*. This good practice should be extended to all classrooms.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Mathematics is very good. Lessons are delivered in a structured manner with very good provision for the active involvement of learners. Resources and concrete materials are used very creatively. Well-structured activities serve to provide pupils with active hands-on experiences, consolidating and developing concepts. Very good provision is in place for mental arithmetic, number work and the development of mathematical language. Content is connected suitably to the life experiences of the pupils. Appropriate differentiation practices are in operation. Collaborative learning and group discussion are used to very good effect. In some instances, activities and content should be further extended to afford more problem-

solving opportunities. The school plan for Mathematics should make more definitive reference to Mathematics trails.

- The quality of teaching and learning in Science is very good, being effectively delivered in both discrete, integrated and play settings. Lessons make good provision for discussion, collaboration and group work. Pupils are enabled to work scientifically and are provided with various opportunities to engage in investigations. They display a very good knowledge of and interest in topics covered; most notably in the *Living Things* strand. Some very good design-and-make tasks were evident during the evaluation. To further enhance provision, the school should examine opportunities to use the local environment to support the exploration of a variety of habitats.

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

- The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Support is provided in a highly structured and focused manner. Highly commendable planning is in place, with parents and relevant professionals being consulted on the design of support programmes. The staged approach is well implemented. A broad range of diagnostic and assessment tools is in use to identify and monitor pupils' progress. Learning activities are very well planned, effectively serving to address targeted needs in a progressive and developmental manner. Teacher-pupil interactions are highly affirming and pupils are making notable progress in their work.
- The school makes good use of withdrawal and in-class support methodologies. It is recommended that greater emphasis be placed on early intervention in junior infants. In so doing, additional provision for numeracy and the use of in-class support approaches should be considered.
- The special needs assistants work purposefully in co-operation with class and support teachers to meet the care and other needs of pupils.
- Pastoral care provision is of a very high quality. The staff has undertaken training and collaborate with a variety of agencies to provide a wide range of programmes to support pupil well-being.

# **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 this very positive report. We wish to acknowledge the dedication, cooperation and support of our staff, parents and pupils. We appreciate the input of the Inspectorate and acknowledge its position as a partner in delivering quality teaching and learning.

**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 has discussed and accepts the recommendations made in the report. The recommendations will be central to our school planning in the coming year.