

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

St. Canice's Boys National School
Finglas, Dublin 11
Uimhir rolla: 18682F

Date of inspection: 14 February 2014



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

1. Introduction

St. Canice's Boys' National School is located in Finglas and is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. There are currently 431 pupils enrolled and they are distributed across 16 mainstream classes. School attendance patterns have improved significantly in recent years due to sustained vigilance in implementing a range of appropriate measures. During the whole-school evaluation inspectors observed teaching and learning in ten mainstream class settings and five support-teaching settings. 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 characterised by an affirming, well-ordered learning environment where a culture of respect and diligence has been carefully nurtured.
- The board of management supports the organisation and development of the school in a very competent, efficient manner.
- The principal provides highly effective organisational and instructional leadership.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good with provision in Mathematics and Physical Education being of particularly high quality.
- Purposeful engagement in school self-evaluation and improvement processes is in evidence.
- Pupils demonstrated positive behaviour and praiseworthy learning outcomes in the curricular areas evaluated.
- The overall quality of support for pupils is very good with commendable attention given to the enhancement of their self-esteem and emotional well-being.
- Information and communications technology (ICT) is used regularly and effectively to support teaching and learning.
- A commendable range of communication channels has been established to develop positive home-school relationships and strong links with the local community.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Greater use of teachers' monthly progress reports together with a stronger focus on the delineation of pupils' learning outcomes, in some curricular areas, would optimise progression in pupils' learning.
- A whole-school strategic approach to the development of pupils' oral language skills in English together with the extension of differentiated team-teaching interventions would augment good practices in this curricular area.
- B'fhiú plean céimnithe Gaeilge a chur i bhfeidhm ar bhonn uile-scoile agus béim ar leith a chur ar mhonatóireacht ghnóthachtáil na ndaltaí san ábhar. (*A progressive incremental Irish plan should be implemented and a stronger emphasis placed on monitoring pupils' progress in the subject.*)

3. Quality of School Management

- The quality of the work of the board of management is very good. Appropriate procedures are well-established and members share their individual skills purposefully to ensure the board fulfils its responsibilities in a competent manner. Current and previous boards have developed school infrastructure and resources to a very high standard.
- The principal demonstrates highly effective leadership and management skills in the provision of a child-centred, well-ordered learning environment. He has successfully nurtured a respectful, affirming culture which facilitates the holistic development of pupils. He is ably assisted by a dedicated deputy principal. Together they work collaboratively with staff to promote high standards in teaching and learning. Post-holders conscientiously undertake a suitable range of duties which are closely aligned to school priorities. A strong sense of teamwork and commitment to school improvement characterise the work of the in-school management team.
- The quality of the management of resources is very good. Regular engagement of staff members in professional development contributes to the very high quality of provision. Ancillary staff makes a valuable contribution to the culture and organisation of the school. The recently renovated school facilities provide a vibrant learning environment which celebrates pupils' achievements and identities. A wide range of resources is used effectively to support teaching and learning with use of ICT being particularly commendable.
- A suitable range of communication channels has been established to promote positive home-school relationships and to create strong links with relevant agencies within the local community. The responses to the parent questionnaires, administered during the evaluation, indicate high levels of parental satisfaction with the school.
- The quality of management of pupils is very good. A suitable range of organisational procedures and incentive programmes has been established to ensure a well-ordered learning environment. Pupils demonstrate high levels of positivity which is also reflected in the pupil questionnaires issued during the evaluation.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The quality of the school planning and school self-evaluation process is good. A positive culture of professional reflection is evident and school self-evaluation practices are well established. Appropriate priorities have been identified in the three year improvement plan and suitable action plans have been devised based on a comprehensive analysis of assessment data. The implementation of improvement initiatives has impacted positively on pupil learning with commendable progress evident across a number of curricular domains.
- A comprehensive suite of organisational plans inform the efficient functioning of the school. The review of some whole-school curricular plans should clearly delineate key learning outcomes for class groupings. Greater use of teachers' monthly progress reports would ensure optimum progression and continuity in pupils' learning throughout their educational experiences.
- The overall quality of teachers' short and long-term planning is good with some excellent practice noted in some instances. Best practices, which included differentiated learning objectives and a close alignment between assessment and planning, should be extended throughout the school.

- 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 na foghlama agus an teagaisc sa Ghaeilge go maith. Cothaítear meon dearfach i leith na Gaeilge agus úsáidtear an teanga go neamhfhorimiúil ar bhonn rialta. Tá sé ar chumas formhór na ndaltaí raon leathan eiseamláirí teanga a úsáid go múiníneach. Ní foláir, afách, béim níos láidre a chur ar úsáid na mbriathra i gcomhthéascanna éagsúla chun scileanna labhartha na ndaltaí a fhorbairt a thuilleadh. Forbraítear scileanna éisteachta na ndaltaí go cumasach. Léann roinnt daltaí le cruinneas agus le tuiscint. Léiríonn formhór na ndaltaí torthaí foghlama sásúla san obair scríofa. B'fhiú plean céimnithe Gaeilge a chur i bhfeidhm ar bhonn uile-scoile agus béim ar leith a chur ar mhonatóireacht ghnóthachtáil na ndaltaí san ábhar.
- *The quality of teaching and learning in Irish is good. A positive attitude has been cultivated towards Irish and the language is used informally on a regular basis. The majority of pupils are able to confidently use a wide range of language exemplars. However, to further develop pupils' oral skills, it is recommended that a stronger emphasis be placed on using verbs in a variety of contexts. Pupils' listening skills are competently developed. Some of the pupils read with accuracy and understanding. The majority of pupils demonstrate satisfactory learning outcomes in their written work. A progressive incremental Irish plan should be implemented, and a stronger emphasis placed on monitoring pupils' progress in the subject.*
- The overall quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is high. Regular provision is made for discrete oral language lessons and pupils demonstrate commendable appreciation of a suitable range of poetry. Considerable cross-curricular emphasis is placed on extending pupils' vocabulary in some settings. However, a whole-school strategic approach to the development of pupils' oral language skills would augment good practices in this area. Pupils' word attack skills have been developed to a very high standard. The whole-school emphasis on high frequency word recognition has impacted positively on pupils' literacy skills. The successful establishment of differentiated team-teaching initiatives is commended. The school is encouraged to extend its use of these differentiated approaches to other classes with additional attention given to the range and genre of pupils' reading material. Pupils' independent writing skills are developed to a high standard with some excellent use of pupil self-assessment and ICT to celebrate pupils' achievements.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Mathematics is very good. A variety of engaging methodologies and a suitable range of resources are used effectively to facilitate pupils' successful mastery of key mathematical concepts and skills. A concerted whole-school approach to the use of mathematical language and the consistent implementation of identified improvement strategies has impacted positively on pupils' development in mathematics. Mathematically rich learning environments are used purposefully. Effective cross-curricular integration together with regular focused consolidation contributes to the cohesive nature and high standard of provision in this area.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Physical Education is very good with some excellent practice noted. Pupils benefit from their engagement in a broad and balanced programme of activities which emphasises skill development across all strands. Curricular provision is complemented by a commendable range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Assessment of pupil skill development is commendable.

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is very good. A variety of methodologies is effectively deployed and high-quality teacher-pupil interactions are in evidence. The school is encouraged to extend the use of play-based methodologies in infant classes to develop pupils' language and motor skills. Pupils demonstrate positive learning dispositions and outcomes in all curricular areas evaluated. Their written work is carefully corrected with regular constructive feedback provided. Useful assessment strategies are adopted by teachers with some excellent use of pupil self-assessment observed during the evaluation.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- The overall quality of support for pupils is very good with commendable attention given to the enhancement of pupils' self-esteem and emotional well-being.
- Early identification of pupils with special educational needs is ensured through comprehensive monitoring systems and close collaboration with all partners. Supplementary support for pupils with special educational needs in literacy and numeracy is currently provided using an appropriate balance of in-class and withdrawal approaches in accordance with pupils' prioritised needs. Carefully designed team teaching models have been successfully implemented with positive impacts on pupil progress in literacy and numeracy. Further development of these focused differentiated initiatives is advised. The effective, conscientious implementation of Reading Recovery and Maths Recovery programmes is commendable.
- Teachers plan conscientiously for the delivery of relevant educational programmes for pupils requiring additional support. In some instances there is scope to enhance the specificity of targets in educational programmes.
- Teachers use a wide range of resources effectively to stimulate pupils' interest. Lessons observed during the evaluation were characterised by high quality teacher-pupil interactions with appropriate consolidation of learning. It is evident that pupils benefit significantly from the support provided.
- The home-school community liaison co-ordinator works conscientiously and collaboratively to implement an appropriate range of purposeful initiatives to promote positive parental participation in their children's education. Considerable attention is given to the management of pupil transitions into and out of primary school. The school community has benefited from the purposeful initiatives established through the *School Completion Programme*.

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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 the very positive Whole School Evaluation report of April 2014. The report affirms the work ethic, collaborative spirit and quality of teaching that underpin the high quality of provision in our school. The Board also acknowledges the very high levels of satisfaction indicated by parents and by pupils in their questionnaire responses. The Board wishes to thank the whole school community who contributed to the process.

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 school has taken on board the recommendations made and the implementation of these has been prioritised as part of the school's development plan. The school looks forward to working on these over the coming years. As part of the school self-evaluation process, work has commenced on the development of an oral English language programme.

Táimid ag eagrú plean céimnithe Gaeilge ar bhonn uile scoile agus ag cur béim ar leith ar mhonatóireacht dul chun chin na ndaltaí san ábhar. The school continues to strive to provide a high standard of teaching and learning and ensure that a safe and caring environment is provided for pupils, staff and wider school community.