

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

**Whole School Evaluation
REPORT**

**Kill o' the Grange National School,
County Dublin
Uimhir rolla: 18886V**

Date of inspection: 7 February 2011



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

1. Introduction

Kill o' the Grange National School is a vertical, co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin. It is an inclusive school that welcomes pupils of all faiths and none. The overall attendance levels of the 213 pupils are very good. The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix to this report.

2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

The following are the **main strengths** of the work of the school:

- The management of the school, as exemplified by the board, principal and in-school management team, is excellent.
- The highly competent and dynamic principal demonstrates the qualities of instructional leadership.
- The pupils are commended on their exemplary behaviour, enthusiasm for learning and application to work.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is commended with teachers presenting well-prepared, stimulating lessons that make good provision for the development of skills.
- Excellent standards are evident in the teaching and learning of all strands of the English curriculum.
- Lessons in Physical Education, which are characterised by the explicit teaching and focussed application of skills, make good provision for scaffolded, discovery learning.
- The highly-qualified special education needs (SEN) teachers present engaging and appropriately-challenging lessons in attractive and well-resourced settings.
- The school provides an attractive learning environment that hosts impressive displays of the pupils' work across the curriculum.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Mainstream teachers should enhance the provision for differentiated learning.
- Classroom planning should be underpinned by explicit learning objectives.
- The communicative approach should be central to the teaching of all Irish lessons.

3. Quality of School Management

- The quality of school management is excellent. The board members work in a most professional, committed and collaborative manner to manage and support the school.

- The highly competent and dynamic principal leads and manages the school very effectively. She demonstrates the qualities of instructional leadership and actively promotes the school's mission to provide education of the highest level in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The high-functioning in-school management team members ably support the principal and contribute significantly to all aspects of school life.
- The special needs assistants and classroom assistants carry out their roles capably and with dedication. All ancillary staff, including the school secretary, caretaker and cleaning staff, carry out their work pleasantly, professionally and with pride.
- The impressive school building provides a stimulating and aesthetically-pleasing learning environment. The school is equipped to a very high standard with a broad and appropriate range of resources to enhance teaching and learning. The school is commended on the exceptional displays of pupils' work across the curriculum.
- Highly effective use is made of a range of strategies, including texts, newsletters, and the school website, to facilitate communication with the broader school community. The school operates an open-door policy exemplified by parental presence in the school, open-days and regular meetings. The active parents' association contributes very significantly to the provision of extra-curricular activities and organises fundraising events.
- The management of pupils is excellent and staff are commended on their clear commitment to their pastoral care and holistic development. The behaviour of the courteous pupils is exemplary. As reflected in the pupil questionnaires, consideration should be given to enabling them to participate in relevant decision-making through an appropriate forum.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The quality of whole-school planning is of a high standard. Organisational policies, which are clear and accessible, give excellent guidance. The comprehensive curriculum plans are reviewed regularly. As indicated by parent questionnaire responses, it is recommended that parents be afforded a more collaborative role in future revisions to pertinent policies.
- The approaches to classroom planning vary. It is recommended that the school review the current formats to incorporate both explicit provision for differentiation and greater emphasis on objectives-based planning. The school makes good use of a range of self-evaluation strategies to monitor and improve learning outcomes, target resources and promote school effectiveness.
- School authorities provided evidence that, in compliance with Primary Circular 0061/2006, the board of management has formally adopted the Department's *Child Protection Guidelines for Primary Schools*. Evidence was provided to show that these child protection procedures have been brought to the attention of management, school staff and parents; that a copy of the procedures has been provided to all staff (including all new staff); and that management has ensured that all staff are familiar with the procedures to be followed. A designated liaison person (DLP) and a deputy DLP have been appointed in line with the requirements of the guidelines.

5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

- The quality of teaching and learning is commended. The teachers present well-prepared, stimulating and challenging lessons that make good provision for the development of skills. Effective cross-curricular learning is promoted as evidenced in the pupils' achievements in project work and the arts. The highly-motivated pupils apply themselves very well to their learning and attain high standards. As reflected in the pupil questionnaires, consideration should be given to extending the provision for collaborative learning activities.
- The school is commended on its analysis of standardised test data at whole-school level to monitor and track the progress of pupils and inform the provision of support. Best practice at whole-class level includes the administration of teacher-designed tests and tasks, criterion-referenced assessments, informative feedback, peer and self-assessment and pupil portfolios. It is recommended that this good practice be adopted across all classes and be used to inform the provision for differentiated teaching and learning. Appropriate strategies are in place to inform parents of their children's progress.
- Ar an iomlán, tá caighdeán maith le sonrú ar mhúineadh agus ar fhoghlaim na Gaeilge. Féachtar chuige go gcothaítear dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge, trí neart ábhar priontáilte a bheith ar taispeáint i dtimpeallacht na scoile agus trí raidhse imeachtaí a eagrú le haghaidh 'Seachtain na Gaeilge'. Úsáidtear dánta agus amhráin mar chuid de na ceachtanna Gaeilge sa chuid is mó de na ranganna. Soláthraíonn na múinteoirí ábhar léitheoireachta a spreagann na daltaí agus cuireann siad ar a gcumas dul i mbun scríbhneoireachta ar mhodhanna ilchineálacha. Díritear aird chuí ar ghramadach agus ar fhoclóir. Ionas go ndéanfaí forbairt níos leithne ar Ghaeilge labhartha na ndaltaí, ba chóir go mbeadh an cur chuige cumarsáideach mar chuid lárnach den mhúinteoireacht sna ranganna Gaeilge go léir.

Overall, the teaching and learning of Irish is of a good standard. The school actively cultivates a positive attitude towards the language through the provision of a print-rich environment and an event-filled 'Irish Week.' Poems and songs are a feature of lessons in almost all class rooms. Teachers provide stimulating reading material and enable the pupils to produce writing in a variety of genres. Good provision is made for the teaching of grammar and vocabulary. To further develop the pupils' oral competence, the communicative approach should be central to the teaching of all Irish lessons.

- Excellent standards are evident overall in the teaching and learning of English. The pupils are confident, articulate and reflective oral communicators who demonstrate an admirable breadth of general knowledge. Teachers foster a love of literature and make excellent provision for the acquisition and development of reading skills. The teaching of poetry and the use of class novels are regular features of lessons. The promotion of emergent writing is praiseworthy. As the pupils progress through the school, they produce high quality writing in a variety of genres. To further enhance their writing experiences, consideration should be given to extending the provision for process writing. The pupils are commended on their handwriting and presentation skills.
- Overall, the teaching and learning of mathematics are very good. Teaching primarily comprises competent, teacher-directed, whole-class instruction and also incorporates paired and individual tasks. Purposeful talk and discussion, and active learning are features of most lessons. Pupils demonstrate rapid recall of number facts and proficiency in number operations. Most teachers facilitate the practical application of mathematics. To build upon this good work, consideration should now be given to enhancing the provision for the teaching and application of problem-solving skills at whole-school level. Effective

models of in-class support are in place. Mainstream teachers should consider extending the current approach to encompass differentiation by learning objective and task.

- The quality of teaching and learning in Physical Education is of a very high standard. Excellent provision is made for continuity and progression in all curriculum strands. All teachers present well-structured, well-resourced and engaging lessons that pay due regard to safety issues. Lessons, which are characterised by the explicit teaching and focussed application of skills, facilitate scaffolded discovery learning. Pupils demonstrate high levels of participation, team work and creativity.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- The quality of support for pupils with special education needs is excellent. The comprehensive school policy promotes collaboration and makes appropriate provision for both the staged approach and early intervention. The highly-qualified SEN teachers present engaging and appropriately-challenging lessons in attractive and well-resourced settings. Support tailored to the pupils' various needs is provided in a wide range of settings. Highly effective use is made of diagnostic testing and teacher observation to inform and monitor the comprehensive programmes of work. The school also provides stimulating extension programmes for high achievers.

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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 of Kill o' the Grange National School would like to thank the inspectors for making their inspection a positive and affirming experience for the whole school community. We are delighted that the main strengths of the school were identified. Although we were examined in four curricular subjects, we welcome the recognition of excellence in other areas, especially in Science and Visual Arts.

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 acknowledges the recommendations of the report and as reflective practitioners we welcome the suggestion for further ongoing review and development proposed in the report. The work is in progress