

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

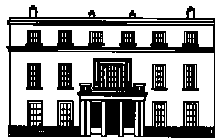
Whole School Evaluation

REPORT

Scoil Íde
Clondalkin, Dublin 22

Uimhir rolla: 19220S

Date of inspection: 4 December 2014



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AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS

1. Introduction

Scoil Íde is a vertical primary school in Clondalkin, Dublin 22, with mixed classes from junior infants to first class and girls alone from second class upwards. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and in the trusteeship of the Presentation Sisters. Over one quarter of pupils do not have English as a first language (EAL). Attendance levels for the majority of pupils are very good. The school has achieved three Green Flags. 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 the principal manage the school effectively and work together for the benefit of the school.
- The school is praised for the implementation of initiatives and interventions which enhance the educational experiences of pupils.
- The teachers succeed in creating an atmosphere which is conducive to learning and they carry out their work in a spirit of collegiality, enthusiasm and teamwork.
- The management of pupils is a significant strength of the school and the pupils are very well behaved, mannerly and motivated.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Physical Education is highly commendable.
- This inclusive school is committed to nurturing the wellbeing of pupils in fulfilment of its ethos and in the spirit of its trustees, the Presentation Sisters.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- It is recommended that teachers use a wider range of methodologies in order to raise the participation levels of pupils, to promote collaboration and to develop their higher-order skills.
- Teachers should ensure that clear learning objectives, including language-learning objectives, underpin their planning and practice.
- Differentiation should be a key aspect in the planning and teaching of English and Mathematics and should be linked to the outcomes of assessment.
- It is recommended that a clear leadership role for the coordination of special education supports be assigned to ensure cohesion and effective practice in the delivery of supports.

3. Quality of School Management

- The work of the board of management is very effective. Board members engage in policy formation and strategic planning, are very supportive of staff, and capably attend to issues relating to the school building. They are also well informed regarding educational standards in the school.
- The work of the principal is characterised by her effective management and administration skills, and her commitment to the wellbeing of each child within this inclusive school. The in-school management team members carry out their duties in a spirit of cooperation. They play a key role in the process of whole-school planning and school-self-evaluation, and they embrace a range of school-based initiatives.
- The management of resources is good. The school is well maintained, and the new school extension and yard are commended. Teachers prepare attractive classroom displays. Very good information and communications technology (ICT) resources are available as administrative, planning and teaching tools. In general, teachers use an appropriate range of resources to support the introduction of new learning. The use of resources by pupils while working individually or together during learning tasks has scope to be enhanced. Personnel are well managed, and all ancillary staff members, including the secretary, special needs assistants and caretaker, carry out their duties in a supportive manner.
- The management of relations and communications with the community is good. A range of appropriate communication strategies is in place, including an informative website. The school should seek to enhance communication with families where English is not the first language. The recently-formed parents' association, and parents in general, provide very good support to the school. In the Inspectorate survey, almost all parents agree they are happy with the school, it has a good atmosphere and is well run.
- The management of pupils is a significant strength of the school. The pupils are very well behaved, mannerly and motivated. The teachers succeed in creating an atmosphere which is conducive to learning. In the Inspectorate survey, all pupils agree that they feel safe in class, and nearly all agree they like school. Arising from the survey, the school should explore ways to enable pupils to have a say in areas of school life, for example, in the setting up of a Students' Council.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- A very good collaborative and consultative process for school planning and school self-evaluation (SSE) is established. There is a systematic approach to policy development and review. Clear and informative organisational policies give guidance on all relevant aspects of provision. In general, the curriculum plans set out appropriate detail on the content to be taught. These plans should now specify whole-school methodologies and strategies to complement this.
- There is scope for development in teachers' planning. Their plans should reflect the diversity of pupils, their language needs and varied abilities. Teachers' short-term plans should set out clear and progressive learning objectives, with a specific emphasis on

language learning. They should also clarify their methodologies and provision for differentiation.

- To date, the school has engaged well with school self-evaluation, and demonstrates good work in the gathering and analysing of evidence, and the setting of priority areas. It is important that all targets clarify the desired measurable improvements in pupils' learning and it is advised that individual personnel be identified to oversee actions.

Child protection policy and procedures

- 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, learning and pupil achievement is good overall. Teaching is characterised by good explanation, teacher-modelling, lively pace and use of appropriate resources, including ICT. The sharing of lesson objectives with pupils was noted: this should be extended. The teachers are praised for team teaching and the introduction of a range of interventions and initiatives to improve learning. Whole-class teaching is the predominant methodology used. In order to promote the pupils' higher-order skills, to raise their participation levels and their opportunities to work collaboratively, it is recommended that all teachers use a wider range of methodologies. Lessons in all subjects should be language-centred, with a focus on enabling the pupils to speak much more frequently, using new language structures and vocabulary.
- Tá scóp ann chun cáilíocht an teagaisc agus na foghlama sa Ghaeilge a fheabhsú. Déantar obair fhiúntach le drámaí, cluichí, amhráin agus le rainn ins na ranganna, agus cothaíonn na hoidí dearcadh dearfach i leith na teanga. Ar an iomlán, áfach, léiríonn na daltaí deacrachtaí ag déanamh comhrá nádúrtha trí Ghaeilge. Moltar mar sin béim a leagan ar chothú chumas cumarsáide na ndaltaí ar bhonn uile scoile. Chuige sin ní mór do na hoidí foclóir agus struchtúir chainte bunaithe ar na téamaí agus ar saol na ndaltaí a mhúineadh dóibh agus iad a chuidiú chun an teanga a úsáid go nádúrtha i mbeirteanna agus i ngrúpaí.
- *There is scope to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Irish. Valuable work is done using drama, games, songs and rhymes in classes, and teachers promote a positive attitude towards the language. Overall, however, pupils experience difficulty engaging in natural conversations in Irish. It is recommended that the development of pupils' communicative abilities be emphasised at whole-school level. To this end, teachers should teach theme-related vocabulary and language structures, based on the pupils' everyday lives, and enable pupils to use the language naturally in pairs and groups.*
- The overall quality of teaching and learning in English is good. A comprehensive early-reading programme is delivered. Up through the school, all pupils have opportunities to read and develop fluency using textbooks, library books and class novels. As standards of reading among pupils vary quite significantly, it is recommended that teachers extend the use of graded-reading material so that pupils read with success. In addition, reading and comprehension skills should be taught systematically and developmentally on a whole-school basis.
- The teaching of writing is effective and pupils get extensive opportunities to write. The whole-school approach to the in-depth study of writing genres, observed during the

evaluation, is praiseworthy. The school's theme-based approach to improving the oral language skills of pupils should be supported by a whole-school programme to ensure progression in language learning.

- Teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics are competent overall. Teachers explain new concepts well with good modelling and questioning. Lessons are appropriately paced and structured, incorporating oral mathematics, games and some use of resources. The pupils display good recall of number facts, and carry out operations with competence. To ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged, teachers should analyse assessment data more closely to plan their lessons and organise differentiated learning activities.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Physical Education is highly commendable. The teachers provide balanced programmes. Lessons incorporate the sharing of clear learning objectives, teacher-modelling, subject-specific language emphasis and attention to skills' development. Teachers ensure that activities are very well organised with clear progression and challenge evident. There is very good development of the pupils' creative and collaborative skills. Teachers address safety issues and make good use of space and resources. During the lessons observed, the pupils were at all times highly engaged and displayed very good learning.
- Good use is made of standardised data at whole-school level to inform SSE and to identify pupils requiring additional support. This data should also be used to track the pupils' attainment in line with their ability levels. Some good practice was noted in a small number of settings incorporating rubrics, criterion-referenced checklists and assessment-for-learning strategies. Overall, there is scope to extend the range and effectiveness of the assessments carried out by teachers to guide differentiation and practice.

6. Quality of Supports for Pupils

- In fulfilment of its ethos, the school creates a nurturing environment which endeavours to ensure that all pupils fully participate in school life. Effective programmes are in place to enable the smooth transition and transfer of pupils to nearby schools, with whom the school enjoys excellent relations. Building on the success of its Intercultural Week last year, the school should explore ways to celebrate the diversity of its pupils and their cultures in the everyday delivery of the curriculum and should document these in an Intercultural policy.
- There are many positive aspects in the supports provided to pupils. These include teamwork, good communications and consultation, and an openness to new approaches. There is scope for development in the delivery of these supports. Withdrawal and in-class support are provided. Where supports were effective, they were very well planned and delivered, with good use of assessment data to evaluate their impact on learning. This good practice should be extended to ensure that targeted support is provided to the pupils most in need. In preparing support plans, teachers should ensure that the outcomes of diagnostic and other assessments including professional reports, inform target setting and learning programmes more specifically. It is recommended that a clear leadership role for the coordination of special education supports be assigned to ensure cohesion and effective practice in the delivery of supports.

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 Scoil Íde, Clondalkin, welcomes this Whole School Evaluation Report which highlights the strengths of this school. The Board notes the content of this report.

The Board welcomes the report's affirmation of Scoil Íde as an inclusive school committed to nurturing the wellbeing of pupils in fulfilment of its ethos and in the spirit of its trustees, Presentation Sisters. Scoil Íde has always been and continues to be welcoming of pupils from a diverse range of cultures and celebrates inter-culturalism in a variety of ways. The Board is heartened that the management of pupils is recognised as a significant strength of the school and that the pupils are very well-behaved, mannerly and motivated.

The Board acknowledges and appreciates the support of staff, parents and pupils enabling the Board and the Principal to continue to manage the school effectively and to work together for the benefit of the school.

The Board greatly appreciates the ongoing work of the teachers in creating an atmosphere conducive to learning and in carrying out their work in a spirit of collegiality, enthusiasm and teamwork. The Board welcomes the quality of teaching, learning, and pupil achievement in P.E. as highly commendable.

The Board will continue, where possible, to support initiatives and interventions which enhance the educational experience of pupils.

The Board of Management congratulates the staff, pupils and parents of Scoil Íde and assures them of its commitment and on-going support.

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 and staff accept the recommendations of the inspector's report and are actively working on the recommendations as part of the school's ongoing SSE and SIP process.

In an effort to enhance communication with non-English speaking families the school has begun translating all newsletters into other languages. These will be available on the school's website.

Since 2009, the school has lost half of its senior management team due to the Government's moratorium on the filling of promoted posts. The team in place is deployed to areas perceived as being vital to the development of the school. However, the Board notes the Inspector's recommendation that there is a leadership role for the coordination of Special Education supports and will, subject to constraints, review this recommendation with a view to implementation.