

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Whole School Evaluation
REPORT**

**Redeemer Boys' NS
Ard Easmuinn, Dundalk, Co. Louth
Uimhir rolla: 19246N**

Date of inspection: 12 April 2013



1. Introduction

Redeemer Boys' National School operates under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Armagh. The school is included in Band 1 of the School Support Programme of Delivering Equality of Opportunity to Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. The school participates in a number of Department initiatives to support literacy and numeracy, along with a range of initiatives designed to inculcate positive attitudes to learning among pupils. There are 105 pupils in the school. Pupil attendance rates are good throughout the school. During this whole-school evaluation, provision for Irish, English, Mathematics and Visual Arts was evaluated. 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:

- Leadership in the school is of a very high quality. The board of management, principal and in-school management team work in a focused and highly collaborative manner.
- All members of the school community work collaboratively to ensure that school policy is kept up to date and relevant to the school's day to day needs.
- Communication between the school and home is very good. All members of the school community have opportunities for frequent and helpful interactions with each other.
- The management of pupils is very good. Highly effective strategies are in place to promote good pupil behaviour throughout the school.
- A broad range of resources is prepared and used effectively to support teaching and learning.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- It is advised that the board of management should have its accounts certified or audited annually.
- It is recommended that the format used for classroom planning is revised to include greater detail on desired learning outcomes, proposed learning activities and differentiation.
- It is recommended that the format for maintaining monthly progress records is reviewed in order to facilitate the recording of teaching and learning in a more concise manner.
- *Maidir leis an nGaeilge, b'fhiú don fhoireann clár córasach a chumadh don scoil a chuimsíonn na snáitheanna curaclaim uile. Regarding Irish, it is advised that the staff devise a systematic programme for the school encompassing all curriculum strands.*

3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management displays strong commitment to the development of the school. The board is properly constituted and members share responsibility for carrying out the functions of the board. The board carries out its duties diligently. Detailed financial reports are presented at each meeting. It is advised that the board of management should have its accounts certified or audited annually in accordance with section 18.1 of the Education Act 1998.
- The principal leads the in-school management team effectively, bringing considerable understanding of the community to his role. He is supported by a committed in-school management team that shares his vision for the further development of the school. Members of the in-school management team work collaboratively to ensure that administrative, curriculum and pastoral duties are performed carefully and prudently.
- Resources are managed carefully by the board of management. A commendable range of resources is provided to support teaching and learning. The school building is maintained well. The board expressed concern about the school's finances and is working effectively to address this issue.
- The parents' association plays a very active role in the life of the school and collaborates effectively with staff and management to organise a broad range of activities which enrich the pupils' school experience. Parents' responses to questionnaires indicate high levels of satisfaction with the work of the school.
- The management of pupils is very good. The school has implemented a highly commendable range of strategies and supports to promote good behaviour throughout the school and to deal with instances of challenging behaviour. These interventions have a very positive effect on the ways in which pupils interact with each other and with adults in the school.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The school planning and school self-evaluation processes are of good quality. A thorough review of curriculum and organisational planning has been commenced. This review involves management, staff and other members of the school community working in a collaborative and focused manner in order to ensure that school policy is kept up to date and relevant to the school's day to day needs. The school's DEIS plan is continually reviewed. Station teaching programmes for literacy and numeracy have been introduced and their effectiveness has been evaluated by staff.
- There is scope for development in the quality of classroom planning. All teachers provide long-term and short-term plans for each curriculum area. However, much of this planning consists of proposed lesson content. It is recommended that further attention is given to identifying desired learning outcomes and outlining specific learning activities for pupils. It is also recommended that short-term plans should provide details of how learning objectives are to be differentiated to cater for variations in pupil ability. Although teacher observation is listed frequently as a primary mode of assessment, there is a need to ensure that appropriate records of this observation are maintained. While this is desirable for all curriculum areas, it is particularly important in respect of the recording of pupil progress in English and in Mathematics. In these subjects, the results of standardised

assessments are kept each year. These results should be collated so that pupils' assessment history can be maintained in an accessible format.

- Monthly progress records are maintained by each teacher. These records involve the checking off of topics listed in the short-term plans. It is recommended that a more concise format be considered for these records. This will also allow details of alterations to the plans to be recorded.
- 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 scóip chun forbartha i múineadh agus i bhfoghlaím na Gaeilge sa scoil. Baintear úsáid as raon cuí de fhearas, teicneolaíocht na faisnéise agus na cumarsáide (TFC) san áireamh, chun ceachtanna a chur i láthair. Glacann na daltaí páirt toilteanach sna ceachtanna. Sonraítear roinnt úsáide á baint as aistriúchán le linn ceachtanna Gaeilge. Moltar an cleachtas seo a sheachaint. Cé go múintear cnuasach maith amhrán agus filíochta i roinnt ranganna, moltar go leathnófaí an dea-chleachtas seo ar bhonn níos córasaí do gach rang. Caithfear aird a dhíriú freisin ar an dul chun cinn a mbítear ag súil leis i dteanga labhartha na ndaltaí tríd an scoil. D'fhéadfaí breis deiseanna a sholáthar do na daltaí an teanga a chleachtadh níos rialta. Ó thaobh na scríbhneoireachta agus na léitheoireachta de, bunaítear an chuid is mó den chlár ar leabhair shaothair. B'fhiú úsáid sa bhreis a bhaint as raon ábhar léitheoireachta níos leithne, ábhar bunaithe ar eispéireas na ndaltaí ach go háirithe. Tá gá le breis cinnteachta a bheith ann maidir leis an teanga atá le múineadh. Chuige sin, b'fhiú don fhoireann clár córasach a chumadh don scoil a chuimsíonn na snáitheanna curaclaim uile.
- *There is scope for development in the teaching of and achievement in Irish in the school. An appropriate range of resources, including information and communication technology (ICT), is used to present lessons. Pupils participate willingly in the lessons. It is noted that there is some use of translation during Irish lessons. It is recommended that this practice is avoided. Although a store of songs and poetry is taught in some classes, it is recommended that this commendable practice be extended more systematically to every class. It will also be necessary to pay attention to the progress expected in the pupils' spoken language throughout the school. Additional opportunities could be provided for pupils to practise the language more regularly. Regarding writing and reading, much of the programme is based on workbooks. It would be worthwhile to make more use of a broader range of reading material, especially material based on the pupils' experience. There is a need for more certainty regarding the language to be taught. It is recommended that the staff devise a systematic programme for the school encompassing all curriculum strands.*
- The teaching of English is of good quality overall. Teachers employ a good range of methodologies and make use of a commendable range of resources. Pupils are exposed to print-rich environments throughout the school. Lessons are generally well paced and well structured. A range of initiatives is used effectively to support the development of reading in the school. The effect of these interventions is analysed carefully by staff to ensure that pupils receive high quality literacy support. Although the development of literacy remains challenging throughout the school, the setting of specific targets and the structured use of initiatives to support literacy development are having a positive impact on pupils' attainment in reading. While it is noted that targeted interventions are used to

enable pupils to write for a variety of purposes, there is scope for the further development of writing. The quality of pupils' writing, both in copybooks and in displays, should be examined so that opportunities for the enrichment of the programme can be identified. In particular, activities which provide challenging tasks for more able pupils should be incorporated into the writing programme. In some classes, poetry is used well to develop pupils' language. There is some scope for more regular use of recitation and the writing of poetry by pupils. It is recommended that less emphasis be placed on formal approaches to the teaching of grammar. In accordance with the Primary School Curriculum, pupils' knowledge of the conventions of grammar should be developed in the context of their general language development.

- The quality of teaching in Mathematics is good, although possibilities for improvement in learning and pupil achievement exist. Teachers use a commendable range of resources and methodologies in the teaching of Mathematics. Appropriate emphasis is placed on hands-on learning in all classrooms. In general, pupils' work is monitored regularly and pupils are given constructive feedback on their efforts. Further differentiation of the programme is required in order to ensure that differences in pupil ability are catered for in a systematic manner.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Visual Arts is good. The programme encompasses all curriculum strands and pupils have frequent opportunities to create two-dimensional and three-dimensional artwork. Their work is displayed attractively along the school corridors and in the classrooms. Integration of Visual Arts with other curriculum areas is planned thoughtfully. Opportunities are provided for pupils to engage in talk and discussion about their own work and the work of artists. Pupils derive enjoyment and benefit from the programme. Lessons are well organised and suitable resources are provided. In some instances, however, the use of templates limits the range of creative and aesthetic experiences of pupils.
- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the subjects evaluated was good. Teachers use a range of teaching methods appropriately and they provide suitable resources to facilitate pupil engagement in a commendable variety of learning activities. Some very good use of information and communications technology to stimulate pupil's interest was evident in lessons observed. There is scope for the development of aspects of assessment practices. It is recommended that more emphasis be placed on the development of a greater variety of formative and summative assessment practices. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) document, *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools (2007)* should be used in this regard.

6. Quality of Supports for Pupils

- Commendable practice is evident in the support provided to pupils with special educational needs. Whole-school procedures and criteria for identifying and selecting pupils for supplementary teaching have been developed. A range of screening tests is in use in the school to identify pupils in need of supplementary teaching. Further diagnostic testing is carried out to identify specific learning strengths and needs. Individual plans are devised for pupils. Class teachers, the principal and the special education teachers all have clearly defined roles in the formulation of these plans. It is recommended that the learning targets set out in these plans should be defined in more specific terms, in order to facilitate greater alignment with short-term plans for pupils.
- The quality of teaching approaches and interventions for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Support is provided in well-resourced settings and is comprised of focused and well-organised interventions. Pupils engage fully during support sessions and they complete assigned learning tasks successfully.

- The quality of home-school partnership in the school is of a very high quality. The Home, School and Community Liaison (HSCL) initiative is organised very effectively. A very positive relationship is evident between the school and parents. This relationship has been nurtured carefully over many years and is very successful in facilitating parental involvement in the life of the school.

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 together with staff of Redeemer Boys N.S would like to acknowledge the courtesy and professionalism of the Department of Education and Skills inspectors. We thank the inspectors for the productive manner in which the evaluation was carried out in our school.

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 Principal and staff of the school are presently implementing the recommendations made.