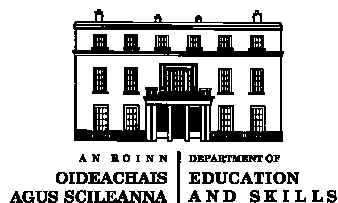


An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Scoil Bhríde
Green Lane, Leixlip, Co Kildare
Uimhir rolla: 19407L

Date of inspection: 20 November 2013



1. Introduction

Scoil Bhríde is a Catholic, vertical, mixed primary school which shares a campus with two other schools in Leixlip, Co. Kildare. There is common enrolment across the schools and a shared parent-teacher association. At the time of the evaluation there were 315 pupils enrolled. While attendance levels overall are good, the increasing number of pupils who miss more than 20 days is cause for concern. In this regard the board should review the school's strategies for improving attendance. 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 acting principal, teachers and wider staff work collaboratively in the best interests of the pupils and all contribute to the very positive atmosphere in the school.
- The board of management and the parents provide very good support to the school.
- There is competent teaching and learning in the four subject areas evaluated.
- The management of pupils is of a very high standard and the pupils are commended on their behaviour, enthusiasm for learning and pride in their work.
- The teachers display proficiency in the use of a wide range of teaching approaches.
- The overall quality of teachers' planning is very good.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- The range of assessment strategies should be extended and further use made of assessment data to inform planning, teaching and interventions at classroom and support level.
- Further provision for differentiation is recommended in order to ensure sufficient support and challenge for all pupils.
- Teachers should place a greater emphasis on the teaching and development of specific reading skills among pupils.
- Approaches to in-class support should be refined to ensure that support is targeted at pupils most in need.

3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management functions effectively. The members work in a committed and collaborative manner to devise policies and to manage and support the school. The acting principal, in his role since January 2013, ensures that the school is well run and fulfils his administrative and management roles with competence. The post holders undertake a wide range of duties capably and with commitment. The forthcoming review of posts should be used to prioritise curriculum leadership in areas identified for further development.
- There is competent management of resources. The school is well equipped with a wide range of teaching aids and resources which are used effectively by teachers. The standard of classroom displays is very good. The school building, grounds and garden are very well maintained. Ancillary staff members contribute significantly to the smooth running of the school.
- Very good use is made of a range of strategies including texts, Twitter, meetings, the school website and reports to facilitate communications with the school community. The shared parent-teacher association and parents in general are very supportive of the school through fundraising activities and school-based events. The school operates a book-rental scheme. In the Inspectorate survey nearly all parents agreed that the school was well run and their child enjoyed school. The survey indicated there is scope to raise the level of consultation with parents regarding policy formation.
- The management of pupils is of a very high standard and all staff members are praised for their nurturing of a very positive school atmosphere. The pupils are very well behaved, cooperative and take pride in their work. They are involved in decision-making through their participation in the Green School's committee. In the survey the majority of pupils agreed they felt safe in class and were listened to by their teachers.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- A collaborative approach to planning is in place. Informative and clear organisational policies give good guidance on all aspects of school life. The school's curriculum plans are enhanced by a wide range of resources and materials that are available to teachers. These plans should be updated more regularly in order to reflect new practices and to ensure whole-school approaches around curriculum implementation. Clear benchmarks for the pupils' learning at each class level should be agreed and recorded in these plans in order to facilitate continuity and progression.
- The school has engaged well in the process of school self-evaluation through the gathering of evidence for baseline data and the introduction of an intervention to improve literacy outcomes. To build on this good start the school is advised to develop its strategic three-year action plan more fully in their chosen target area.
- The quality of the teachers' classroom planning is very good. It is informed by the structure of the curriculum and sets out clear objectives and learning activities. Some good planning for differentiation was noted; this practice should be extended. The quality of planning for pupils with special educational needs varies, with very good focused planning in a few settings.
- 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

- Overall there is competent teaching and learning in the school, with some very good teaching observed. The teachers are good communicators and display proficiency in the use of a wide range of methodologies. Where teaching was most effective, lessons incorporated a distinct teaching phase where new concepts, language and skills were explicitly taught. All lessons should incorporate the sharing of objectives and thorough consolidation. The pupils display excellent cooperative skills and high levels of engagement. Teachers should differentiate their learning activities and resources to ensure that pupils are appropriately challenged. The pupils' written work in terms of penmanship, layout and content is good. All teachers closely monitor and correct their pupils' written work and provide supportive feedback.
- Tá cáilíocht an teagaisc agus na foghlama sa Ghaeilge leordhóthannach. Baineann na hoidí úsáid mhaith as áiseanna spreagúla agus as dánta, cluichí agus rainn i rith na gceachtanna. Cruthaítear timpeallacht shaibhir i bprionta. Baineann éagsúlacht le cumas na ndaltaí ceisteanna a chur agus a fhreagairt. Cé go gcuireann na hoidí béim chuí ar obair bheirte, ba chóir achar níos faide a chaitheamh ar mhúineadh na n-eiseamláirí teanga nua agus iad a bhunú ar chomhthéacsanna i saol na ndaltaí. Ar an iomlán sroicheann tromlach na ndaltaí caighdeán cuí sa léitheoireacht agus sa scríbhneoireacht. Moltar níos mó comhtháthú a dhéanamh idir na snáithe i dteagasc na dtéamaí éagsúla agus nasc níos mó a chruthú idir an obair ó bhéal agus na tascanna léitheoireachta agus scríbhneoireachta cruthaithí.
- *The standard of teaching and learning of Irish is appropriate. Teachers use stimulating resources, poems, games and rhymes during lessons. A print-rich environment is established. Standards vary regarding the pupils' ability to pose and answer questions. While teachers place suitable emphasis on pair work, more time should be spent on the explicit teaching of new language exemplars which are closely linked to the pupils' everyday lives. Overall, most pupils attain appropriate standards in reading and writing. It is advised that there be greater integration between the strands in the teaching of the different themes and that stronger links be established between oral language and reading and creative writing tasks.*
- The quality of teaching and learning English is good. Oral language is well taught and the pupils are confident, articulate communicators. There is good teaching of phonics and sight vocabulary, and pupils have regular opportunities to read using levelled reading material. Standards of reading among pupils vary. There is a need for the explicit teaching and development of specific reading skills as the pupils progress through the school. It is recommended that teachers engage in guided reading with the younger pupils, using appropriately-differentiated material. In-class support should focus on the application, reinforcement and assessment of reading skills with targeted pupils. The pupils write in a wide range of genres and engage well in the process of writing. To build on this good work, it is advised that more in-depth study of and engagement with a specified range of writing genres be a feature of provision.
- The standard of teaching and learning in Mathematics is competent. Teachers place good emphasis on oral mathematics, language teaching, integration and the use of appropriate resources. In most classes there is good explicit teaching of new content. Most pupils display accuracy in computation, good recall of number facts and understanding of concepts across the strands. When planning their learning objectives,

activities and resources, the teachers should tailor these to match the pupils' abilities. In addition, the pupils should be given more opportunities to solve everyday problems using the school's agreed problem-solving strategy.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Science is commendable. There is both breadth and depth in the programme provided and the pupils' learning across all of the strands is very good. Close links are established with local industry to promote an interest in and a love of Science. High-quality projects are completed by senior pupils. The teachers use excellent resources, including the local environment and school garden, to develop the pupils' skills of working scientifically, and designing and making. The pupils are actively involved in the Green School's Programme as they work towards their sixth flag. Where practice was most effective, the pupils were enabled to learn by discovery using their own ideas, with less emphasis on teacher-directed investigations.
- There is good provision in a number of aspects of assessment. Whole-school standardised assessment outcomes are analysed well. All teachers maintain records of pupils' learning. Some effective practice observed incorporated the use of self-assessment strategies and the linking of pupils' assessment outcomes to specific curriculum objectives. It is recommended that the range of assessment approaches be developed and extended across the curriculum. Further use of diagnostic assessment is advised to identify pupils' specific needs and to inform strategies for intervention at both classroom and support level. The staged approach to intervention should incorporate more formal recording of observations and interventions at class level by mainstream teachers.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- Overall, there is appropriate provision of support for pupils with special educational needs. Education plans are prepared in a consultative manner. The content of some short-term planning has scope to be more precise in terms of setting out progressive learning objectives and activities for individual pupils. Support, both in-class and withdrawal, is characterised by affirmative relationships, use of appropriate resources and attractive learning environments. The special needs assistants attend to the pupils' care needs very well. There is scope to refine approaches to in-class support to ensure that support is targeted at pupils most in need. All aspects of provision for pupils who receive support should be documented at whole-school and individual level, including provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language.

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 report of the Inspectorate which affirms the proficiency, dedication and commitment of the whole staff, the supportive involvement of the parent body, the engagement, cooperation and enthusiasm of our pupils, and the nurturing of a very positive school atmosphere.

The staff (teaching, support and ancillary), the Board and the Parent-Teacher Association commend the Inspectors on the courteous and professional manner in which they conducted their duties, making the inspection a valuable and informative experience for all.

Area 2: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

We will continue to build on our strengths and have already begun to address the Inspectors' recommendations in relation to improving attendance, refining in-class support and the development of Specific Reading Skills.

These and other such targeted actions will demonstrate our readiness and commitment to the full implementation of the Reports's findings as part of our School Improvement Plan.