

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Whole School Evaluation
REPORT**

**Bishop Galvin National School
Orwell, Templeogue,
Dublin 6W
Uimhir rolla: 19494J**

Date of inspection: 15 September 2014



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

1. Introduction

Bishop Galvin National School is a Catholic co-educational school catering for pupils from third to sixth class. The overall attendance of the 471 pupils is very good with a small number of pupils absent for more than 20 days. The board of management of the school 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:

- This is an inclusive school and the board of management principal, staff and parents are commended for the positive and supportive school environment.
- Excellent commitment and leadership is in evidence across the school and this facilitates the provision of a high quality educational service to the pupils.
- A culture of teamwork and collaboration is cultivated successfully among the staff and they demonstrate a very good understanding of the school's priorities.
- Teachers are a vibrant presence in the school and the overall quality of the teaching is commendable.
- A wide range of resources for teaching and learning is provided and purposefully used by teachers.
- The management of pupils is excellent. Pupils are confident, motivated and enthusiastic learners and the overall standard of their achievement and behaviour is high.
- The commitment of the board of management and the parents' association to the on-going development of the school is highly praised.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- To further enhance the learning experiences of pupils in Mathematics, additional opportunities should be provided for pupil-led active, discovery learning involving exploration and discussion of mathematical concepts and relationships.
- To build on existing good practice in assessment, greater use of assessment for learning approaches and formative feedback to pupils is recommended.

3. Quality of School Management

- The commitment of the board of management to the on-going development of the school is highly praised. The board is properly established, meets regularly and members carry

out a range of duties in a diligent manner. Matters of finance, school organisation, policy development and the achievements of pupils are discussed regularly.

- The principal is a long-serving and highly respected member of the school community. He demonstrates excellent commitment in his leadership and management of the school. He successfully promotes a culture of distributive leadership, a positive school climate and collaborative working relationships throughout the school. He is supported by a highly capable in-school management team whose work greatly assists in the efficient operation of the school. The willingness of all staff to take on additional duties as necessary is acknowledged. In the questionnaires the overwhelming majority of parents report that they are happy with the school and that it is well run.
- The board, principal, staff and parents are commended for the positive, supportive school environment. The building and its surroundings are maintained to a very high standard and the staff involved are commended for this. There are praiseworthy classroom environments and corridor displays throughout the school. Almost all parents report that a safe environment is provided for their child and almost all pupils responded that they feel safe in class and playground. A wide range of resources is available, including a very good range of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) equipment. ICT is particularly well used to support teaching, communicate with the wider school community, analyse data and for administrative purposes. The school has been awarded *Digital School of Distinction* status. The support provided by the secretary makes a significant contribution to the day-to-day running of the school.
- Relationships and communication with the school community are very good. The school communicates effectively with parents through a wide range of channels, including, frequent newsletters, school website, text-a-parent service, regular parent/teacher meetings and annual reports. Questionnaires indicate that almost all parents feel welcome at the school. The parents' association, parent body and local community are very supportive of the work of the school and are involved in a wide range of school activities.
- The management of pupils is excellent and an atmosphere of mutual respect is cultivated across the school. A positive code of behaviour is in place which is reflected in the management of the pupils in the classrooms. Pupils are very well-behaved and present as confident, enthusiastic and motivated learners. In order to further develop the use of the pupils' voice in the development of the school, consideration should be given to instituting a pupils' council.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The school deserves praise for its collaborative approach to planning and the overall quality of whole-school planning is very good. A cohesive and comprehensive whole-school plan which incorporates relevant administrative, organisational and curriculum policies has been compiled. Overall, policies and plans give good guidance on the operation of the school and to teachers in formulating their classroom planning.
- This is a reflective school and the teachers meet regularly to reflect on and discuss their work. Policies and practices are regularly reviewed and there is very good analysis of assessment data at whole-school level. The staff have engaged well in School Self-Evaluation (SSE), and School Improvement Plans (SIP) have been devised for the areas of numeracy and literacy. A number of initiatives have been agreed and are being implemented on a whole-school basis. It will be important to continually monitor and track the impact of initiatives on pupils' learning.

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 overall quality of teaching across the school is commendable. Teachers successfully deliver lessons which are very well structured, lively and engaging. In the parent questionnaires the overwhelming majority of parents agree that teaching is good in the school and responses demonstrate very high levels of satisfaction with the school. Pupils engage positively in lessons and the overall quality of their learning is high. The majority of pupils responded that they enjoy their lessons and learning. Teachers employ a good range of assessment modes to assess pupil progress. In the questionnaires a significant number of pupils responded that they did not know how they were doing in reading and Mathematics. Consideration should be given to the further use of assessment for learning approaches and the use of formative feedback to pupils.
- Tá teagasc agus foghlaim sa Ghaeilge ar chaighdeán ard. Baintear úsáid deas as prionnta sa timpeallacht agus sna ranganna. Tá samplaí deasa d'obair na ndaltaí ar thaispeáint. Baintear úsáid as raon leathan de mhodhanna múinte. Úsáidtear cluichí, drámaí, pictúir, cartaí agus teicneolaíocht go héifeachtach. Múintear an foclóir nua agus na frásaí go coinsiasach. Cuirtear béim oiriúnach ar an gcumas cumarsáide. Baineann na daltaí taitneamh as na ceachtanna i nGaeilge agus tá ag eirí go maith leo i nGaeilge labhartha. Bunaítear an léitheoireacht sa Ghaeilge ar na téacsleabhair agus léann an chuid is mó dena daltaí le cruinneas agus tuiscint. Toisc go bhfuil caighdeán maith bainte amach ag an chuid is mó dena daltaí i nGaeilge moltar anois úsáid a bhaint as raon níos leithne d'ábhair léitheoireachta mar shampla úrleabhair nó sliocht éagsúla ón idirlíon. Sa scríbhneoireacht obair fheidhmiúil is mó atá i gceist ach sonraítear roinnt samplaí maithe de scríbhneoireacht phearsanta.
- *Overall teaching and learning in Irish is of a high standard. Good use is made of print in the environment and nice samples of pupils' work are displayed in the classrooms. Teachers use a wide range of teaching methodologies. Games, drama, pictures, cards and technology are used effectively. New vocabulary and phrases are taught conscientiously. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the communicative approach. The pupils enjoy their lessons in Irish and they are progressing well in spoken Irish. Reading in Irish is based on the textbook in use and most of the pupils in the classes read with accuracy and understanding. Given the good standards achieved in Irish it is recommended that pupils are exposed to a broader range of reading material in Irish such as novels or extracts from the internet. Writing in Irish is mostly of a functional nature but some good examples of pupils' personal writing are in evidence.*
- The quality of teaching and learning in English is very good. There is effective teaching of oral language across the curriculum and pupils engage confidently and articulately in class discussions. A number of praiseworthy whole-school approaches to teaching various aspects of literacy has been agreed and are being implemented. The use of a structured phonics programme, graded reading schemes, class novels, guided reading initiatives and the encouragement of pupils' personal reading serve to ensure very good levels of reading competence, and successfully foster a positive attitude and love of reading among pupils. Pupils are producing writing of very good quality in an appropriate

range of genres. It will be important to continually monitor and track the impact of the agreed whole-school approaches on pupils' learning and to give formative feedback to pupils on how they are doing.

- There is high quality teaching of Mathematics in the school. Features of effective practice include clear explanation of concepts, focussed questioning and good use of technology. Teachers are making very good efforts to incorporate "mental maths" into all lessons, thus ensuring that programmes of learning include a good balance across the strands. The pupils are motivated and display high levels of interest in lessons and the overall standard of their achievement in Mathematics is high. To further enhance the learning experiences of pupils in Mathematics additional opportunities should be provided for pupil-led, active, discovery learning involving exploration and discussion of mathematical concepts and relationships.
- Praiseworthy teaching and learning in Music was evident across the school. Lessons are characterised by skilled teaching, reinforcement of musical elements and the active engagement of pupils. There is very good provision for the three strands of listening and responding, performing and composing. Pupils are afforded ample opportunities to participate in a wide range of music-making activities, identification of rhythmic patterns and responding to music. Pupils enjoy their lessons in Music. They sing very well and perform a variety of songs in various styles in Irish and in English, with and without percussion accompaniment. A number of teachers play musical instruments to accompany the pupils while engaging in song-singing.

6. Quality of Supports for Pupils

- This is an inclusive school and the quality of support for pupils is very good. The principal and school staff demonstrate commitment to the welfare of all pupils, the provision of a holistic education, and the continued improvement of their learning. Support teachers prepare carefully to meet the needs of their pupils. The overall quality of the Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Individual Pupil Learning Programme (IPLPs) is very good. In the main targets contained in the IEPs and IPLPs are specific and provision is made for regular review. There is a highly collaborative approach with very effective liaison and planning with class teachers, parents, special needs assistants (SNAs), and outside agencies, as necessary. A variety of approaches is used, including withdrawal of groups and individuals, in-class support and team teaching, as appropriate. Lessons in support settings are based on identified needs and positive teaching and learning outcomes are in evidence. Four special needs assistants (SNAs) work very well in collaboration with the class and support teachers to meet the care needs of the pupils.

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 the Inspectorate.

The Board will use the contents of the report to continue enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in Bishop Galvin NS. The Board also acknowledges the strong levels of satisfaction expressed by parents and by pupils. The Board wishes to thank the whole school community who contributed to the process and whose input over the coming years will be vital to ensure the high standards in this report are maintained and built on.

We welcome their findings with regard to the strong sense of commitment among all stakeholders to the provision of a quality education and to the creation of positive learning experiences for our pupils. We would also like to thank the Visiting team of Inspectors for their acknowledgement of the commendable quality of teaching in the school and the very high standards achieved by our pupils.

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 equally welcome the report's recommendations to build on existing good practice in the school to further enhance the learning experiences of our pupils.

The recommendation to provide pupil-led discovery learning is currently being addressed as part of our review of our School Improvement Plan in Numeracy. We have already put a programme in place to promote Logical and Critical thinking. The new Science plan, which has since been presented to and approved by the Board, will aim to "develop pupil curiosity, their capacity for observation and their analytical and problem solving skills". It will give also give opportunities to engage in pupil led discovery and learning.

Building on good practice in assessment, greater use of Assessment for Learning strategies to include Self Assessment, Conferencing and Portfolio Assessment will now be introduced on an all school basis, thus enhancing formative feedback for pupils. The introduction of S.A.L.F (Self Assessment and Learning Folders) is already being investigated as part of School Self Evaluation in Literacy.

School Self Evaluation in Literacy, which is currently in progress, will give an opportunity for parents and children to highlight areas for development. The staff will also agree ways to monitor and track the impact of agreed whole school strategies.