

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Whole School Evaluation
REPORT**

**Bishop Shanahan Junior National School
Orwell Park
Templeogue, Dublin 16
Uimhir rolla: 19658N**

Date of inspection: 21 January 2011



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

1. Introduction

Bishop Shanahan National School is a Catholic co-educational primary school catering for pupils from junior infants to second class. Attendance of the 445 pupils is very good with a small number of pupils absent for more than 20 days. 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 quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers use a range of teaching methodologies effectively and present lively, engaging and well-structured lessons. Pupils achieve high standards in English, Irish and the Visual Arts.
- The quality of the leadership provided by the principal and in-school management team is very good. They share a sense of common purpose and work very well together to achieve school improvement.
- Discipline is excellent throughout the school. The pupils present as confident and well-motivated learners. They are commended on their behaviour, application to learning and enthusiastic participation in lessons.
- The school environment is welcoming and hosts an impressive range of displays that promote and celebrate the pupils' learning.
- There is excellent management and use of resources. Information and communications technology (ICT) is particularly well used to support teaching and learning, to communicate with the wider school community, to analyse data and for administrative purposes.
- The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Commendable support is given by the board of management and parents to the school.

The following **main recommendation** is made:

- It is recommended that teachers provide a greater degree of planned differentiation in Mathematics to cater fully for the varying ability levels of pupils. The information gathered by teachers during assessment should be used to inform this process.

3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management gives commendable support to the school. Members of the board carry out their duties enthusiastically, efficiently and competently. They are actively involved in organisational and curriculum planning. The board ensures that the school building and grounds are maintained to a high standard. It communicates well with the school community.
- The quality of leadership is very good. The recently-appointed principal demonstrates a professional approach to all aspects of her work. She displays effective organisational, administrative and curriculum leadership skills. The principal and in-school management

team share a sense of common purpose and work very well together to achieve school improvement. The support provided by the ancillary staff makes a significant contribution to the effective day-to-day running of the school.

- There is excellent management and use of resources. The use of ICT is a particular strength of this school. It is used very well to support teaching and learning, to enhance communication with parents, to analyse data and for administrative purposes. The school environment hosts an impressive range of displays that promote and celebrate the pupils' learning.
- The management of pupils is excellent. There is a very positive code of behaviour which is reflected in the management of pupils by the teachers. The pupils present as confident and motivated learners. They are praised for their behaviour and their enthusiastic participation in lessons.
- There is very good communication with parents. A comprehensive policy on parental involvement is in place. The central role of parents in the education of their children is acknowledged. The school communicates effectively with parents through a wide range of channels including, the school website, newsletters, text-a-parent service, regular parent/teacher meetings and annual reports. There is a very active parents' association shared with the senior school. The association is highly supportive of the school and is involved in a wide range of school activities.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The quality of whole-school planning is very good. A coherent school plan incorporating relevant curriculum administrative and organisational policies is in place. Teachers are commended for their collaborative approach to planning. Teachers of the same year groupings meet regularly to plan their work. The quality of teachers' individual planning varies. In the best instances short-term plans include specific learning objectives and make provision for differentiation. It is recommended that this practice be extended to all teachers' planning.
- The teachers engage effectively in school self-evaluation. They meet regularly to engage in ongoing systematic review of planning and pedagogies. Classroom practice is modified in light of review findings.

Child protection policy and procedures

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 overall quality of teaching is very good. Lessons are lively, engaging and well structured. Teachers use a range of pedagogies effectively, including whole-class, collaborative group and pair work and independent work. ICT is very well integrated into

lessons with pupils afforded ample opportunities to use the school's extensive ICT resources to support their learning. The quality of the pupils' learning is very good. Their participation in lessons is excellent. They present as motivated and enthusiastic learners and achieve very good standards in a number of curriculum areas. Teachers employ a good range of assessment modes including checklists, teacher tests, samples of work and portfolios. There is very good analysis of data at whole-school level. In the parent questionnaires 99% of parents responded that they were happy with their children's progress in school.

- Tá caighdeán an-mhaith ann i leith foghlaim agus múineadh na Gaeilge. Baineann na múinteoirí úsáid as raon leathan de mhodhanna múinte chun na daltaí a mhealladh chun cainte. Úsáidtear cluichí, drámaí, pictiúir agus teicneolaíocht go héifeachtach i ngach rang. Múintear an foclóir nua agus na frásaí go coinsiasach. Cuirtear béim chuí ar an gcur chuige cumarsáide. Baineann na daltaí taitneamh as na ceachtanna agus tá ag eirí go han-mhaith leo i nGaeilge labhartha. Tá an chuid is mó de na daltaí i ngach rang ábalta ceisteanna a fhreagairt agus a chur i nGaeilge. Tá na daltaí i ranganna a haon agus a dó ábalta abairtí simplí a léamh le tuiscint agus tascanna a bhaineann le tús na scríbhneoireachta a chríochniú i gceart.

There is a very good standard in the teaching and learning of Irish. Teachers use a wide range of teaching methodologies to encourage the children to speak. Games, drama, pictures and technology are used effectively in every class. The 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 very well in spoken Irish. Most of the pupils in each class are able to ask and answer questions. The pupils in first and second classes can read simple sentences with understanding and are able to ably complete early-writing tasks.

- The quality of teaching and learning in English is very good. The teaching of oral language is effective across the curriculum and pupils engage confidently and articulately in class discussions. Poetry is well taught. The staff is commended on their approach to the teaching of reading. Teachers use a wide range of strategies including the use of picture cues and the systematic teaching of sight vocabulary and phonics to successfully develop the pupils' reading skills. Pupils are provided with ample opportunities to engage in guided, shared and independent reading. They produce writing of very good quality in an appropriate range of genres. Good emphasis is placed on independent writing. The standard of handwriting is very good.
- Overall, teaching in Mathematics is satisfactory. Features of effective practice include very good use of manipulatives, clear explanation and demonstration, well-organised station-teaching, judicious use of the interactive white board and maths games. Teachers are making very good efforts to incorporate mental maths into all lessons. To maximise the impact of this intervention the approaches to mental maths in use in some classes should be reviewed. More regular assessment of the pupils' understanding of concepts by teachers in all classes is recommended. The outcomes of these assessments should be used to inform differentiated learning activities for groups and individuals. The quality of pupils' work in copies is very good and is regularly corrected.
- The standard of teaching and learning in the Visual Arts is high. A broad and balanced programme is provided. The pupils' work is valued and displayed very attractively throughout the school and on the school website. Very good provision is made for looking and responding to pupils' work and the work of famous artists. Lessons are well linked with other curriculum areas. Very good attention is paid to the monitoring of continuity and progression in the various strands. Each pupil has an individual drawing profile and pupil portfolio which is added to as they progress through the school. This practice is

commended. In the questionnaires parents responded very positively to the teaching of the Visual Arts in the school.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. There is a variety of approaches used including withdrawal in groups and individually, early intervention and in-class support. Individual pupil learning programmes (IPLPs) and individual education programmes (IEPs) are of very good quality. There is a highly collaborative approach to their development involving class teachers, parents, special needs assistants and other agencies. Specific and achievable targets are set and are reviewed regularly. Lessons are very well structured and tailored to the pupils' needs.
- A small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) are enrolled in the school. These pupils have access to part-time teaching support. A policy for EAL pupils has been developed. The planned use of the *Primary School Assessment Kit* will assist the development of programmes for these pupils.

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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 wishes to thank the Inspectors of the Department of Education & Skills on their very thorough assessment of Bishop Shanahan National School.

We have always strived for a school environment which is a happy place for learning all our children and where those children with particular needs find a high level of support.

It is gratifying to find that an independent review of our school community confirms that it is well regarded by parents and staff and functions to a high standard.

As the Board of Management, we have received support from our parish and community in maintaining the fabric of the school as well as endeavouring to increase resources for teaching.

The leadership of the school, both past and present, has been of a consistently high standard, constantly aiming to improve teaching methods and involvement of parents. This has resulted in high professional standards in a welcoming and nurturing school environment.