

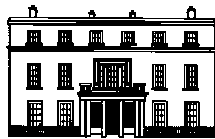
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation  
REPORT**

**St. Ronan's National School  
Deansrath, Clondalkin, Dublin 22  
Uimhir rolla: 19707A**

**Date of inspection: 01 October 2012**



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

## 1. Introduction

St. Ronan's NS is a vertical, co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. It receives additional funding through its participation in Band 1 of DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools). The school serves a diverse population. 59% of pupils do not have English as their first language and 8% are members of the Travelling Community. Attendance levels for the majority of the 443 pupils on rolls are very good. Notwithstanding that, the number of pupils who miss more than 20 days each year is cause for concern. The school implements a wide range of strategies to promote attendance and punctuality. The school has achieved its second Green Flag. During the evaluation inspectors evaluated twelve mainstream settings and five special education settings. The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

## 2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations for Further Development

The following are the **main strengths** of the work of the school:

- The standard of school management and leadership, as exemplified by the principal, the in-school management team and the board of management, is very high.
- The teachers are skilful professionals; they are dedicated to school improvement and communicate high expectations to their pupils.
- The quality of supports and interventions for pupils is excellent.
- The processes of school planning and school self-evaluation are very effective.
- This inclusive, welcoming school manages its relations and communications with the community very successfully and provides praiseworthy pastoral care to all pupils.
- Teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Drama are highly commendable.
- A whole-school approach to the promotion of positive discipline is implemented successfully and the pupils display exemplary behaviour at all times.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- The explicit teaching and development of specific reading skills during English lessons and across curricular areas is recommended.
- In Mathematics, teachers should place more emphasis on developing the pupils' reasoning skills and on enabling them to solve everyday problems across all strands.
- The teachers should extend the approaches to assessment and ensure that the outcomes of assessment closely inform their intended learning objectives.

### **3. Quality of School Management**

- The work of the board of management is very effective. Board members, representative of the multicultural community, carry out all of their management duties to a high standard and they are very visible in school life.
- The principal provides excellent leadership. He has an extensive knowledge of pedagogy which informs his work as an effective leader and administrator. He is deeply committed to raising standards for all pupils and to meeting their pastoral care needs. His vision is shared by the deputy principal and the in-school management team who carry out their duties very effectively. The principal empowers all staff to take an active role in school improvement through his distributive leadership style.
- The management of resources is very good. This is evident in the accessibility and use by teachers of a wide range of resources, including ICT and the school library, to support and enhance the pupils' learning. The school is very well maintained and there are stimulating displays in classrooms and school corridors. Personnel are very well managed and all ancillary staff carry out their duties effectively and with dedication.
- The management of relations and communications with the community is highly commendable. Very effective communications are facilitated by the school website, newsletters, meetings, the parents' room, school reports and the school journal. Parents are enabled to participate in school life through the excellent work of the coordinator for home-school-community-liaison (HSCL). Parents give very good support to the school. Their views and concerns are sought and acted upon. In the Inspectorate survey, almost all parents agree it is a good school, and that it is welcoming and well run. The school has nurtured close links with local schools.
- The management of pupils is excellent. The school successfully implements a consistent approach to positive discipline. Staff members ensure that the pupils' application, efforts and achievements are celebrated. The pupils' behaviour is exemplary. In the survey, all pupils agree that teachers explain things clearly and almost all agree that they enjoy their lessons and learning.

### **4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation**

- The quality of the school planning and school self-evaluation process is very high. This collaborative, consultative process, led by the principal, and coordinated by committee leaders, is focused on school improvement. Organisational and curriculum planning overall are very good. The school engages in effective strategic planning. The current three-year DEIS action plan reflects the school's skilful engagement with evidence gathering, data analysis, target setting, programme implementation and review.
- Overall the quality of teachers' individual planning is commendable.
- 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 and learning in the lessons observed is good. Lessons are well structured and engaging. The teachers use appropriate methodologies and resources. There is good emphasis on language development. Where teaching was particularly effective, the content of lessons was based on an analysis of the pupils' work and assessment outcomes. This should be extended and in addition, all teachers should share the learning objectives of lessons with pupils. There are very good levels of participation, cooperative work and sustained application by pupils overall. The school is acutely aware of the challenges regarding the raising of the pupils' achievement levels. Through its well-coordinated actions it is making steady improvements in literacy and numeracy standards in recent years.
- Overall, assessment practices are very good. A range of diagnostic, screening and formative assessments is used to identify the pupils' learning needs and to track their progress. The extended use of criterion-referenced checklists, rubrics and portfolios is recommended. Assessment for learning (AfL) tools should also be agreed and utilised more widely by teachers. Comprehensive monthly records of general progress are compiled and shared. The teachers carefully monitor and correct their pupils' written work and provide feedback for improvement.
- Baineann caighdeán cuí le teagasc agus le foghlaim na Gaeilge. Cothaíonn na hoidí dearcadh dearfach i leith an teanga. Baineann siad úsáid mhaith as áiseanna spreagúla agus as dánta, cluichí agus rainn i rith na gceachtanna. Cruthaítear timpeallacht saibhir i bprionta. Cé go gcuireann na hoidí béim chuí ar obair bheirte, ba chóir achar níos faide a chaitheamh ar mhúineadh na n-eiseamláirí nua. Ba chóir freisin, tuilleadh deiseanna a sholáthar do na daltaí an teanga nuafhoghlamtha a úsáid i gcomhthéacsanna éagsúla chun máistreacht a fháil air. Déantar iarracht chreidíunach nasc a chruthú idir an obair ó bhéal agus tascanna léitheoireachta agus scríbhneoireachta cruthaithí agus tá caighdeán cuí bainte amach ag na daltaí sa dá snáithe seo.
- There is fully appropriate provision for the teaching and learning of Irish. The teachers promote positive attitudes towards the language. They use stimulating resources and employ poems, games and rhymes during lessons. A print-rich environment for Irish is established. While teachers place suitable emphasis on pair work, more time should be spent on the explicit teaching of new language exemplars. More opportunities should be provided for pupils to use their newly-learned language in a variety of contexts in order to gain mastery of them. Good work is evident in linking oral language to both reading and creative writing tasks and appropriate standards are achieved in both strands by pupils.
- The teaching of English is good. Teachers capably promote the development of the pupils' oral language skills. The effective pre-teaching of key vocabulary and phrases during lessons was observed and should be extended. Overall, the pupils are confident, eager communicators. There is competent teaching of early-reading skills. All reading material is carefully graded to match the pupils' abilities. Notwithstanding this, reading levels overall have scope for improvement. The explicit teaching and development of discrete reading skills across all curricular areas, as well as during English lessons, is recommended. There is appropriate teaching of spellings and grammar. The pupils write with growing competence in a range of genres and they edit and redraft their work. The use of portfolios should be considered as the pupils engage in self- and peer-assessment of their chosen work.
- The quality of teaching in Mathematics is good. There is explicit teaching of key vocabulary, teacher-modelling and the use of very good resources. As learning outcomes overall are a matter of concern, the school has put a range of strategies in place. These include early-intervention in the junior classes, involving the team-teaching of core

concepts and skills, based on the assessed learning needs of pupils. Consideration should be given to extending the use of these specific methodologies across all classes with regard to challenging mathematical concepts. Overall, the teachers should focus more on developing the pupils' reasoning skills and on enabling them to solve everyday problems across all strands. Greater links between the outcomes of formative assessment and the setting out of teachers' intended learning objectives is advised.

- Teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Drama are highly commendable. Through consistent engagement with story, poetry, hot seating, role-play and games, the pupils are enabled to enter into fictional scenarios with trust, assurance and skill. They are guided to explore feelings, develop empathy, and reflect on the world around them. Teachers ensure that all elements of the drama curriculum are well taught. The pupils engage in drama-in-education activities as well as school productions.

## **6. Quality of Support for Pupils**

- The quality of supports for pupils with special educational needs, including language needs, is excellent. This highly-skilled, dedicated team ensure that the variety of models provided are carefully planned and very well coordinated. Team members make very good use of assessment data to plan their supports and to track the pupils' progress. Detailed individual and group education plans are compiled. These comprise focused, time-bound learning targets and appropriate methodologies. Dynamic teaching and high expectations are the hallmarks of these supports.
- A significant strength of the school is the quality of the pastoral care it provides to pupils. This support complements the praiseworthy work underway by the Salesian Society and the Holy Ghost Fathers within the community.
- This inclusive school values and celebrates the diversity and multiculturalism of its pupils. In tandem with the work of the HSCL coordinator and school completion programme, the school ensures that all pupils can fully participate in school life. Among the strategies in place are the buddy system and book rental scheme as well as homework supports and language classes for parents. The school also provides breakfast and homework clubs, counselling, support and therapy services, Green-School activities, pupil-transfer programmes and cultural events. It is noteworthy that the school has achieved sporting excellence in table tennis.

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