

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Whole School Evaluation
REPORT**

**Glasnevin Educate Together NS
Glasnevin, Dublin 9
Roll number: 20168D**

Date of inspection: 18 January 2013



**A N R O I N N | D E P A R T M E N T O F
O I D E A C H A I S | E D U C A T I O N
A G U S S C I L E A N N A | A N D S K I L L S**

1. Introduction

Glasnevin Educate Together NS is a co-educational primary school serving Glasnevin and surrounding areas in Dublin city. The school is under the patronage of Educate Together and there are currently 231 pupils enrolled. In addition to the mainstream classes, there is a special class for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). There is scope for pupil attendance levels to improve and the board of management is urged to build on existing practices that promote attendance to achieve this. During this whole-school evaluation, provision for Irish, English, Mathematics and History 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:

- The board of management, the school principal, the teachers and the parents' association demonstrate a shared commitment to the development of Glasnevin Educate Together NS as a place of rich learning experiences.
- A very considered and worthwhile approach has been taken by the teachers, under the effective leadership of the principal, to develop teaching and learning in both English and Mathematics.
- The majority of lessons observed during the evaluation had clearly identified objectives and were appropriately structured. In many instances, teacher questioning of pupils was particularly skilful, contributing to very good quality learning for pupils.
- Attainment levels for pupils in Mathematics and History are of a very good standard.
- The quality of support for pupils is very good. Inclusion is very effectively achieved, lessons are very well structured and learning outcomes are very good.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Chun tabhairt faoin nGaeilge a fhorbairt, moltar an t-ábharfoghlama a sholéiriú a thuilleadh sa phlean scoile mar bhunús do chúrsaí phleanála agus cúrsaí meastóireachta na n-oidí. *In order to contribute to the development of Irish, it is advised that learning content be specified more clearly in the school plan as a basis for teacher planning and assessment.*
- In some classes, short-term planning should provide greater detail with regard to how the range of pupil ability levels will be addressed, particularly in terms of learning objectives and anticipated learning outcomes.
- In some classes, there is a need to improve the standard of presentation of pupils' written work with attention to penmanship, spelling and writing conventions.
- It is advised that in-class support and team-teaching should be further developed as part of the early intervention programme.

3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management undertakes its work efficiently and effectively according to required Department of Education and Skills procedures and protocols. At the present time, the board does not review overall trends in standardised testing in Mathematics and English reading. Therefore, it is suggested that pupil attainment in standardised testing is reviewed by the board on a periodical basis.
- The leadership of the principal is very effective. It is characterised by a clear sense of purpose and a commitment to providing pupils with good-quality learning experiences where all pupils are valued. A committed and enthusiastic in-school management team is in place and good school structures facilitate its effective functioning. It is commendable practice that post-holders have assumed a leadership role in curriculum planning and that this is having a clear impact in classrooms.
- The school makes efficient and effective use of its existing building to provide the pupils with a safe, clean and stimulating learning environment. The school garden is particularly commendable for its use of space and its learning potential.
- Teachers are successful in creating a positive and ordered learning environment for pupils.
- In a meeting with the inspector conducted as part of the whole-school evaluation, members of the parents' association expressed their satisfaction with the quality of home-school communication. A concern was expressed with regard to the date that end-of-year reports are issued and at the post-evaluation meeting with the inspectors, it was suggested by the board that these reports would issue mid-June so that there would be an opportunity for parents who wish to discuss their child's report with their child's teacher to do so. A questionnaire completed by parents as part of the whole-school evaluation process indicates strong levels of satisfaction with the quality of education being provided in the school. However, a significant minority of parents reported that they were not certain as to the school's provision for Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE).

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- While organisational policies are written clearly and are effective in relating to the context of the school, the Irish curriculum plan is too general to be of significant guidance to teachers. To improve this plan, the school is advised to focus more on delineating desired learning outcomes and on documenting decisions made by the school which are particular to Glasnevin Educate Together NS in its implementation of the curriculum.
- The school has adopted a very effective action planning approach to facilitate the development of English and Mathematics. There is also evidence of a worthwhile beginning to self-evaluation as a means of progressing pupils' learning.
- Overall, the quality of teachers' short-term planning is good with some of very good quality. In some very few instances, classroom planning needs to substantially improve with much greater detail required regarding learning objectives. There are some instances where the provision for the teaching of English reading could be improved through focusing on specific reading skills to ensure that these are taught in a systematic and progressive manner. There are very good examples of meaningful integration across a number of curriculum areas enriching the learning experience for pupils.

- 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

- Ar an iomlán, is gá don scoil tabhairt faoin nGaeilge a fhorbairt. Tá cuspóirí agus struchtúr cinnte agus oiriúnach ag baint le cuid mhaith de na ceachtanna agus tá stór focal agus abairtí cuí leathan ar eolas ag cuid mhaith de na daltaí. Tá scileanna éisteachta agus tuisceana na n-daltaí forbartha go breá. Cé go bhfuil meon dearfach ag na daltaí i leith na Gaeilge, baineann easpa cruinnis le scileanna labhartha roinnt daltaí cumasacha agus níl sé seo sásúil. Ó thaobh na léitheoireachta de, is léir go bhfuil cleachtadh sa bhreis ag teastáil ó roinnt daltaí. B'fhiú tabhairt faoi struchtúr comónta a chur i bhfeidhm do cheachtanna léitheoireachta. Ó thaobh na scríbhneoireachta sna meánranganna agus na hardranganna moltar córas céimnithe a chur ar siúl maidir le múineadh an litrithe. Chun tabhairt faoi na forbairtí seo, moltar an t-ábhar foghlama a sholéiriú a thuilleadh sa phlean scoile mar bhunús do chúrsaí pleanála agus cúrsaí meastóireachta na n-oidí. Bheadh scrúduithe caighdeánacha cabhrach anseo freisin. *Overall, there is a need for Irish to be developed within the school. There are clear objectives and a clear structure to most lessons and pupils have a good range of vocabulary and sentences at their disposal. Listening and understanding skills are developed well. While pupils have a positive attitude to Irish, there is a lack of accuracy in the speaking of some able pupils and that is not satisfactory. With regard to reading, it is clear that further practice is required by some pupils. It would also be worthwhile for a common structure of reading lesson to be implemented. With regard to writing in the middle and senior classes, it is advised that a structured system should be put in place for the teaching of spelling. To progress Irish generally, it is recommended that a greater emphasis be placed on clarifying learning content in the school plan as a basis for teacher planning and assessment. The use of standardised tests for Irish would also be helpful in this regard.*
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is good. In oral language development, pupils demonstrate a very good ability to express themselves fluently and confidently. The quality of pupils' attainment levels in reading is good. As pupils progress through the school, the majority either maintain or improve their achievement level in their annual standardised test scores. There are less pupils scoring highly in standardised testing in the senior classes than in the middle and junior classes. To remedy this, there is a need for very focused teaching of reading skills. There is evidence of good progress in writing skills as pupils move on through the school and more able pupils are producing work of very good quality. The quality of work from less able pupils will be improved by teachers focusing more systematically on specific skill development, monitoring work carefully and ensuring that pupils incorporate what they have learned from previous writing activities into their current writing. In some classes, the majority of pupils do not present their work neatly and with due regard to punctuation and presentation conventions. This needs to be addressed by teachers. The school has developed a very worthwhile plan for the development of pupils' spelling skills. There is a need to pay explicit attention in this plan to words pupils are likely to use in their writing and to words they frequently spell incorrectly.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is very good. The mathematics curriculum is taught in a broad and balanced manner. A strong emphasis is placed on practical Mathematics, activity learning and problem solving. In most lessons observed during the evaluation, there were clear objectives and teacher questioning was very effective in helping pupils to conceptualise their learning. In general, the

development of pupils' understanding and application of mathematical language is skilfully undertaken. Overall, pupil attainment levels are very good and the majority of pupils maintain or improve on their level of attainment as they progress through the school. Ensuring that there is specific provision in teachers' planning for systematic revision and consolidation of concepts will enhance learning for pupils who are at an average level of attainment in Mathematics. There are some commendable examples of teachers making good provision for more able pupils. This type of provision should characterise all mathematics lessons.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in History is very good. A variety of resources and teaching approaches are used to provide pupils with a broad range of interesting learning experiences. During the evaluation, pupils demonstrated a good knowledge of a range of topics from the curriculum together with a good awareness of concepts such as change and continuity. There are some very worthwhile examples of History being integrated with English which adds richness to the pupils' learning, particularly in terms of the human dimension to History.
- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in the majority of instances ranges between good and very good. Lessons have clear objectives and a clear structure. Teacher questioning of pupils is particularly effective. There is a richness in the range of learning experiences and activities which the school provides for pupils. *Aistear*, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework is being implemented very effectively in the infant classrooms. In some cases teachers need to make better provision for more able pupils in Mathematics. Continuity and progression in pupils' learning in Irish will be enhanced by a clearer understanding of the expected level of attainment at each class level.
- The quality of assessment is good. Suitable screening and standardised tests are used in literacy and numeracy. Assessment of learning in many classrooms is comprehensive. Effective assessment for learning strategies observed in some classrooms should be used on a whole-school basis. In a questionnaire completed by the pupils from third to sixth class as part of the whole-school evaluation and which poses questions within the three broad areas of learning, welfare and safety, the majority of pupils record positive responses to all questions. In some instances though, for example their progress in Mathematics, there is a large minority of pupils expressing a lack of certainty in their responses and this would be worth discussing with pupils generally.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- The quality of support for pupils is very good. There is a very strong sense of support teachers and classroom teachers working collaboratively. The professional expertise among the four support teachers is commendable. While all are based in the school each teacher is also deployed in another local school. This is challenging in terms of the co-ordination of classroom teaching and support teaching. It is recommended that the deployment of the support teachers is reviewed with a view to at least one experienced member of the team working fully in the school.
- Support is provided primarily on a withdrawal basis to small groups of pupils. Support sessions are conducted in a very affirming, structured manner and learning outcomes are very good. It is advised that in-class support and team-teaching should be further developed as part of the early intervention programme.
- Pupils' records in all support settings are comprehensive and detailed. Individualised plans for pupils with additional needs are formulated in consultation with class teachers and parents. Using common templates for individualised plans would be beneficial. In

some cases the voice of the pupil is garnered as part of the planning process. This very good practice should be adopted by all support teachers.

- There is a clear commitment to meeting with parents as individualised plans are drawn up and reviewed. Consideration should be given to the practical involvement of parents by agreeing home tasks. Some additional mid-term opportunities to meet with parents should be organised to discuss pupils' progress in relation to targets set.
- A special class in the school provides a very supportive learning environment for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Teacher-pupil interactions are warm and affirming and classrooms routines are well managed and reinforced by pictorial timetables. An effective balance between collaborative work and one-to-one personalised tuition is supportive of the pupils' learning needs. Appropriate emphasis is placed on exploiting potential for integration with mainstream classes. In developing provision further it is recommended that home-school communication booklets are developed and plans for inclusion are documented in pupils' profiles. Behavioural plans should be drawn up as necessary.

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 report of the Inspectorate and wishes to thank them for the supportive and professional manner in which they carried out the Whole School Evaluation.

We are delighted that Glasnevin Educate Together National School has been recognised as a place of rich learning experiences.

Two teachers have been appointed as Link Teachers in Literacy and Numeracy. They have been attending Continuous Professional Development seminars in their Curriculum areas. Although, not part of the In School Management Team, these two teachers are instrumental in progressing our on-going School Self Evaluation and bringing about change through the peer supports they have provided to the whole staff.

The Board also appreciates the affirmation received in the report in the following areas:

1. The very good quality learning for pupils.
2. The very considered and worthwhile approach taken by the teachers, under the effective leadership of the principal, to develop teaching and learning in both English and Mathematics.
3. The very good attainment levels for pupils in Mathematics and History.
4. The very good quality of support for pupils. The effective achievement of Inclusion. The very good learning outcomes as a result of very well structured lessons.

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 Board of Management welcomes the recommendations made in the report and is pleased to state that the implementation of all these recommendations has commenced.

1. The learning content will be specified more clearly in the Gaeilge Plan. The Revised Language Curriculum from the NCCA will also be taken into consideration in future planning of our Gaeilge Plan.
2. In class support has been further developed and team teaching will commence in the first term.
3. One Learning Support Teacher is now permanently based in the school.