

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation  
REPORT**

**Saint Paul's Boys' National School,  
Lisduggan, Waterford  
Uimhir rolla: 20219R**

**Date of inspection: 19 April 2013**



## 1. Introduction

St. Paul's BNS is an all boys, vertical school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Waterford and Lismore. The school participates in the Department's *Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools* (DEIS) programme and also receives support through the *School Completion Programme* (SCP). There are 241 pupils enrolled in the school and the attendance of most pupils is very good. The school is commended for the strategies it has introduced to successfully improve attendance levels. 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 school is characterised by its positive school climate and co-operative working relationships are in evidence across the school community.
- The highly supportive and competent board of management provides effective governance to the school.
- The parents' association are strongly committed to supporting the work of the school and parents participate meaningfully in a range of pertinent school activities.
- The principal and the teaching staff are commended for their dedication to the school and the welfare of the pupils.
- The quality of teaching and learning is commendable.
- During the evaluation pupils' behaviour and their participation in learning were very good.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- Sa Ghaeilge, ní mór clár céimnithe a chur i bhfeidhm chun a chinntiú go bhfuil forbairt chórasach ag teacht ar an ábhar teanga atá á mhúineadh ó rang go rang. In Irish, a systematic programme should be implemented, to ensure that the language content being taught is progressive from class to class.
- It is advised that the school further develop the continuum of support for pupils with additional needs, including the utilisation of classroom support plans

## 3. Quality of School Management

- The highly supportive and competent board of management provides effective governance to the school. Positive and productive relationships exist between the board, school staff, parents and the wider community.

- The principal displays very good organisational and management skills. She is supportive of the staff, welcoming of parents and fosters a caring and positive school climate. The members of the in-school management team (ISMT) undertake their assigned duties with considerable commitment. The duties reflect the current priorities of the school.
- The impressive school building provides a stimulating and aesthetically-pleasing learning environment. The school is equipped to a high standard with a broad range of resources to enhance teaching and learning.
- The special needs assistants carry out their roles capably and with dedication. All ancillary staff, including the school secretary, the caretaker, the lunch-time assistant and cleaning staff, carry out their work professionally and with competence.
- The management of relationships and communication with the school community is of a high quality. Parents participate meaningfully in a range of pertinent school activities that support the pupils' learning. The school has a very committed parents' association who undertake a wide range of fundraising duties. In the parent questionnaires, almost all parents affirm that the school is welcoming of them and that they are happy with the school.
- The home-school community coordinator (HSCL) in collaboration with parents, the principal and teachers, succeeds in developing a positive supportive structure between the home and the school.
- The management of pupils is effective. During the evaluation pupils' behaviour and their participation in learning was very good. The pupils participate in a range of activities that support their holistic development. These include sporting activities, school assemblies, buddy-systems and the school garden. The school has also initiated a range of after-school curricular and non-curricular programmes. In the pupil questionnaires, most pupils report that they consider that this is a good school. All pupils report that they feel safe in their classrooms.

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

- The overall quality of the school planning and school self-evaluation is good. School management is committed to the development and review of whole-school policies and plans. A range of organisational and curriculum plans support the work of the school.
- School self-evaluation is well established in the school through its participation in the DEIS programme. More recently the school has undertaken the review of numeracy and following this review the school has identified and targeted elements of its work that can be further developed.
- The quality of classroom planning is generally good. Where this planning is particularly effective, it focuses primarily on learning objectives and learning outcomes. Progress records are maintained dutifully.
- 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 is commendable. Suitable teaching strategies and methodologies are successfully employed to maximise pupil participation. Classrooms provide stimulating environments that are rich in print and number. Samples of pupils' work are attractively displayed. The atmosphere in classrooms is positive and interactions between teachers and pupils are encouraging and supportive. It is advised that the value of some textbooks be examined, in the context of their appropriateness in meeting the needs of all pupils. It is worth noting, that in the questionnaire responses, all parents report that teaching in the school is good.
- Pupil attainment is regularly assessed through a combination of formal and informal assessment strategies. It is evident that there is a broad range of needs within each classroom setting. It is therefore advised that the school further develop the continuum of support for pupils with additional needs, including the utilisation of classroom support plans.
- Ar an iomlán, tá teagasc agus foghlaim na Gaeilge ar chaighdeán maith. Déanann na hoidí iarracht dáiríre dearcadh dearfach i leith na Gaeilge a chothú trí úsáid a bhaint as modhanna múinte gníomhacha ina n-áirítear cluichí, drámaíocht agus ceol. Chun gnóthachtáil na ndaltaí a fheabhsú a thuilleadh, ní mór clár céimnithe a chur i bhfeidhm chun a chinntiú go bhfuil forbairt chórasach ag teacht ar an ábhar teanga atá á mhúineadh ó rang go rang. Léann cuid mhaith de na daltaí le cruinneas agus le líofacht oiriúnach. Cleachtar scríbhneoireacht fheidhmiúil don chuid is mó agus tugtar roinnt deiseanna oiriúnacha dóibh scríbhneoireacht phearsanta a chumadh.
- *In general, teaching and learning in Irish is of a good standard. The teachers make a genuine effort to cultivate a positive attitude to Irish through the use of active teaching approaches including games, drama and music. In order to further improve the pupils' achievements a systematic programme should be implemented to ensure that the language content being taught is progressive from class to class. Many of the pupils read with appropriate accuracy and fluency. In the main, the pupils practice functional writing tasks with some opportunities for engagement in personal writing activities.*
- The quality of teaching and learning in English is good. Teachers create appropriate contexts to develop pupils' oral language skills. Admirable attention is placed on promoting the pupils' reading skills. Most pupils reported that they were doing well at reading. However, it is advised that all pupils engage in reading activities that are at an appropriate instructional level. Writing genres are addressed systematically throughout the school and the quality of the pupils' written work is of a commendable quality.
- Effective teaching and learning of Mathematics is in evidence in the school. In the main, pupils display good understanding of content previously taught and the majority of pupils' surveyed report that they are achieving well. Teachers explain the content of lessons clearly and use 'hands on' practical resources. Initiatives to further improve attainment in Mathematics, including the introduction of *Maths for Fun*, are welcomed. It is advised that whole school approaches to mental Mathematics be implemented.
- Teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Music is of a very high standard. A broad and balanced curriculum is delivered to the pupils and includes listening and responding to music, the development of musical literacy and the performing of songs. External tutors, supported by the SCP and DEIS grant provide violin and guitar tuition and choir and music workshops. The pupils participate in liturgical ceremonies and school events and these serve to enhance their overall musical experience.

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

- Effective practice is evident in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Valuable initiatives including *Maths Recovery*, *Reading Recovery* and *Literacy Lift Off* are implemented successfully. The team are also praised for their implementation of team teaching initiatives. It is advised that greater attention be paid to the planning for these activities, to ensure that they maximise the learning opportunities for the pupils.
- In support settings, lessons are well structured and supportive learning environments are created. Affirming pupil-teacher interactions and positive pupil engagement levels are in evidence.