

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Whole School Evaluation
REPORT**

**Gaelscoil Bhaile Brigín
Balbriggan, Co. Dublin
Roll number: 20252P**

Date of inspection: 6 October 2011



**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

Gaelscoil Bhaile Brigín is an all Irish school which was established in 2006 under the patronage of Foras Pátrúnachta na Scoileanna LánGhaeilge Teo. The majority of pupils are from families in the area and although few children are reared through the medium of Irish, there is great support for Irish and for Irish medium education. There are 292 pupils enrolled in the school. The pupils' attendance is satisfactory. 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:

- It is clear from the atmosphere in the school that a great emphasis is placed on pupils' overall development and on the development of Irish and that the whole school community are working together to achieve this.
- A good home-school relationship was evident.
- Teaching was carried out in an assertive manner.
- A good start has been made to in-class teaching as a support for pupils with special educational needs.
- The pupils are managed well. A pupils' committee and a green committee are in operation in the school and these greatly add to pupils' participation in the life of the school.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- It is recommended that strategies be implemented to raise the written standard of Irish.
- Good teaching with great participation was observed in Mathematics. However, more attention should be paid to the range of pupils' levels which exist and provision should be made for these in every lesson.
- The results of the standardised tests should be recorded in the school in order to easily track individual pupils' attainment over the years.

3. Quality of School Management

- The Board of Management operates under the rules set out by the Department of Education and Skills. The members work conscientiously so as to ensure the provision of a broad and effective education.
- The principal is effective in running and managing the school and in creating a positive atmosphere.
- The posts of responsibility are assigned appropriately. The practice established in the school of reviewing the duties and then matching those duties to the priorities and needs of the school should be developed.
- The conduct of pupils is of a high standard and the pupils have respect for each other and for the school environment. Their levels of confidence and self-respect contribute positively to the quality of life in the school.
- There is effective management of relationships and communication with the school community. Information sessions about curricular approaches are provided by the school staff to parents. This is good practice. The opinions of parents are welcome when developing school policies. Representatives from the parents' committee indicated that the school is to be especially commended for the standard of help and welcome given to all pupils.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- Planning is carried out appropriately on a cooperative whole school basis and is of a good standard. Self-evaluation is also undertaken and the school has set out a plan to implement priorities.
- Teachers' planning is good. In short term planning it is recommended that more comprehensive provision be made for the differences in pupils' levels of ability. As a means of further improvement for monthly reports, it is recommended that a school template be developed which would indicate the work carried out on the strands and strand units of the curriculum and would emphasise the skills and concepts learned by pupils.
- The school authorities provided assurance that the board of management has formally adopted the Procedures regarding Child Protection in Primary and Post Primary Schools, without change or amendment and that school practice is in line with the requirements of Child Protection in Primary and Post Primary Schools.

5. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Achievement

- The pupils have good communicative ability in Irish. There is a progressive and comprehensive programme being taught in the school in accordance with good principles of immersion education. Vocabulary is clearly taught and pupils' aural skills are

satisfactorily developed. Reading groups should be established to enable the pupils to read at their own levels. Students read accurately in accordance with their own ability and they have a satisfactory understanding of what they read. Functional writing is acquired mainly in the junior and intermediate classes. Although most pupils are able to structure sentences correctly, there is a lack of accuracy evident in some of the writing. Satisfactory monitoring has been done on pupils' written work but it would be worth placing more emphasis on neatness and on improving the layout of copybooks. Overall, it is recommended that strategies be implemented to raise the written standard of Irish.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English is generally good. Oral language activities are appropriately challenging while the potential for oral language development through other curriculum and school activities is readily realised. In the infant and junior classes, reading skills are taught effectively through a systematic programme of phonological awareness and whole word sight vocabulary development together with discussion and the development of comprehension skills. Throughout the school, the majority of pupils are attaining a good standard of reading in terms of fluency and understanding with a significant number of these pupils attaining a very good standard. More focused development of reading skills as the pupils proceed through the school will enhance the teaching of reading generally. A structured, individualised reading programme is effective in providing for the needs of weaker readers. The school should develop pupils' independent writing skills through more focused and systematic teaching of these skills including spelling and sentence structure. A co-ordinated approach for the development of penmanship is also required. Pupils' written work should be neater.
- *Tá cáilíocht an teagaisc, na foghlama agus dul chun cinn na ndaltaí sa Bhéarla go maith ar an iomlán. Tá dúshlán cuí ag baint le gníomhaíochtaí labhartha agus eiríonn go héasca leis an scoil teanga ó bhéal a fhorbairt trí achair eile den churaclam agus gníomhaíochtaí scoile eile. Sna ranganna naíonán agus sóisearacha múintear scileanna na léitheoireachta go héifeachtach trí chlár sistéamach san fheasacht fhóneolaíoch agus stór focal súilaithe a úsáid mar aon le cómhra agus forbairt ar na scileanna tuisceana. Tríd an scoil tá fórmhor na ndaltaí ag léamh ar chaighdeán maith ó thaobh líofachta agus tuisceana de agus tá líon suntasach de na daltaí seo ar ard-chaighdeán. Le béim sa bhreis ar fhorbairt scileanna na leitheoireachta agus na daltaí ag dul ar aghaidh sa scoil, tiocfaidh feabhas ar mhúineadh na leitheoireachta go ginearálta. Déantar soláthar éifeachtach ar riachtanais na ndaltaí atá ar cháilíocht níos laige sa léitheoireacht trí chlár sistéamach pearsanta a úsáid. B'fhiú don scoil scileanna scríbhneoireachta neamhspleácha na ndaltaí a fhorbairt trí mhúineadh níos córasaí na scileanna seo, an litriú agus déanamh abairtí ina measc. Tá cur chuige comhordaithe chun scileanna peannaireachta a fhorbairt de dhíth chomh maith. Ba chóir go mbeadh léiriú níos slachtmhaire ar obair scríofa na ndaltaí.*
- The majority of pupils have achieved a good standard of Mathematics. Most pupils demonstrated a definite understanding of appropriate concepts. Mathematical terms are taught in a structured manner. There is beneficial discussion in all classes to consolidate understanding of concepts. In order to ensure that pupils are succeeding in Mathematics, it is recommended that an extra analysis be carried out on pupils' progress during the year and on the results of standardised tests. It is also recommended that the ability of all students be taken into consideration in the preparation of short term planning in order to ensure that work is suitable of pupils at every level of ability.
- A good standard is evident in approaches to teaching and learning visual arts with appropriate emphasis placed on the development of certain skills as well as good integration across the curriculum. Pupils are given regular opportunities to engage with a wide variety of media. In addition, the pupils are encouraged to reflect on the traits of famous artists' work and they are given worthwhile opportunities to look at art and to

comment on it. Every strand of the curriculum is evident in the many displays around the school.

- Teaching is of a good standard in the school. Lessons are presented in a structured manner and with good pacing. Suitable resources are used effectively. Although the majority of students are coping well, it is recommended that teaching be further differentiated in accordance with pupils' various needs in order to support all pupils in learning at their own level of ability.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- There is a good standard of learning and teaching for pupils who have special educational needs. A systematic, organised programme is followed which meets the specific learning needs of the pupils with clear learning objectives. Inspirational learning spaces are created in the learning support rooms with a generous supply of resources. There is a practice of in class co-teaching in the school and it is recommended that this practice be developed by ensuring the roles of teachers in order to meet the various needs of pupils more effectively.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

This is a translation of the School Response that was submitted in Irish

Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The board of management of Gaelscoil Bhaile Brigín welcomes this report and thanks the members of the inspectorate for their professional and courteous approach and for the understanding and support which was displayed during the inspection. The board is also very grateful for the recognition of the good work and the atmosphere within the school. The board of management would like to congratulate the staff on the excellence of the achievements which have been realised since the school was established in 2006 and would like to thank the parents for their constant cooperation.

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 accepts the recommendations in this report. The writing process has also been identified as a learning priority during the school's own self-evaluation activities and an action plan has been prepared to advance this work. The results from standardised testing have always been recorded but further analysis is currently being planned to ensure the best use of the data. The school is extending the practical and concrete activities currently being undertaken in Mathematics through the introduction of a new scheme of work and greater differentiation will be integral to this process. As a young school, we are looking forward to implementing the recommendations of the inspectorate, and more, to advance the progress achieved to date.