

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Scoil Mobhí
Glasnevin, Dublin 9
Uimhir rolla: 19395H

Date of inspection: 15 October 2010



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

{This is a translation of the original report which was written in Irish}

1. Introduction

Scoil Mobhí is an all-Irish, co-educational primary school which was founded by the Dominican Sisters in 1972 and which functions under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The school is attended by pupils from the area and from other places in Dublin. There are 260 pupils on rolls. 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:

- A positive happy atmosphere is cultivated in the school in which respect for and love of the heritage and the culture of Ireland are nurtured, as well as respect for people and other cultures.
- The board of management operates effectively and the members give great support to the staff and the school community.
- The principal directs the school with understanding and assurance and the in-school management team co-operates helpfully with her to provide leadership for a wide range of activities.
- The staff is commended for their dedication and the standard of teaching, and the pupils have achieved a good standard in the subjects which were evaluated.
- The good practice of the learning-support team is commended, especially with regard to identifying the needs of the individual pupil, to organising suitable programmes and to maintaining comprehensive records of the progress.
- The courtesy and the learning efforts of the pupils are commended and it is clear that they co-operate willingly with the teachers.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- In short-term class planning, it is recommended that greater reference be made to differentiation and to co-operative learning strategies.
- When a review of the approach employed for the provision of learning support is conducted, it would be worthwhile to make greater use of in-class support.

3. Quality of School Management

- The board of management functions effectively as a unit. The members of the board have particular responsibilities and they fulfil these responsibilities diligently. The board plays a central role in the whole-school planning process and it guides the development of the school's policies. The board gives steadfast support to the staff and to the school community. The minutes of the meetings indicate the matters which are discussed by the board and the decisions which are taken at every meeting.
- The principal provides understanding leadership for the in-school management team and the team co-operates with her to advance curricular priorities. Regular review is conducted of the responsibilities of the in-school management team in order that leadership is provided in the curricular and administrative areas being developed by the school.
- Proper care is taken of school maintenance. The building is neat and tidy. An attractive range of teaching resources has been provided. At present two class teachers are functioning as support teachers because classrooms are not available for them. This situation means that the size of every mainstream class is larger than the size recommended by the Department. It is recommended that the board should deploy the teachers according to the schedule for the provision and appointment of staff (Circular 0021/2010).

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The quality of school planning is of a high standard. A wide range of curricular and administrative policies has been discussed on a whole-school basis and has been approved by the board, following an advisory process with members of the school community. A five-year action plan has been devised by the board, wherein the school's priorities have been set down. This action plan adds to the effectiveness of self-evaluation in the school.
- The long-term plans of the teachers are very comprehensive and reference is made therein to subjects, to aims and learning objectives, to class organisation and to resources. Helpful direction is given to the teachers in those documents. Short-term planning indicates the content to be covered for each period. It would add to the effectiveness of short-term planning if reference were made therein to various learning activities, to differentiation and to assessment. A common system is employed by the teachers for maintaining monthly progress records.
- 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 teachers in this school set about their work conscientiously and energetically. Effective structure and pace pertain to the lessons, with suitable emphasis on the participation of the pupils. Accordingly, the teachers are very successful in stimulating and retaining the interest and the attention of the pupils in their lessons. The pupils display interest in their work and they undertake various tasks with energy and spirit. Very good use is made of equipment, especially of information and communication technology. The teachers correct the pupils' work carefully and regularly and give them feedback regularly on their progress. Effective use is made of class teaching during the lessons. There is scope for making greater use of co-operative methods in the teaching and learning, by means of affording the pupils more regular opportunities to work together in pairs and in small groups. The responses of the parents to questionnaires show that the majority of them are satisfied with the quality of teaching, of learning and of pupil attainment.
- Useful planning is done for the teaching of Irish and beneficial resources are organised to assist the teaching and learning. The teachers employ suitable learning methods and it is perceived that good use is made of technology in the teaching. The lessons proceed at a suitable pace and it is noted that there a good structure to the learning activities. The pupils know a good range of songs and poems. Good use is made of computers to publish the pupils' work and the efforts of the pupils are celebrated in the class displays. The written work of the pupils shows that they are able to write about a wide range of matters and in various genres.
- *The quality of teaching and learning in English is very good. A suitable oral language development programme is in place. The school has a very good stock of library books and class libraries are well resourced. Pupils read with meaning and fluency and their attainment levels in reading are very good. Teachers adopt a creative and structured approach to the writing process and the development of the pupils' writing skills in a range of genres. Commendable emphasis is placed on poetry appreciation and on providing pupils with opportunities to compose poems. Very good assessment practices are in operation, with pupils' work being corrected in a careful manner.*
- The pupils display interest in the Mathematics lessons and they are making suitable progress in the subject. Commendable emphasis is placed on the language of Mathematics and on mental arithmetic. The teachers use a variety of teaching methods successfully. The concepts are related to the lives and environment of the pupils. In the lessons, the teachers make effective and creative use of resources and information and communication technology to illustrate and explain concepts. Suitable emphasis is placed on the use of concrete materials during lessons to cultivate participation and to embed concepts. Satisfactory use is made of conversation to discuss various concepts and to develop the pupils' skills.
- The pupils in this school derive great enjoyment from music. They sing a wide range of songs in Irish and English pleasantly and sweetly. The choir assists greatly in this respect. The teachers undertake the teaching of this subject creatively and methodically. They make excellent use of resources and the very effective use made of information and communication in their lessons is particularly noteworthy. The pupils participate actively and imaginatively in the lessons by way of using various instruments to make music. Suitable emphasis is placed on music literacy and on various aspects of music, such as beat, speed, rhythm, duration and the development of style. Very effective integration is achieved with other curricular subjects.

6. Quality of Supports for Pupils

- Comprehensive planning is done in this school for pupils who have special learning needs, such as difficulties with literacy or numeracy. By using standardised and diagnostic tests regularly, additional needs are identified and suitable learning targets are selected for individual pupils. Effective interventions are organised to serve identified needs and it is ensured that the pupils are working on suitable learning programmes. Accurate records are maintained on the progress of pupils who are receiving support. In order to add further to the good practice that was observed, it is recommended that greater emphasis be placed on in-class support so that any negative aspects of regular withdrawal of pupils from class can be minimised.