

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
REPORT

Scoil Bhríde,
Kill, Co. Kildare
Uimhir rolla: 17662R

Date of inspection: 18 January 2012



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

1. Introduction

Scoil Bhríde is a co-educational, vertical school in the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin. The attendance of the 558 pupils enrolled is very good. In addition to the twenty mainstream classes the school has an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) unit. The newly-built school accommodates thirty-two mainstream classes and enrolment is projected to rise further in the coming years.

During the whole-school evaluation inspectors observed teaching and learning in thirteen mainstream class settings, three support teaching settings and in the ASD unit. The evaluation focused on the quality of teaching and learning in Irish, English, Mathematics and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE). The board of management of the school 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:

- Scoil Bhríde is an inclusive, open and welcoming school.
- The quality of leadership provided by the principal is excellent.
- The teachers work collaboratively and skilfully to provide a high quality, all-round education for all the pupils in their care.
- The management of pupils is highly commendable. The pupils are very attentive, enthusiastic and well behaved.
- The work of the board of management and parents' association is highly effective.
- The aesthetically-pleasing, new school building is very well resourced and its facilities are excellent.
- The standard of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics, English and SPHE is highly commendable.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- I múineadh na Gaeilge, moltar tuilleadh deiseanna a sholáthair i rith na gceachtanna chun dul siar agus daingniú a dhéanamh ar an teanga atá foghlamtha. *In the teaching of Irish, it is recommended that further opportunities be provided in lessons for consolidation and revision of language learned.*
- To facilitate further school self evaluation, it is recommended that the school engage in an ongoing process of action planning to effect continuous school improvement.

3. Quality of School Management

- The work of the board of management is highly effective. The recent completion of a high quality, modern building is testament to the endeavours of the board. It plays an active role in policy formation and is very well informed with regard to the pupils' achievements.

- The quality of leadership provided by the principal is excellent. He demonstrates highly proficient school administration and management skills. His visionary leadership style is reflected in the promotion of an inclusive and very effective learning environment for all pupils. He successfully empowers teachers and is committed to the pursuit of high standards from all members of the school community.
- The principal is supported by a hard-working and professional in-school management team. They carry out a wide range of duties that contribute significantly to school development.
- There is an extensive range of resources including Information and Communications Technology (ICT) which are expertly utilised by teachers. The stimulating and carefully designed library is noteworthy. Classrooms and communal areas of the school host an impressive variety of purposeful displays.
- The management of pupils is highly commendable. They are very attentive, enthusiastic and well behaved. Their involvement in a wide range of extra curricular activities positively enhances their educational experiences. Analysis of parent and pupil questionnaires, administered as part of the evaluation, indicates that the overwhelming majority of parents agree that their child likes school and is doing well in the school. A very high number of pupils believe it is a good school.
- The school promotes a high level of communication and partnership with parents and the community. The active and dedicated parents' association supports a wide range of school celebrations and extra-curricular activities. Almost all parents surveyed feel welcome in the school and all parents agree that the school is well run.

4. Quality of School Planning and School Self-evaluation

- The quality of whole-school planning is very good. Administrative policies are clearly written and accessible. Good quality curriculum plans are evident although some possibilities for improvement exist. Plans for English, Mathematics and Irish primarily guide the content to be covered at each year level. In further developing curriculum plans consideration should be given to incorporating current best practice and agreed school decisions in the revised plans.
- The teachers' classroom planning is of a very high quality. Comprehensive short-term plans, which make specific provision for differentiation, facilitate continuity and progression in the pupils' learning. Teachers provide detailed monthly progress reports.
- School self-evaluation practices are underway. These include the presentation and initial analysis of standardised tests results in English and Mathematics and a schedule for policy review and development. To facilitate further school self evaluation, it is recommended that the school engage in ongoing action planning to effect continuous school improvement. This action plan should be informed by thorough analysis of cumulative standardised tests and available school data. The curriculum leadership roles of the in-school management team will be intrinsic to this process.
- 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

- In relation to the lessons observed, the quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement is of a very high standard. Well structured and well paced lessons are linked to planned objectives and ensure a high level of pupil participation. The standard of teacher modelling and teacher instruction during lessons is praiseworthy. Very good learning is evident as the pupils work independently and cooperatively in their learning tasks.
- Tá caighdeán na múinteoireachta agus na foghlama sa Ghaeilge go maith. Gabhann bríomhaireacht agus ilgnhéitheacht le modhanna múinte na n-oidí. Aithrisíonn agus canann na daltaí réimse leathan rainn agus amhráin go muintínach i ngach rang. Tá sé ar chumas na ndaltaí abairtí a struchtúrú i gceart, agus na briathra agus ceisteanna a fhreagairt go cumasach i roinnt ranganna. In ainneoin sin, tá deacrachtaí ag go leor daltaí tríd an scoil ceisteanna a fhreagairt agus cumarsáid a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge. Ba chóir tuilleadh deiseanna a shólathair chun dul siar a dhéanamh go rialta agus daingniú a dhéanamh ar an teanga atá múinte i gceachteanna.
- Ar an iomlán, léann na daltaí go tuisceanach agus go líofa. Úsáidtear téascleabhair don fhorhmór chun an léitheoireacht agus scríbhneoireacht a mhúineadh. Soláthraítear deiseanna do na daltaí ábhar éagsúla léitheoireachta a úsáid agus tabhairt faoi scríbhneoireacht chruthaitheach i roinnt ranganna. B'fhiú an dea-chleachtas seo a threisiú a thuilleadh.
- *The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Irish is good. Teachers use lively, activity-based methodologies. The pupils can competently recite and sing a variety of poems and songs in every class. Pupils in some classes are able to structure sentences correctly, use verbs and answer questions capably. Nevertheless, many pupils throughout the school have difficulty answering questions or communicating in Irish. It is recommended that further opportunities be provided in lessons for consolidation and revision of language learned.*
- *For the most part the pupils read fluently and with understanding. Textbooks are the main resource for the teaching of reading and writing. In some classes varied reading material is utilised and creative writing opportunities are provided for pupils. This effective practice should be further embedded.*
- Teaching, learning and pupil achievement in English are of a very high quality. The pupils' reading skills are systematically developed as they progress through the school. Achievement in standardised reading tests is very good for most pupils.
- The pupils' oral language skills are capably developed through class discussions and across the curriculum areas. They engage confidently and articulately in class discussions. To build on this practice, an objectives-based oral language programme should be developed throughout the school. The pupils write in a variety of genres; the quality of this work is very good. Some excellent practice was observed where pupils were engaged in peer editing as part of the writing process. This practice should be shared and established as school policy.
- The standard of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in Mathematics is highly commendable. Through explicit instruction, effective use of resources and learning activities the teachers succeed in meeting the needs of all pupils. The school adopts a variety of approaches to problem solving. The adoption of an agreed approach is advised. The pupils undertake tasks confidently and results from standardised tests indicate that they display competence across the strands.

- The quality of teaching, learning and pupil achievement in SPHE is very good. The welcoming atmosphere in the school and the evident interest of the staff in the well being of the pupils create a positive climate for learning in SPHE. Teachers use a wide range of strategies and programmes effectively in lessons. Almost all pupils surveyed feel safe in class and a high number of pupils agree they could talk to a teacher if they were upset about something.
- The quality of assessment approaches is good. All teachers use a range of modes to monitor the progress of pupils. There is need in some mainstream class settings to assess concepts taught more frequently and extend the use of assessment data to inform programmes of learning.

6. Quality of Support for Pupils

- The quality of supports for pupils with special educational needs is commendable. Scoil Bhríde is an inclusive, open and welcoming school in which successful supports are put in place to ensure equality of access to and participation in all aspects of school life.
- Lessons observed were effectively structured and included a range of appropriate resources and methodologies. The quality of individual education plans (IEPs), programme planning and records of pupils' progress varies. Some very good IEPs and learning programmes are prepared which include specific targets and are based on the pupils' diagnosed learning needs. This good practice should be shared through more regular meetings of the special needs teachers.
- The recently-established ASD unit is supported by a confident and committed staff. High quality resources are in place to support the pupils' specific needs and teaching is characterised by clear explanations and supportive interactions.
- All pupils are enabled to engage in all school activities through the use of school funds and Departmental grants. The school does not seek voluntary contributions from parents and a book rental scheme further minimises their costs.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The BOM of Scoil Bhríde welcomes the findings of this report. The Board is delighted the report recognises and affirms the great work being done by all involved in our school. We are particularly pleased that the report acknowledges that our school is an open welcoming and inclusive school which promotes an inclusive and effective learning environment for all pupils.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

As a school community we are committed to continuous professional development and to that end we will take on board the recommendations of the team of inspectors in future planning.