

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation  
REPORT**

**Scoil Assaim Buachaillí  
All Saints' Drive, Raheny, Dublin 5  
Uimhir rolla: 17976R**

**Date of inspection: 21 September 2010**



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

## 1. Introduction

Scoil Assaim is an all-boys' primary school located in Raheny, Dublin 5. It is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and caters for pupils in classes second to sixth. Currently, there are 264 boys enrolled in the school. Attendance levels are very 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:

- There is effective and efficient management of the school by the board of management.
- Purposeful, strategic and concerted leadership by the principal and other members of the in-school management team is in place.
- High-quality, whole-school plans have been compiled to guide the delivery of the curriculum.
- Creative approaches to the design of lesson activities and the use of resources have been devised.
- A warm and nurturing school atmosphere exists where teachers interact with pupils in a pleasant and affirming manner.
- Pupils are offered a wide range of extracurricular activities.
- Lessons are structured appropriately and well paced.
- Pupils show interest and pride in their work.
- Support for pupils is delivered in a very organised, affirming and nurturing manner.

The following **main recommendations** are made:

- While teachers present lessons using information and communications technology (ICT) in a very creative manner, there is some scope for providing pupils with greater opportunities to use ICT.
- In the next review of its approaches to providing support for pupils in literacy and numeracy, it is recommended that the school review the criteria used for identifying and discontinuing support.

### **3. Quality of School Management**

- The board of management functions in a very effective and systematic manner. It sets about its work strategically and collaboratively.
- The school principal provides strong and purposeful leadership to the school. Such leadership is grounded in the importance of promoting high standards of achievement, while also providing a warm and affirming school experience for the pupils. The principal is supported by a dynamic and effective in-school management team. This team sets about its work in a concerted and collaborative manner. The duties in respect of posts of responsibility are reviewed regularly. In the next review of duties, it is recommended that a greater focus on curricular leadership in the areas of literacy and numeracy be considered.
- The school is presented in a very tidy and organised manner. It has an on-going maintenance programme which ensures that the school building and contents are maintained to a high standard. The school has amassed a wide selection of suitable resources to support the implementation of the curriculum. Of noteworthy mention is the school library. The school benefits from the committed support of a secretary, caretaker and contract cleaning staff.
- Teachers interact with pupils in a very warm, respectful and affirming manner. Pupils are very content and cooperative in this learning environment.
- The school communicates regularly with parents through the use of memos and newsletters. The school's informative website is also a valuable means of communicating with the school community.

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

- School planning is of a high standard. It is clear, focused and comprehensive. The school adopts a collaborative and consultative approach to the formulation and development of its school plans.
- Teachers prepare both long-term and short-term plans which delineate, in a very clear and sequential manner, the content to be covered. There is scope to record differentiation practices in some short-term plans.
- The school is engaged in a number of purposeful self-evaluation initiatives and exercises. Through the use of working groups, staff-meetings and planning reviews, such initiatives are fruitfully focused on curricular development. 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

- In the four curriculum areas evaluated, lessons were well paced and structured, serving to stimulate pupil interest and involvement. Teachers made creative use of a variety of methodologies and activities. A stimulating range of resources was used very effectively, both to facilitate lesson presentation and to promote pupil engagement in learning activities. While teachers present lessons using ICT in a very creative manner, there is some scope for providing pupils with greater opportunities to use ICT. Pupils apply themselves to their work with pride and interest. Their responses to the questionnaires indicate that their work is regularly corrected in a formative manner and that they have a good opinion of the school.
- Cuirtear béim chuí agus fhiúntach ar fhorbairt na Gaeilge sa scoil. Baintear roinnt úsáide as an teanga mar theanga bhainistíochta ranga le linn an lae. Tá luas agus struchtúr éifeachtach sna ceachtanna agus tugtar deiseanna rialta do dhaltaí a bheith rannpháirteach sna gníomhaíochtaí foghlama éagsúla, cluichí teanga, filíocht, amhránaíocht agus drámaíocht san áireamh. Léann na daltaí le brí agus muinín. Cuirtear béim chuí ar fhorbairt scileanna scríbhneoireachta.
- *The school places appropriate and worthwhile emphasis on the development of Irish. Some use is made of the language for classroom management during the day. Lessons have effective pace and structure and pupils are given regular opportunities to participate in various learning activities, including language games, poetry, singing and drama. Pupils read with meaning and confidence. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the development of writing skills.*
- A structured and balanced English language programme provides clear and focused direction for the systematic development of skills in oral language, reading and writing. Pupils engage in oral language activities with enthusiasm. There is some potential for the wider use of paired oral language activities both within discrete English language lessons and in other curricular areas. Pupils enjoy reading and they read capably. The school celebrates reading for pleasure and encourages pupils to read material in a wide range of genres. Its stimulating and comfortable library is a notable exemplar of such celebration. The development of children's writing is well scaffolded and pupils write well for a variety of purposes. As there is some variance in the style of pupils' handwriting across different class levels, it is recommended that approaches to the development of handwriting skills at a whole-school level be reviewed.
- Pupils engage actively in mathematics lessons which are delivered in a stimulating and creative manner. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on conceptual development through the use of concrete materials, discussion and information and communications technology (ICT). Very good attention is given to the revision of concepts. Content is related to the life experience and environment of the pupils in most lessons. Classrooms are presented as mathematics-rich environments. Pupils' progress is monitored in a continuous and careful manner. Appropriate provision is in place for the development of the pupils' problem-solving skills. In some instances, teachers should make greater provision for allowing pupils to ask questions during lessons.
- Physical Education is provided in a very systematic and organised manner, with commendable emphasis on pupils' involvement in games both during lessons and as part of extra-curricular activities. The school has a very good stock of resources. Pupils clearly enjoy physical education lessons, engaging in them with energy and enthusiasm. Suitable emphasis is placed on warm-up and cool-down activities. Teachers effectively model the relevant skills to be developed. Lesson activities are well chosen to introduce, develop and revise specific skills.

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

- The school provides for pupils with special educational needs in a deliberate and focused manner. The special education team adopt a collaborative approach to their work, with parents, pupils and class teachers being consulted on the design and implementation of support programmes. Teacher planning and school planning in this regard are of a very high quality. A variety of assessment techniques and diagnostic tests is used effectively. Support is delivered in both the areas of numeracy and literacy. The school makes use of both in-class support and withdrawal approaches. In so doing, it provides the pupils with a stimulating and active learning experience which places strong emphasis on the pupils' involvement, on building confidence and, where relevant, on the development of social skills. Various methodologies are used effectively and frequently involve the creative use of resources, ICT and visual stimuli. In the next review of its approaches to providing support for pupils, it is recommended that the school review the criteria used for identifying and discontinuing support in literacy and numeracy.

# **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 of Scoil Assaim welcomes this excellent report and is very pleased with the findings. The report affirms the quality of work being performed by teaching staff and the wider school community.

The Board is particularly pleased that the nurturing and encouraging interaction between teachers and pupils was recognised by the inspection team; this is considered an essential aspect of Scoil Assaim's programme of education. The wide range of extra-curricular activities provided by staff was also noted; this has provided an official acknowledgement of the commitment of so many staff members who dedicate their own time to developing pupil skills.

The Board congratulates the Principal and the staff, and also commends the Parents' Association for their continued work and support. The boys of Scoil Assaim can also be proud of themselves; they were described as cooperative, actively engaged in their learning, taking pride in their work, and content in their school. The Board believes this provides a positive and accurate picture of school life.

The WSE was a very positive experience for all involved in Scoil Assaim. The Chairperson of the Board thanks the inspection team for their diligence throughout the WSE, and commends their courtesy and professionalism during their time in Scoil Assaim.

## **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 accepts the recommendation that there is scope for providing pupils with greater opportunities to use ICT. Since the inspection team's visit, Scoil Assaim's Parents' Association has been actively working towards increasing ICT resources. The school now has a set of 32 laptops for in-class use; these, alongside the ICT equipment purchased with the DES grants, have already provided a much higher level of access and opportunity for development.

Scoil Assaim will review the criteria used for identifying and discontinuing literacy and numeracy support for pupils, as suggested. The Board notes that the quality and variety of support is acknowledged and commended as providing a stimulating and active learning experience for pupils, and that planning in this area is of a very high quality. In reviewing the criteria, Scoil Assaim would hope to maintain its current high standard of support.