An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Presentation Secondary School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Grogan's Road Wexford Co. Wexford
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	63661C

Date of Evaluation: 26-04-2018

WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning reports on the quality of teaching and learning and on the quality of management and leadership in a school. It affirms good practice and makes recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of educational provision in the school.

How to read this report

During this inspection, the inspectors evaluated and reported under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

1. Quality of school leadership and management
2. Quality of teaching and learning
3. Implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations
4. The school's self-evaluation process and capacity for school improvement

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

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.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.
4. The Child Safeguarding Statement meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.
5. The records of the last three board of management meetings record a child protection oversight report that meet the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2017.
6. The board of management has ensured that arrangements are in place to provide information to all school personnel on the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2017
7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE, Wellbeing).
8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

Date of inspection	26-04-2018
Inspection activities undertaken • Meeting with board of management • Meetings with principal and deputy principals • Meetings with key staff • Review of relevant documents • Student focus-group interview • Meeting with parents	• Analysis of parent, student and teacher questionnaires • Observation of teaching and learning • Examination of students' work • Interaction with students • Feedback to senior management team, board of management and teachers

School context

Presentation Secondary School is a post-primary school under the trusteeship of Catholic Education An Irish Schools' Trust (CEIST). It has a current enrolment of 803 female students. The school provides junior cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of school leadership and management is very good, and there is a culture of improvement, collaboration and distributed leadership; however, there is scope to develop cross-functional collaboration of the middle leadership team.
- Leadership of teaching and learning is good but a number of whole-school programmes and resource management areas merit review.
- High-quality student support structures are in place and the school provides students with a wide variety of valuable opportunities for personal and social development.
- Teaching and learning was good overall and ranged from very good to satisfactory in the lessons observed; the best lessons included opportunities for students to use their voice, collaborate, research, and reflect on their learning.
- Overall implementation of previous recommendations is good, but there remains scope to improve assessment and differentiation.
- School self-evaluation (SSE) engagement is good and an effective school improvement team leads the process; practices identified in the initial school improvement plan are yet to be fully embedded.

Recommendations

- Senior management should distribute leadership and management responsibilities which encourage and support partnership and collaboration through working in teams, in line with Circular 003/18.
- The senior management team should oversee a review of the following: the content of the RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education) and tutor-time programmes; the use of human resources for maximum benefit to students; and the efficacy of the online sharing platform.
- Teachers should provide a good balance between higher-order and lower-order questions, and should engage students in purposeful activities which promote student voice.
- To fully progress previous recommendations, all teachers should develop formative assessment practices and consider how to differentiate the level of challenge for students.
- The embedding of whole-school SSE practices should be monitored and reviewed regularly by the school improvement team, to ensure progress in teaching and learning is sustained.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leading learning and teaching

A culture of improvement is effectively promoted in teaching, learning and assessment. Teacher professional development is encouraged and supported by school management. All teachers are invited to discuss their work and their professional development needs at an annual one-to-one meeting with the principal. There are highly effective systems for monitoring students' progress and development. Responsibilities are shared and a whole-school approach is taken.

School management and staff effectively plan and manage the school curriculum, timetable and teacher deployment. However, a number of areas merit review. Senior management should explore further deployment of teaching resources to maximise the support for students through initiatives such as additional team-teaching. The school has introduced a new tutor-time slot on the timetable, which has proved successful. This time should include a formal instructional element, such as one linked to a whole-school wellbeing programme, to maintain a minimum twenty-eight hours tuition time for students. To facilitate more reflection on learning and give time to complete the final term's modules, the TY programme should continue until the end of term.

Holistic development of all students is given a high priority; the school is very inclusive and opportunities are provided for students to develop their capacity for leadership and to contribute to school life. Student welfare is also given a high priority and there are high-quality student support structures. However, some roles overlap and some confusion exists as to who is responsible for various issues. It is recommended that senior management clarify roles and responsibilities of staff involved in student support, so students, staff, and parents know who to approach with questions or concerns. It is also suggested that consideration be given to the inclusion of a year head, on a rotating basis, at the weekly student support team meeting.

Students in the focus group expressed a desire for additional areas to be included in the RSE programme. Their observations have merit. It is recommended that the RSE team undertake a review of the current programme to establish if the programme is meeting students' needs, explore any gaps and adjust the programme accordingly.

The special education team is highly effective. Comprehensive resources are supplied to teachers working with students with special education needs and regular progress monitoring takes place. Parents are consulted frequently and the school actively supports them by providing classes offering training on how to help their daughters cope with school and special educational needs.

There is a whole-school approach to Guidance with many staff involved in supporting students when they are making personal and educational decisions. There is a good balance between one-to-one and classroom guidance. However, there is no formal collaborative whole-school guidance planning team. It is recommended that a whole-school guidance planning team be formed to identify the guidance needs of students and to share responsibility for the development and annual review of the guidance plan.

Managing the organisation

The principal and the two deputy principals are a highly effective and collaborative senior management team; they successfully manage and oversee the smooth day-to-day running of the school with shared and rotating responsibilities. The principal leads and manages the organisational structures in the school effectively.

The senior management team promotes a culture of collaboration. Almost all staff, including new teachers, are involved in committee work such as the school improvement team or the school focus team.

Respectful interactions between all members of the school community were evident during the inspection. Many staff and students reported to the inspectors about an open door policy, the welcoming atmosphere in the school, and collegiality.

Members of the school community create a climate of security and well-being for students and staff. Most students expressed pride in attending the school, feel safe and cared for, and agree there is a positive atmosphere. Almost all parents surveyed agree their child feels safe and well looked after.

The learning environment, including the grounds and buildings, is maintained to a very high standard. A recent positive addition to the facilities is a multi-sensory room for students. A plan is approved for development of the campus which includes additional science laboratories and two classrooms.

One of the learning priorities identified for investment was an online sharing platform to support teaching and learning. Some inconsistencies are evident in the use and effectiveness of this platform. It is recommended that senior management lead a review of the current usage and functionality of the online sharing platform. The information and communication technology (ICT) team should promote a consistent approach to managing content in the online folders and agree locations for subject department plans, resources, and assessments. As part of this review, staff e-learning needs should be assessed and additional training and support provided.

The board of management and the senior management team are fully aware of their statutory obligations and work effectively to ensure compliance with all legislative and policy requirements. The admissions policy should be prioritised for review and sections should be updated including criteria for entry, students with special education needs, and the internal admission criteria to programmes on offer such as TY and LCVP.

The code of behaviour has been recently reviewed and has a good balance between positive behaviour rewards and sanctions. There is a clear structure and ladder of referral. However, a significant minority of students do not consider all students are treated fairly and this is mirrored in the teacher survey, where a significant minority of teachers do not agree that the code is implemented consistently. It is recommended that senior management instigate an examination of current practices in relation to the code of behaviour, and strive for consistency of application across the school.

Leading school development

The trustee body CEIST, board of management and school leaders are very proactive in establishing and maintaining the guiding vision for the school, inviting the whole school community to engage in a collaborative planning process, thus fostering joint ownership of the school's five-year strategic plan.

Strategic planning is well advanced; the high-quality strategic plan identifies six areas for improvement. Each member of the senior management team has two areas of responsibility to lead and manage, in conjunction with the school improvement team. This is very good practice.

Engagement with the school self-evaluation (SSE) process is good and some valuable teaching and learning practices have been identified and initiated. It is recommended that the SSE team engage in closer monitoring of the SSE targets and actions so that these become embedded practices, rather than initiatives that run for a finite time.

School management has very effectively managed a period of change over recent years, including the addition of new members to the senior management team, the current review and restructuring of the middle management posts, and the move from paper books to e-learning.

Developing leadership capacity

It is very good practice that the senior management team reflects and critiques their professional practice and supports each other.

The current middle management team is effective. It meets formally twice a year at the beginning and end of the school year. Its members believe they have a middle management function beyond their duties, and there is an openness and willingness to develop their roles and meet more frequently as a middle leadership team. There is scope to further empower the middle leadership team more explicitly. It is recommended that school management distribute leadership and management responsibilities that encourage and support partnership and collaboration through working in teams in line with Circular 003/18.

The principal encourages and empowers teachers to take on leadership roles outside the formal middle management structures, thus building leadership capacity within the school. It is commendable that new members of staff, and staff taking on new roles, are mentored by the senior management team. There is a very good induction programme for new teachers which includes lesson observation, discussions about teaching and learning, and provision of resources including an excellent staff handbook.

Student voice is valued and an appropriately constituted student council meets regularly. It has been involved in policy development, the new mission statement, and progressing the views of students. The wider student body is regularly surveyed for views regarding use of the e-learning devices. However, there is scope to engage students in more discussions about teaching and learning.

The school leaders are actively involved in professional associations and avail of support to develop effective management and leadership practices. Some teachers are professionally involved with the teaching and learning support services of the Department of Education and Skills. The sharing of learning from these experiences effectively supports teaching and learning in the school. Engagement with professional bodies is supported by school management.

2. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Thirty-two lessons were observed during the course of the evaluation. The quality of the teaching and learning observed was exemplary in a small number of lessons, good or very good in the majority of instances, and satisfactory in some. The main areas for development include the promotion of student voice, and assessment for learning.

Learner outcomes and experiences

There was variation in the quality of the learner experience across lessons. Most teachers endeavoured to promote active learning through the use of a broad range of methodologies. Where used, effective strategies such as think-pair-share encouraged students to respond to questions asked in class or to share the outcomes of individual tasks. There were good examples in some lessons of students using their digital devices with great ease to seek information in response to questions asked in lessons and also for spelling and grammar purposes.

Where best practice was observed the lessons were dynamic environments where students were active participants in their own learning. They demonstrated keen interest in the subject and a strong desire to learn more. This was supported in many instances by the opportunity to research and present their work during the lesson. Very good attention to improving students' presentation

skills was also noted in some instances. Students shared their knowledge and voiced their opinions through lively discussion facilitated by the teacher. They listened attentively to both the teacher and their peers when engaging in group work activities. Good use of peer assessment was also observed in some instances.

There were a number of lessons where improvement is required in promoting student voice. There was limited evidence in these instances of students asking questions, volunteering answers or opinions, or being asked to answer individually.

The use of pair or group work was observed in almost all lessons and this is good practice in promoting active and independent learning. However, there were instances where the learner experience could have been further enhanced with greater clarity of purpose in regard to the learning tasks assigned. In addition, there were a number of instances where group work was assigned, but the tasks did not afford sufficient opportunity to maximise learning outcomes for the particular subjects.

In some lessons the new specification for junior cycle demonstrated clear benefits for students' learning and the enjoyment of lessons. Some of these students were also well inducted into the new practice of establishing success criteria when planning their work, and this is good practice.

There were many lessons where students displayed both confidence and competence when presenting their work to the teacher and their peers. High levels of motivation prevailed in the lessons where student voice was clearly in evidence. This resulted in very good learning attainment for the lesson. There were some lessons where the learning attained remained more in the realm of student recall than in higher-order thinking.

Teachers' individual practice

The quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to highly effective in the lessons observed. Lessons were well prepared and structured. Most teachers shared their lesson plan with the students. In instances where the plan merely outlined the lesson content, it is recommended that teachers articulate their learning intentions in terms of what the students should be able to do by the end of the lesson.

A variety of methodologies was observed, some of which were used to very good effect while others required further development. Question and answer sessions were observed in all lessons. Best practice was noted where students were appropriately challenged through the use of probing, higher-order, and directed questioning. There were, however, a number of lessons where the questions asked resulted in information recall and were answered by the class in chorus. All teachers should ensure that there is an appropriate balance between global and directed questioning and between lower-order and higher-order questioning and that all students are appropriately challenged in this regard.

Information and communication technology (ICT) was used to support learning through the use of digital presentations, visuals, and some good choices of video clips. Supporting worksheets were distributed in a number of lessons and students were also afforded good opportunities for individual research. Student whiteboards were used in some lessons; however, teachers did not always follow through by asking the students to hold up the boards and show their work. This should be addressed. There were some lessons where a more integrated approach to skills development is recommended.

All teachers endeavoured to ensure a good balance between instruction and student activity. Pair or group work was observed in all lessons, and its purpose and the intended learning was generally, but not always, clearly communicated. The very good seating arrangements in most classrooms facilitated ease of organisation and communication within the group. Good practice was noted where teachers circulated during group work activities, responding to students or groups requiring

additional support. Further differentiation strategies are recommended to ensure that all students are challenged to reach their full potential.

Teachers used a variety of digital platforms to provide students with supplementary information and homework assignments. An examination of student journals and copybooks, however, indicated that homework is not frequently assigned in all subjects. Some of the corrections noted in copybooks and folders included comments or summative marks. In some instances students received very good formative feedback indicating their strengths and areas for development. However, the provision of developmental formative feedback is not as yet embedded in teachers' practice. All teachers should afford students opportunities to demonstrate their learning individually and to receive feedback.

There was some reference to key words, in particularly subject-specific terminology, in some lessons. Literacy for the promotion of students' oral and written communication was well embedded in lessons where the student voice was actively encouraged and where formative feedback was used in the correction of student work. There was more limited evidence of numeracy, particularly in the context of developing problem-solving skills. Greater attention to literacy and numeracy development is recommended in a number of lessons across the curriculum.

Teachers' collective practice

Teachers are afforded three formal meetings in the year for the purposes of formal subject planning. They have also been provided with professional time for individual planning. In some instances teachers use this professional time to work as cluster groups, planning for the requirements of the new junior cycle, reviewing their work to date, and discussing issues of common concern. This is good practice in ensuring collaboration and the sharing of ideas and practice. In other instances teachers have divided out among the group responsibility for the development of curricular plans for different year groups. Where this approach is prevalent, it is recommended that teachers seek out opportunities for departmental discussion and the sharing of practice to maximise the rich learning experiences inherent in a collaborative approach to subject planning.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

Overall progress is good. Most recommendations have been fully addressed or are currently being addressed.

Leadership and Management

Previous recommendations regarding timetabling and subject provision have been successfully addressed. All science groups have weekly access to the science laboratories and access will be further improved when the new building is available. Physical Education is provided for all students in line with the Department guidelines. The recommendation to provide twenty-eight hours tuition time will be fully implemented once senior management ensures a programme of instruction is provided during tutor-time. Policies which were identified have been completed and ratified by the board.

Teaching and Learning

Overall teacher collaborative planning practices have improved through both formal and informal methods. A significant number of teachers have attended additional continuing professional development training and it is commendable that teachers are sharing good teaching practices both at subject department level and at whole-school level.

There remains scope to develop active student learning in lessons, formative written developmental feedback on student assignments, and for teachers to differentiate the level of challenge in lessons commensurate with each student's ability.

4. THE SCHOOL'S SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS AND CAPACITY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The School's Self-Evaluation Process

The senior management team and the school improvement team have led a process of school improvement and self-evaluation effectively. Staff engagement with the process has been good. The first phase of SSE was successfully completed but progress needs to be monitored.

It was not evident that all literacy and numeracy practices have become embedded into lessons. It is recommended that the SSE team review the initial targets and investigate if the teaching and learning practices identified in the first three-year plan have become embedded.

The current SSE focus is assessment and sharing of success criteria. The inspectors observed very good practice in some lessons where students were observed using the success criteria and exemplars in their learning. However, this was not a consistent finding. The positive learning benefits associated with using success criteria should be highlighted and this practice should be extended throughout the school.

The School's Capacity for Improvement

There is very good capacity within the school community. The culture of collaboration, the active involvement of the board, the capacity within the senior and middle management teams, and the commitment of the staff, all bode well for the future of the school.

The Inspectorate's Quality Continuum

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	*Very good* applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is *outstanding* and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	*Good* applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a *very good* standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	*Satisfactory* applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	*Fair* applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	*Weak* applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;

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 welcomes this inspection report as a validation of the school's commitment to excellence in education in a caring and inclusive environment. It notes in particular the acknowledgement that the Board, the Principal and the Senior Management Team have shown *"highly effective leadership and management"* & that a *"culture of improvement is effectively promoted in teaching, learning and assessment"* and that *"Holistic development of all students is given a high priority; the school is very inclusive and opportunities are provided for students to develop their capacity for leadership and to contribute to school life."*

We welcome the fact that members of our school community create a climate of security and well-being for students and staff. Most students expressed pride in attending the school, feel safe and cared for, and agree there is a positive atmosphere. Almost all parents surveyed agree their child feels safe and well looked after.

The board of management welcomes that the report affirms so much good practice in our school and makes very useful recommendations and suggestions that closely mirror the school's own improvement plan and it's Focus for 2017-2022.

It means a great deal to the board that the report notes the very high estimation of parents and students of the care and support that is provided for students. This is very affirming of the support structures in the school as well as the broad range of co & extra-curricular activities organised and supported so generously by the teaching staff.

The board also welcomes that the following was noted:

The Board of Management is particularly pleased with the inspectors' recognition of the very high level of teaching and learning observed by them. They identified some exemplary teaching practices. The report commends Senior Management for its guidance and leadership in this regard.

The board welcomes that progress on previous reports and recommendations is overall good and that most recommendations have been fully addressed or are currently being addressed.

Finally, we welcome that it was noted there is very good capacity within the school community. The culture of collaboration, the active involvement of the board, the capacity within the senior and middle management teams, and the commitment of the staff, all bode well for the future of the school.

The findings and recommendations are an accurate reflection of the current high standards of education and learning provided to students at the school.

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 has taken the following steps to address the recommendations in the report & is committed to addressing the recommendations made in the report.

- *The Board will continue to promote procedures that will extend the already well-established practice of high quality teaching.*
- *At the time of the report, the board had just completed the process of Post of Responsibility review in line with Circular 003/18. The process is now complete and a Middle Leadership Team has been established, which will have regular meetings throughout the year, which will encourage and support partnership and collaboration through this team.*
- *The RSE department have had the Rape Crisis Centre up to the school to talk to senior students around the area of consent. The RSE/SPHE department have begun to oversee a review of their programme.*
- *Following the inspection, a plan was put in place for tutor-time, with a weekly theme for tutor time. This theme is published in our Staff Handbook and Student Journal, as well as intercom announcements.*
- *All Human Resources for 2018/2019 have been used to maximum capacity taking account of allocations.*
- *Further training and CPD has been scheduled for our online sharing platform for 2018/2019.*
- *CPD for staff has been planned for January 2019 for differentiation – which will focus on the balance required for higher-order and lower-order questions. This will also address formative assessment practices for all teachers*
- *Through continued implementation of the School Self Evaluation process the staff and senior management team will continue to engage with students and parents in reviewing the effectiveness of strategies being employed to further improve teaching and learning.*

All matters referred to in the WSE-MLL report will be addressed within the terms of the school improvement plan and school focus, 2017-2022.