

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Follow-Through Inspection  
REPORT**

**Saint Patrick's Comprehensive School  
Shannon**

**Roll Number: 81007U**

**Date of inspection: 22 April 2016**



<b>Date of original inspection</b>	<b>21 April 2015</b>	<b>Type of original report</b>	<b>WSE-MLL</b>	<b>Date of FT inspection</b>	<b>22 April 2016</b>
<b>Report published</b>	<b>Yes</b>				
<b>Follow-through inspection activities</b>					
<p><i>The following activities took place in the course of the follow-through inspection</i></p> <p>Meetings with senior management team  Meeting with representatives of the student support team and year heads  Meeting with representatives of the special educational needs (SEN) team  Meeting with nominated subject department co-ordinators  Communication with chairperson of board of management  Review of school documentation and records</p>					
<b>Recommendation in original inspection report</b>		<b>Progress achieved to date on implementation of recommendation</b>			
<p>The board of management should ensure that a robust system of whole-school action planning underpinned by target-setting, ongoing review and consultation with all stakeholders is put in place.</p> <p>Greater involvement of parents in school life needs to be developed and the board should establish and maintain procedures to facilitate the involvement of students in the operation of the school.</p>		<p><b><u>Partial progress</u></b></p> <p>While the board has been diligently responding to school management issues arising over the past year, it has not as yet established a formal whole-school action planning system as intended in the school response to the WSE-MLL report. The new board, established in March 2016, has included the WSE-MLL recommendations on the agenda of its next meeting, and this is commended.</p> <p>It is very positive that a democratically-elected student council has been established in the school. This has already made a very valuable contribution to students and staff in the area of awareness-raising regarding bullying issues.</p> <p>Greater involvement of parents in school life continues to be needed.</p>			
<p>The roles of senior management and middle management should be strategically linked to the school's improvement agenda.</p>		<p><b><u>Partial progress</u></b></p> <p>At the time of the WSE-MLL, the school was operating with a very limited in-school management team, resulting in senior management focusing a significant proportion of its energies on the day-to-day administration of the school.</p> <p>Recent post holder appointments have removed some of the work of student management and of programme co-ordination from senior management. This has created an opportunity to advance the school's improvement agenda. Furthermore, the imminent appointment of a new deputy principal offers scope for the senior management team to focus on leadership of learning as a priority.</p>			
<p>To optimise the management and care of students the code of behaviour should be reviewed, a student-support team should be established and a formal school attendance strategy should be developed.</p>		<p><b><u>Partial progress</u></b></p> <p>Significant aspects of the code of behaviour and related student management policies such as the mobile phone policy need to be reviewed, further developed, and/or changed as necessary.</p> <p>It is commended that a student support team with a scheduled weekly meeting has been established. It was reported that this, coupled with greater teacher use of the "comments" function on the school's administration software, has improved information sharing. Additional members are due to be added to that student support group next year, including the school's main resource teacher; this is good progress.</p>			

<p>The school's allocation for special educational needs should be used in full for its intended purpose and to the maximum benefit of students with identified additional learning needs.</p>	<p><b><u>Partial progress</u></b></p> <p>Changes in planning for the 2016/17 intake of prospective first years with special educational needs (SENs) are commended. Additional customised supports have been and are due to be put in place to meet the needs of specific students. A growing awareness is evident of the need to balance the provision of a broad curriculum with the provision of flexible supports for students with SENs.</p> <p>The contributions of staff with specialist qualifications in the area of SEN need to be harnessed more strategically. There is a need for the leadership of a small SEN team, of more flexible curricular planning for a minority of students, and of whole-school professional development in relation to differentiating subject teaching and assessment and to the future establishment of an ASD unit in the school.</p> <p>There are still deficiencies in how some of the resources for SEN are deployed. In this regard, it is essential that there is full compliance with Circular 70/2014.</p> <p>It is recommended that the improved general allocation of teaching posts for 2016/17 be used for Guidance to support the social/emotional needs of students with SENs.</p>
<p><b>Teaching and Learning</b></p> <p>Collaborative subject department planning should ensure that schemes of work are appropriately detailed to guide teaching and learning and include action planning for improved attainment.</p> <p>Strategies for differentiation and assessment for learning practices need to be more widely and more consistently implemented to support learning across the range of abilities.</p>	<p><b><u>Partial progress</u></b></p> <p>The follow through inspection focused on progress made in two subject departments; English and Materials Technology (Wood).</p> <p>Teachers of English are making specific progress in planning for assessment for learning through their preparations for classroom-based assessments. The department is now more aware of the need for differentiation and of designing common schemes of work. School management has created a weekly meeting slot for the teachers of English, utilising DES-allocated professional time, to support planning for the new JC specification.</p> <p>To support whole-school assessment for learning, school management is now asking all subject departments to engage in a collective analysis of examination results achieved by candidates in the certificate examinations to be followed by action planning. Also, a tool was distributed by management to help teachers seek students' feedback on their learning.</p> <p>The Materials Technology Wood department reported engaging in more-differentiation-focused project task design for students with particular SENs.</p> <p>The work undertaken by these two subject departments provides good direction for other departments.</p>
<p><b>Summary of findings</b></p>	
<p>It is acknowledged that the school is operating with a very limited number of middle management positions and that staff engagement in task team policy development has been a great support to the school this year.</p> <p>There has been partial progress, overall, in relation to each of the key recommendations.</p>	

Very good progress has been achieved in establishing a student support team and a student council.

### **Recommendations**

Annual priorities for development should be gathered from staff, parents, the student council, and the board. An agreed set of priorities should be devised for action planning and progress. These should include the key recommendations of the WSE-MLL report and the planning and implementation of the new JC Framework.

Staff meetings need to be conducted in a more strategic manner. Whole-school action planning targets should be explicitly agreed with staff toward the start of a school year, task teams should be agreed to help achieve those targets, and a review of progress should be undertaken. The practice should be introduced of formally including slots on the staff meeting timetable for staff members with particular experience of subject department planning and/or new pedagogical approaches to give short inputs to their colleagues. In addition, the use of questionnaires periodically to gather whole-staff feedback on issues should be considered to help decision making.

A review of existing practices and policies such as those relating to student behaviour, attendance, and mobile phone use should take place involving all stakeholders, leading to evidence-based decision making and policy design. This would be a very valuable focus for school self-evaluation work. Interweaving professional development inputs with the consultations is recommended. A useful support to this work could be the engagement of an outside facilitator to guide the process and to ensure that the professional development inputs and the consultation lead to the desired results.

The deficiencies identified in relation to support for students with SENs should be addressed.

The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.