

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation**  
**Management, Leadership and Learning**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Loreto High School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Beaufort Grange Rd Rathfarnham Dublin 14
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	60340N

**Date of Evaluation: 21-03-2019**



## **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

Dates of inspection	21-03-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with board of management</li> <li>• Meetings with principal and deputy principal</li> <li>• Meetings with key staff</li> <li>• Review of relevant documents</li> <li>• Student focus-group interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with parents</li> <li>• Analysis of parent, student and teacher questionnaires</li> <li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li> <li>• Examination of students' work</li> <li>• Interaction with students</li> <li>• Feedback to senior management team, board of management and teachers</li> </ul>

### School context

Loreto High School Beaufort was founded in 1925. It is a fee-charging secondary school for girls under the trusteeship of the Loreto Education Trust with a current enrolment of 652 students. While the school operates within a Catholic ethos, it welcomes students of all faiths. The programmes offered in the school include the Junior Cycle programme, a compulsory Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate and the leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

### Summary of main findings and recommendations:

#### Findings

- The work of the school community is characterised by team work, commitment, professionalism and the shared vision to provide a caring and supportive community which encourages each student to develop her full spiritual, intellectual, moral, creative, physical and social potential.
- The board of management, in union with senior management, provides highly effective leadership and management; however, some areas require further development such as whole-school guidance, tracking and mentoring of students' progress, planning for the TY programme and action planning to progress school priorities.
- The senior management team, of principal and deputy principal, very effectively manages and oversees the day-to-day running of the school while actively fostering a positive school climate.
- Learning support is efficiently managed; however, it is delivered by a large team of teachers, mostly through one-to-one support, and currently no teacher holds a special needs teaching qualification.
- Teaching and learning was highly effective and to further enhance the quality of learner outcomes, there is scope to extend teachers' use of differentiation and the application of formative written feedback.

- The senior management team, the board and teachers have successfully addressed recommendations from previous evaluations; the school community has very high quality management and leadership capacity for and commitment to school improvement and to self-evaluation.

### **Recommendations**

- The board and senior management should oversee the development of an action plan to progress agreed priorities. In addition, teachers should collaboratively develop a whole school guidance plan and planning for the TY programme and for some subjects require further development.
- School management should continue its efforts to deploy a qualified learning support teacher to work within a smaller core team in providing targeted learning support for students.
- To enhance the high standard of learning outcomes for students, teachers should further develop differentiation strategies in lessons and extend the use of written formative feedback on students' work and senior management should oversee the further development of an attainment tracking system to support all learners.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

#### **Leading learning and teaching**

The board of management, in union with senior management, provides highly effective leadership and management. A positive learning culture that promotes and supports innovation and creativity is evident. The dedicated and reflective board is committed to maintaining the provision of a holistic inclusive education, guided by the philosophy of Loreto Education principles.

The principal and the board work diligently to deliver a very effective learning organisation through support for areas relating to teaching and learning including the progression of e-learning and teacher continuing professional development (CPD). To further inform them on teaching and learning, the board could consider inviting members of staff to address them on aspects of academic provision, such as how the school is implementing and embedding curricular changes.

The senior management team is highly committed to sustaining an environment beneficial to teaching and learning. Senior management sets high expectations for students' learning. They strongly support teachers in the provision of high quality teaching and assessment practices by actively encouraging and facilitating teacher engagement in CPD and in peer collaboration. Senior management consult with and listen to staff and they are open to ideas and initiatives that staff wish to progress. Senior management and relevant staff support and mentor newly qualified teachers through the *Droichead* programme and facilitate student teachers in gaining valuable practical teaching experience.

A broad, mainly academic curriculum is provided. It is praiseworthy that the LCVP has been recently added to the curriculum. Following completion of the Junior Cycle programme, all students participate in a well-designed Transition Year programme that incorporates core and optional

subjects, along with a wide variety of interesting modules. Programme planning for TY requires further development. The TY plan should include comprehensive details of how the programme is delivered and assessed. The large number of teachers delivering TY do not meet as a group to discuss the programme. Senior management should consider the formation of a core team of TY teachers to provide additional oversight of the programme and to deliberate on its future direction in the context of a changed learning environment following student participation in the new Junior Cycle.

A wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities is provided for students. There is good student engagement with a variety of sporting, artistic and social and developmental activities. It is praiseworthy that senior management are making deliberate attempts to strengthen the appreciation of creative arts within the school community.

Students are supported to reflect on their progress as learners and develop a sense of ownership of learning and responsibility for their learning. A cohort of teachers acts as mentors to sixth-year students and through this they encourage and support students to set academic attainment goals. A new leadership post for tracking students' academic progress has recently been established. This good development could further support student attainment by using assessment data from primary school and results from school-based assessments to progress a school-wide mentoring system.

Students' learning experience is underpinned by the creation of a caring, supportive, and respectful school community. A very good rapport was noted between teachers and students during the evaluation, and interactions were highly respectful and inclusive. The well-organised student support system includes class tutors, year heads, chaplain, additional education needs and guidance teams. Regular meetings of the care team and year heads with senior management facilitate timely attention and response to issues of concern.

Support for students with additional learning needs is co-ordinated efficiently. Designated hours allocated by the Department to support students with additional educational needs are used appropriately for their intended purpose. Almost two-thirds of teachers deliver learning support to students. Good practices were noted in many areas including: a register of how learning support is deployed, appropriate sharing of information with teachers, preparation of student support files, and the commencement of team teaching. Areas identified for further development include the need to regularly track and evaluate students' progress, reduce the number of teachers involved in the delivery of support and establish a core learning support team with the required educational expertise and qualifications. The work of the additional educational needs team should be informed by Circular 014/2017 and the *Guidelines for post-primary schools: Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools*.

The guidance department works effectively to support students in their educational, vocational and personal development. Guidance is currently timetabled in senior cycle, while junior-cycle students are supported through the delivery of the Social Personal and Health Education programme. It is advisable to strengthen the Junior Cycle guidance programme. Currently, the guidance plan does not reflect the full range of curricular and co-curricular guidance activities. It is recommended that a core task team be established to progress a whole-school guidance plan. Students in senior cycle are provided with Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE). However, questionnaire data indicates that the procedures for providing parents with information about RSE needs review.

### **Managing the organisation**

The senior management team provides very good quality leadership and management to the school community. They achieve this through very good communication and by fostering a positive school climate. They encourage and model respectful interactions and high levels of collaboration and

respect for staff, parents and students. Both principal and deputy principal maintain visible presence and operate an open-door policy. They bring a complementary range of skills and qualities to their roles as they work together to ensure high functioning day-to-day management.

The newly formed board of management has a good balance of experienced and new members; its members possess a diverse range of skills that greatly enhance management capacity. The board has adopted a strategic management approach as it discharges its responsibilities with integrity and transparency. At each board meeting, the principal gives a comprehensive report on school activities and the operations of the school. An agreed report is prepared for staff and the parents' association after each meeting.

Policy formulation is well developed; a comprehensive suite of policies has been ratified by the board. In general, parents, teachers and students review policies when they are in draft form. It is recommended, however, that consultation occurs at an earlier stage of policy development.

Teaching staff are appropriately deployed according to their qualifications and expertise. Teachers presented as highly dedicated, self-motivated professionals with a strong work ethic. They demonstrated a collective responsibility to engage with and to progress the school's identified priorities as members of task teams. Teachers' commitment to the school through their participation as class tutors, and provision of extra-curricular activities was notable. The principal meets teachers annually to discuss their work and this is good practice.

The school's admissions, transition and induction practices for new students are effectively co-ordinated and managed. A good induction programme helps ensure that first-year students have a sense of belonging to a caring community. Junior cycle students are offered a core curriculum and a range of optional subjects, which are chosen before entering first year. Both students and parents identified in questionnaires subject choice information as an area for further development.

The building and grounds are maintained to a high standard. The board has engaged in strategic planning to provide additional classrooms and development of information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure. Environmental responsibility in the maintenance and use of facilities and resources is actively promoted through the Green Schools programme. The school has attained a fifth Green Flag.

### **Leading school development**

Leadership of school development is very good and it is reflected in the commitment and work of the school community to ensure that the mission statement is enacted every day. Senior management works diligently to maintain a collegial, collaborative and empowering working environment while understanding the importance of managing change processes in a flexible and sensitive manner. They have overseen the establishment of a committee system that involves almost of all teaching staff in progressing identified targets, such as aspects of the SSE process and other developmental priorities. This is providing very good opportunity for leadership development, co-operation and collaboration among staff.

In progressing school development, there has been very good engagement by the school community in the SSE process and the subsequent embedding and evaluation of agreed improvement targets.

Through a strategic planning process, the board and school community have identified a set of additional developmental priorities for the next three years, including further enhancing digital literacy for teachers and students, coaching for middle management and upgrading the infrastructure. To progress the agreed priorities, the board should oversee the development of a time bound action plan informed by baseline data with identifiable targets and success criteria.

Partnership with parents is valued as a means of supporting students' learning. The work of the school is aided by an active parents' association who are involved in numerous events such as organising a careers evening for senior students. The principal generally attends the regular meetings of the association and provides updates on school issues and policy development. The parent questionnaires showed high overall levels of satisfaction with the school, but also indicated a desire for a greater level of information and consultation. The school has also developed good and mutually beneficial relationships with the wider community.

### **Developing leadership capacity**

The board and senior management team regularly reflect and review their professional practice through self-and peer evaluation. The Inspectorate's quality framework, *Looking At Our School*, is used as a reference document to benchmark the quality of their work. This is very good practice. The board and senior management team regularly attend events organised by the Loreto Trust and by national professional bodies to support their own professional development and their leadership and management roles.

Very good distributed leadership is provided through school-based committees, the class tutor system, and the post of responsibility structure. An effective review of the schedule of posts has taken place. The review ensured the needs of the school were reflected in the leadership and management responsibilities. Individual and collective staff contributions to school life are welcomed and highly valued by school management. While teachers have tangible input into the decision-making process, the role of middle management as an advisory and consultative body to senior management could be developed further.

Student participation and student leadership have been fostered to a high degree. An impressive and varied array of opportunities is provided for students to assume active and developmental leadership roles. These include the first-year mentoring programme, the TY-led organising committee for school activities, the Green Schools committee, school prefects, the student council and student leadership of some of the extra-curricular activities. The well-organised student council meets weekly and it is representative of all year groups. The council discusses relevant aspects of school organisation with senior management. It is praiseworthy that a whole-school spirit is being cultivated through the development of a 'house' system whereby all year groups collaborate on group activities. The sense of belonging is further supported by whole school outings.

## **2. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Teaching and learning was of a very high quality in the majority of lessons and good in a minority of the lessons observed. Although teaching approaches observed were exemplary, effective or highly effective in almost all lessons, the areas of differentiation and formative assessment require further development to ensure highly effective provision across all lessons.

### **Learner outcomes and experiences**

Overall, learner outcomes and experiences were very good. Students were given opportunities to work collaboratively, as well as working independently in a purposeful manner. The range of abilities within class groups was generally well managed by the teacher through individual in-class support and differentiated questioning strategies. Nonetheless, there remains scope for teachers to further differentiate tasks and assignments to ensure all students are challenged appropriately.

In all lessons, interactions were very respectful and positive among students themselves and between students and teachers. Student engagement and willingness to participate was very evident. They readily contributed to class discussions, asked questions, offered ideas, and suggested possible solutions with confidence. Students co-operated very well with each other during group activities, such as think-pair-share and peer assessment. Students displayed confidence in language lessons where they availed of very good opportunities to use the target language authentically.

A stimulating learning environment has been created throughout the school. All classrooms had projects and posters which showcased students' work and these displays were also visible on the corridors. Teachers incorporated ICT use into lessons in a highly effective manner which supported learning. Junior cycle students used ICT with a high level of proficiency; they were observed using it as a research tool, for assessment of learning, recording interviews, and as a mini white board. Students demonstrated a commendable knowledge of a range of digital applications which have advanced their ability to access, manage and share content and developed their managing information and thinking skills. To allow students to further develop a strong sense of owning and managing their own learning, teachers could encourage students to independently research topics related to the lesson in advance of the lesson and then share their findings with the group.

The high expectations for students are very evident in the majority uptake of all Leaving Certificate subjects at higher level and in the high attainment in examinations. Students' demonstrated very good subject knowledge and proficiency in the skills required for successful learning at both junior and senior cycle.

### **Teachers' individual and collective practice**

Teaching was very good or good in almost all of the lessons observed. In the highly effective lessons, teachers' individual practice was characterised by the thoughtful selection of activities and preparation of creative, purposeful and appealing resources. Lesson planning was most effective when activities focused on the intended student learning and learning intentions were shared with students in terms of what students should know and be able to do by the end of lessons. To build on this good practice, teachers should consider ways to appropriately differentiate the learning intentions for all learners.

Where practice was very good, teachers ensured a very good balance between teacher and student voice giving students plenty of time to discuss topics and to contribute to the lesson. In the majority of lessons, highly effective practice was observed in balancing challenge and support for students. In a small number of lessons, teachers over-supported students and could have allowed students greater autonomy by making their own notes, summarising their learning or engaging in inquiry-based independent research.

Teachers modelled enthusiasm and enjoyment in learning and set high expectations for their own work and that of their students. They demonstrated a high level of competence and professionalism.

It is commendable that a significant number of teachers have very good professional engagement in peer observation practices with their colleagues to further develop their teaching, learning and assessment practices.

The school has adopted formative assessment as an area to develop as part of the SSE process. Teachers employed a good variety of formative assessment approaches in lessons, but there was scope to further develop written formative assessment practices in the majority of students' copies.

The quality of subject department planning varied from high quality to satisfactory. In some subject departments, Junior Cycle reform has led to planning with very clear alignment between learning outcomes, formative assessment, and teaching approaches. Some very good subject plans had also



incorporated Wellbeing, key skills and statements of learning into planning processes. To further improve the quality of subject plans, Junior Cycle for Teacher (JCT) resources should be used more extensively and effectively to develop units of learning in junior cycle subjects.

### **3. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS**

#### **Leadership and Management**

A number of subject inspections and a whole school evaluation have taken place in recent years. All recommendations in the previous evaluations with the exception of deploying a trained teacher for SEN provision have been successfully addressed by senior management reflecting the very effective leadership and management of the school. School management share recommendations arising from inspections with all teachers for the purpose of integrating best practice throughout the whole school.

#### **Teaching and Learning**

Recommendations from previous reports focused on areas such as subject planning, greater use of varied methodologies, ICT, questioning techniques and student use of the target language. Subject departments and teachers have made substantial progress in the effective implementation of the recommendations.

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

#### **The School's Self-Evaluation Process**

The school community has adopted a reflective and collaborative approach to their work. The school has engaged actively in the SSE process and has been very successful in using it to effect positive changes. Very good practices have been established such as gathering evidence using a variety of tools from an array of sources such as the sixth-year questionnaire. School data has been used very effectively to inform practice and set targets. School improvement plans have been implemented in relation to literacy, numeracy, assessment for learning, ICT use and peer observation. Building awareness and embedding of Junior Cycle key skills in classroom practice has commenced as the next area for SSE. The openness amongst teaching staff to engage with peer observation and to share expertise and experience is commended.

#### **The School's Capacity for Improvement**

There is very high quality management and leadership capacity for improvement at all levels of the school community. This is characterised by team work, commitment, professionalism and the shared vision to put into practice its mission statement.

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

## **Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board of Management and school community welcomes this overwhelmingly positive report.

The Board of Management is pleased that the Loreto ethos was evident in the guiding vision for the school. The inspectorate acknowledged that the work of the school community is characterised by team work, commitment, professionalism and the shared vision.

The report recognised that The Board of Management, in union with senior management, provides highly effective leadership and management.

It was also noted that the core activity of Teaching and learning was highly effective.

## **Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.**

The Board welcomes the recommendations in the report and has put the following in place to address them and we will continue to implement all recommendations, as with previous reports.

We are currently in the process of recruiting a qualified learning support teacher.

Work had commenced on the planning to collaboratively develop a whole school guidance plan and to further improve the TY and three year plan.

Teachers have since attended a CPD on differentiation.

Developing written formative feedback has been included in our SIP for 2019/20 as part of our SSE.

## 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 of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	<i>Very good</i> 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 <i>outstanding</i> 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	<i>Good</i> 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 <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	<i>Satisfactory</i> 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	<i>Fair</i> 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	<i>Weak</i> 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;