

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Marian College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Ballsbridge Dublin 4
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	60500J

Date of Evaluation: 03-10-2019



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

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 (SSE) 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, and Wellbeing).
8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.

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

The school did not meet the requirements in relation to 1 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, by the end of the first day of the evaluation the school furnished evidence of compliance with these requirements.

WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

Dates of inspection	03-10-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with board of management • Meetings with principal and deputy principal • Meetings with key staff • Review of relevant documents • Student focus-group interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Marian College is a voluntary secondary school for boys under the trusteeship of the Marist Brothers. The school has a diverse intake and participates in DEIS, the Department's action plan for equality of opportunity in schools. The school offers the Junior Cycle programme, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the established Leaving Certificate (LC), and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme. Current enrolment stands at 350.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- Overall, school leadership and management is good and the board, senior and middle management are committed to school development; nonetheless longer term strategic and curriculum planning require considerable attention.
- Planning for and the delivery of support for individual students with special educational needs (SEN) is good; however, overall deployment of SEN resources is not fully in line with the new resource allocation model.
- Students are very effectively supported by a range of care structures in an inclusive school community which values diversity.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good, practice ranging from very good to good; in a small number of lessons satisfactory quality was observed.
- Overall, progress in addressing previous recommendations is satisfactory; good progress has been made in addressing a number of recommendations, but others remain areas for improvement.
- The school's engagement with DEIS action planning for improvement is fair overall; there is little clarity among the school community regarding the classroom practices required to meet the current DEIS targets.

Recommendations

- The board should instigate and oversee a full curriculum review and evaluation of the current TY programme, junior and senior cycle subjects and programmes, while also considering the merits of additional short courses, practical subjects, and the Leaving Certificate Applied.
- School management should deploy allocated SEN resources appropriately in line with Circular 0014/2017 and the *Guidelines for Post-primary Schools Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools, DES, 2017*

- The board should lead and oversee the development of a long-term strategic school development plan through a consultation process with all key stakeholders.
- Teachers should plan to include more differentiation, opportunities for students to learn collaboratively, and reflection on learning moments into the fabric of lessons.
- Senior management should lead and monitor a systematic DEIS process to drive further improvements in teaching and learning practices, as highlighted in this and previous reports.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall school leadership and management is good and the board, senior and middle management are committed to school development; nonetheless curriculum and strategic school planning require considerable attention.

Leading learning and teaching

The principal and other school leaders encourage teachers to develop their teaching, learning and assessment practices through the provision of whole staff training days. Recent examples include training for Junior Cycle Wellbeing and digital learning to support the introduction of a new online sharing platform. They also encourage individual uptake of relevant and purposeful professional development opportunities, both subject-specific and leadership development training. A positive and recent development is the school's participation in Forbairt, the Professional Development Service for Teachers' (PDST) action learning programme.

A small number of teachers engage very effectively in peer-observation and find it beneficial in enhancing their classroom practices. A minority of subject departments use the online platform effectively, while the majority of subject departments share good teaching, learning and assessment practices on an informal basis. Leadership of teaching and learning requires improvement to bring about more consistent whole-school approaches to classroom practice, assessment, collaboration and planning. The school self-evaluation process should be used more effectively to identify areas for development, set targets, and measure improvement. Whole-staff capacity should be advanced through greater input from teachers at staff meetings about teaching and learning practices. The deputy principal has been effectively leading a new digital learning plan which has the potential to support student learning once implemented in full. This plan should be progressed without delay and teachers should be provided with further training on how to use the online sharing platform more effectively.

The school welcomes students from initial teacher education programmes. There are a small number of Droichead trained mentors among the staff and newly appointed teachers are provided with a good quality induction programme and information pack.

Those with leadership roles across the whole school effectively promote an inclusive and caring school community which values diversity through involvement in the Green Schools, Active Flag, social justice projects with local and national charities, and visits from a range of guest speakers. There is a strong bond with the Marist Order who are aware of the increasing diversity of the school population. Given the increased diversity within society and the school mirroring these changes, a guest speaker policy should be collaboratively developed with input from students, parents and staff to develop criteria for invited speakers that reflect the evolving ethos of the school.

It is commendable that a large number of staff are involved in voluntary activities such as sports clubs, the school musical and other non-sporting activities. Students are provided with a broad range of extra and co-curricular learning opportunities including lunch time clubs, coding workshops, participation in the BT Young Scientist competition, and guidance-related trips and speakers.

Students are very effectively supported by a range of care structures and systems. The year heads for each year group execute their academic monitoring, behaviour management and caring roles competently. To support the work of year heads, a student support team meets weekly to discuss emerging individual student issues and wider school concerns. The range of interventions and supports available includes a full-time guidance counsellor, a learning support programme, a full-time home-school community liaison teacher, school completion programme supports, student mentoring, breakfast club, after school study, and access initiatives to promote improved student transitions in conjunction with Trinity College Dublin.

In the context of a medium sized school and its student cohort, the current curriculum does not meet the needs of all students as the school offers few practical subjects and does not provide LCA. The curriculum review committee has considered introducing subjects such as Computer Science, Physical Education, and Junior Cycle short courses, but these have not as yet been provided. Two positive curricular developments have been the introduction of a well-developed Junior Cycle Wellbeing Framework programme and an Information and Communications Technology programme delivered as a module for junior cycle and TY students.

Students and parents expressed positive views about their experiences of the TY programme and the developmental benefits arising from activities such as work experience. Notwithstanding this, planning for TY requires significant change as there is no core team leading and developing the programme, no schedule of team meetings, no consistency in modular planning and no annual formal review and evaluation collating the views of students and parents.

The board should oversee a full curriculum review of the current subjects and programmes on offer at both junior and senior cycle, and, in consultation with students and parents evaluate the potential benefits of introducing practical subjects and other programmes.

Managing the organisation

The board of management and the principal are aware of their statutory obligations and work effectively to ensure that all legislative and policy requirements are met. The board effectively discharges its responsibility to create and maintain a climate of security and well-being in the school through the development of clear policies and practices which are regularly reviewed. As part of this review process, the board should consider how to improve oversight and communication of the delivery of the RSE programme, given that a majority of parents in the questionnaire responses did not agree that they had been informed.

The principal and deputy principal are an effective team; they oversee the smooth day-to-day running of the school and work efficiently. They have established clearly identified roles and responsibilities and meet on a daily basis to distribute duties and discuss school issues. Despite the efforts of senior management to improve communication systems, a significant minority of students, parents, and staff feel that communication could be improved. To this end, senior management should review and evaluate the effectiveness of the recently introduced on-line systems.

The principal and the board constantly monitor the efficient use of budgets, personnel, and other resources and direct them appropriately towards identified learning priorities such as the recent upgrading of the ICT infrastructure and new digital hub, training for teachers, and building of a new sports hall. Deployment of staff is generally effective with almost all staff, teaching their subject specialisms. This brings a mix of strengths and skills to subject departments. However, the board and principal should review teacher deployment in the Physical Education (PE) department as there is only one qualified PE teacher leading the programme. A number of other teachers, involved in delivery of the subject do not have a PE qualification. This review should be a priority, especially if the board is considering providing PE as a LC subject.

The co-ordinator for additional education needs works effectively to plan for and co-ordinate the delivery of support for students. It is positive to note that individual student support plans have been successfully developed, identifying each student's priority learning needs and appropriate classroom based strategies for teachers to employ. It is also good practice that a small core team is providing assistance for individuals and that student progress is reviewed on an ongoing basis. However, deployment of special education resources is not fully in line with the resource allocation model as a significant number of hours are being inappropriately used to reduce class sizes, support subject provision and facilitate teacher attendance at meetings. Specific action by the board is required to oversee and address the deficiencies identified. The board and principal should deploy SEN resources for targeted interventions directed at the students most in need of assistance through a variety of support modes and in line with Circular 0014/2017 and the *Guidelines for Post-primary Schools Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools, DES, 2017*.

The principal effectively promotes a culture of individual collaborative review by meeting teachers annually to discuss their work and professional development. It is good practice that middle leaders reflect on their work and write an annual report for the board and that the senior management team reviews its own practices and areas for development on an annual basis.

However, the informal collaborative review practices noted at subject department level require further development. Teachers should use the data available from standardised testing and attainment tracking to inform planning for the future. They should work to align their planning for teaching and learning with the school's DEIS targets and action plans. Student outcomes should also be analysed as part of subject department planning and review.

Leading school development

The board and members of the school community are committed to the current guiding vision and mission which is to provide opportunities for excellence for all students through the provision of a holistic educational experience. However, given the changing diversity of the school population and the fluctuating number of student applications, it is timely for the board to further develop the school's strategic plan, placing greater focus on longer term planning. Targets and actions to increase enrolment and broaden the curriculum should be incorporated into a revised plan. The plan should involve consultation with the relevant stakeholders and should be reviewed and evaluated at regular intervals. Ongoing progress should also be monitored by the board.

The principal and other leaders in the school value and support partnership with parents and the wider community. While small in number, the parents' association is active, attending school events, contributing to policy development and review. The association is very well supported by the principal and the home-school-community liaison (HSCL) co-ordinator who regularly attend meetings.

Positive links have been established with local employers, the School Completion Programme, and sports associations. Connections are nurtured by the HSCL co-ordinator and other members of staff who visit a number of primary schools and support students' transfer experience to post-primary.

Developing leadership capacity

The senior management team encourages staff to take on leadership roles through the effective use of distributed leadership models. A significant number of teachers participate on various committees such as the campus committee, while others volunteer to co-ordinate subject departments. Both the principal and deputy principal have pursued training in leadership development and avail of the advice from national bodies that promote effective management and leadership practices. As part of their leadership functions they support newly appointed middle leaders through the provision of an effective mentoring programme and regular meetings of the middle leadership team.

Those in leadership and management roles value student views, ensuring the student council is elected democratically and included in decision making; during the previous school year students were consulted regarding the restructuring of the timetable to one hour lessons. Both the principal and link teacher attend student council meetings. It is commendable that students are active mentors and participants in school life, and are provided with opportunities to lead various projects such as the Marist leadership project and the induction programme for incoming first-year students. Nonetheless, student responses in the surveys indicate that only a small number agree that they have a say in how things are done in the school. This response merits further exploration and discussion regarding ways to increase the student voice.

2. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Learner outcomes and experiences

Sixteen one-hour lessons were observed. These covered a range of core, optional, practical and non-examination subjects in junior and senior cycle and in TY. The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment was good. The quality of teaching and learning ranged from very good to good. In a few lessons satisfactory practice was observed.

Learner outcomes and experiences

The overall quality of learning in the lessons observed was good. Best practice was noted where a variety of well-planned differentiated strategies supported learning. Students in these lessons were also facilitated to take ownership and responsibility for their own learning through discovery and inquiry. In the small number of experiences where learning was less than good, strategies were not tailored to respond to the wide range of abilities in the group and reflection and evaluation of learning was not planned as an integral part of the lesson. Teachers should plan for and create opportunities for students of varying abilities to experience integrated and challenging differentiation strategies. Students should be provided with the opportunity to reflect on their learning, to collaborate, and to provide teachers with feedback on their learning during each lesson.

Very good quality learning was observed where students were actively engaged in their lessons and where learning was investigative and challenging. In the small number of instances where learner experiences were less than good, teacher instruction prevailed and students had limited opportunity to work collaboratively. Teachers should plan for an appropriate balance between teacher

instruction and student activity and create more opportunities for students to collaborate on learning through group tasks and pair work. Further opportunities for students to role play, debate, question each other and present their work to the class should be incorporated into lessons.

Best practice was also observed where students were afforded the opportunity to engage in active learning tasks, to express their own ideas, to connect with lesson topics, and to offer a range of responses to questions and solutions to problems. In these lessons, teachers provided opportunities for students to apply and develop their knowledge and skills through appropriately challenging activities, tasks and assessment strategies. In some instances, greater use of differentiated strategies, including higher order questioning techniques and individual student attention, to support the learning styles and abilities of all students is recommended.

Student attentiveness and behaviour was exemplary. Most students engaged very diligently in classroom tasks and activities. Classroom management was very good overall and interactions between students and teachers were respectful and positive. Where learning was of a high quality, students achieved the intended learning outcomes for the lesson, and had the opportunity to practise subject-specific, problem-solving and practical skills.

Teachers' individual and collective practice

Overall, the quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good. Teachers were very well prepared, the materials and resources selected were appropriate, and the sequence of learning activities was well planned.

Learning intentions were stated at the outset in some instances. The most effective practice was noted where they were stated in terms of the learning to be attained and where they were revisited with opportunity for appropriate reflective student input. Good practice was also observed where teachers used success criteria so that students were more aware of their strengths and of the areas they needed to develop. These practices should be extended to all lessons.

Teachers used a variety of methodologies to good effect in many lessons. A range of resources was used very effectively to support learning. These included laminated boards, ICT and subject specific materials. Audio-visual clips, presentations and visuals were well utilised to enhance learning. In language lessons best practice was observed where there was an integrated approach to the development of the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing and the experience of language immersion improved students' competence in communicating in the target language.

Teachers' enthusiasm for and expertise in their subject area was prominent in all lessons. Their clear explanation of topics, demonstration of practical skills, effective management and monitoring of classroom tasks greatly supported student learning.

Some teachers engage successfully in providing developmental formative written feedback on homework and student assignments. There is substantial scope to further develop and embed assessment practices that assist students to build on their capabilities and address areas where they need to improve. Teachers should encourage students to make a written record of oral feedback provided during lessons.

There was evidence of planning as a collaborative and reflective process in some of the subject plans examined. These plans also showed very good awareness of recent curricular developments including the new specifications implemented at Junior Cycle. However, many of the subject plans require substantial development in order to reflect the teaching, learning and assessment strategies

needed to support DEIS action planning. To this end, teachers of Junior Cycle should utilise Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) resources to develop collaborative planning.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

Overall, implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations is satisfactory. However a number of significant recommendations, that still need to be enacted at a whole-school level, should be addressed as a matter of priority.

Leadership and Management

Strategic planning as outlined in the recent DEIS report continues to require attention. There is scope to better utilise the available data, including individual subject attainment, to inform target setting and support the identification of teaching and learning practices for improvement.

Teaching and Learning

There has been good progress in some subject department planning with an appropriate variety of teaching and learning activities identified to optimise students' experience of the one-hour lessons. However, a number of previous recommendations, that have general whole-school application, such as greater use of differentiation and more opportunities for students to engage in collaborative discussions, continue to require development as they have not as yet become embedded whole-school practices.

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

The School's Self-Evaluation Process

The DEIS action planning process has brought about some improvement in a number of thematic areas, most importantly in attendance and literacy. A number of literacy and numeracy initiatives such as book in the bag and common approaches to calculations have been successfully embedded. Some progress was also noted in the provision of formative developmental feedback to students. However, teachers were not able to clearly identify the strategies being promoted for improving teaching, learning and assessment as part of the current DEIS action plan. The DEIS leadership team needs to identify the practices which require improvement and communicate them to the entire staff. DEIS priorities should then inform classroom practice and progress should be regularly monitored and discussed at whole-staff level. The status and progress of the DEIS action plan should also be shared with the wider school community.

The School's Capacity for Improvement

The capacity for school improvement is good; the school has effective school management, an enthusiastic teaching staff, all supported by a diverse school community.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A. Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board thanks all the members of the school community, teaching and non-teaching staff, students, parents, board members for their engagement in the process.

The board welcomes the positive feedback in relation to teaching and learning, exemplary student behaviour, very effective care supports, the broad programme of extra-curricular activities and the contribution of the wider school community to the inclusive and diverse rich fabric of the school

The board endorses comments relating to the effectiveness of senior management

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 of Marian College welcomes the recommendations issued by the Department of Education Inspectorate.

The school will continue the review process with regard to subject planning.

The school has commenced work in reviewing our Curriculum, TY programme and SSE. We recognise the new model of allocation in SEN and will work to deliver such hours as recommended.

The Board will consider the recommendations regarding deployment of teaching staff within the current recruitment and retention context

We query the accuracy of the survey responses that suggest only a small number of students have a say in the running of the school. Evidence in the rest of the report outlines that students are active participants in school life and take key leadership roles in a number of projects as well as the participation of the Principal and link teacher in the students' council.

The board would also like to acknowledge the significant work undertaken by the staff parents and students in changing the school start and finish times and moving the school to a 1-hour timetable following the DEIS evaluation in 2017

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;