

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Catholic University School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	89 Lower Leeson Street Dublin 2
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	60540V

Date of Evaluation: 18-10-2018



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.

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.

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.

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

At the time of the evaluation, the school did not meet the requirements in relation to checks 3, 5 and 7 and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, school management has subsequently furnished evidence of compliance with all these requirements.

WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING.

Dates of inspection	15, 16 and 18 October 2018
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

The Catholic University School is a fee-charging, all-boys Catholic post-primary school, under the trusteeship of the Marist Education Authority. The school recently celebrated its 150th anniversary. There are currently 525 students enrolled. The school provides the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate programme, as well as a compulsory Transition Year.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of leadership and management is good; school management is keen to lead and mediate change to respond to the evolving needs of students.
- Risks identified in a recent fire safety audit, which had been commissioned by the board of management, had not been fully rectified at the time of the evaluation.
- Senior management and staff work diligently to promote a positive learning culture; they have high expectations for their students.
- Commendably, a broad range of curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular programmes is provided; although aspects of provision for special educational needs (SEN) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) are in need of review.
- The quality of teaching and learning observed was good overall; there was scope to enhance student interaction and discussion in a significant minority of lessons.
- The implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations is not satisfactory.
- While the school has a good capacity for school improvement, there is considerable scope to develop its formal school self-evaluation (SSE) process and collaborative planning.

Recommendations

- The board should ensure that the issues identified in the fire safety audit are rectified as a priority.
- School management should oversee the development and implementation of a robust SSE process; consideration should be given to including responsibility for leading SSE and developments in teaching and learning as part of its review of middle-management posts.
- School management should ensure that all of the hours allocated to SEN are used in accordance with Circular 14/2017, and that all senior cycle students receive the full programme of RSE.

- Teachers should further integrate differentiated, student-centred, active methodologies and formative assessment in lessons to ensure all students are appropriately challenged and supported.
- Subject departments should ensure that all curricular plans are comprehensive, active documents designed to collaboratively support and enhance teaching, learning and assessment.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of school leadership and management is good.

Leading learning and teaching

The quality of leading learning and teaching is good. The board of management and senior management team promote a positive learning environment, and they have high expectations for both students and staff.

Education, in the Marist tradition, is defined as a *“formation of heart, mind, character and virtue”*. The school strives to foster students’ holistic development by providing a broad range of curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular learning opportunities. School management recognises the talents and interests of teachers and is open to innovation; these school strengths are reflected in recent additions to the curriculum, including Technology, Politics and Society, *Learning to Learn* and Information Technology.

The board actively promotes and supports teachers’ continuing professional development (CPD). It has ambitious plans to develop its educational facilities, and to foster a greater appreciation of music, culture and the arts among its student body. To this end plans have been prepared for the construction of a new block of specialist rooms on the campus which will be dedicated to STEAM subjects – Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics.

The need to develop Information and Communications Technology (ICT) as a learning tool in lessons was identified by both teachers and students in their responses to questionnaires, which were administered as part of the evaluation. The school is currently developing its Digital Learning Framework strategy, with a view to improving its broadband infrastructure, creating an e-learning platform and successfully embedding digital technologies into teaching, learning and assessment.

The TY programme combines academic study, with a variety of modules in a wide range of interesting activities, including tours, work experience and community outreach. The school is commendably aiming to achieve certification for some of its key TY modules. During the evaluation students expressed their appreciation of the more active methodologies used in TY. However, they expressed the view that some of their project tasks were too theoretical and classroom-based in nature. They stated a preference for more active, experiential learning outside the classroom.

Provision for students with special educational needs (SEN) is effective overall. Student support files have been developed in many cases, but some work remains to be done in this area. SEN planning is based appropriately on the continuum of support framework and very good use of assessment data. It was evident during the evaluation that there was a need for closer collaboration and coordination between the SEN department and other teachers who are

providing supports to students. It is recommended that a small SEN core team, with appropriate training, be established to ensure more effective collaborative planning and coordination in this regard.

There was evidence that a small number of the SEN hours were not being used in accordance with Circular 14/2017, but were being used to create small classes for students taking Ordinary Level Mathematics and English at senior cycle. The school's SEN policy predates the 2017 Circular and the new allocation model. It is recommended that school management ensure that all of the hours allocated to SEN are used in accordance with Circular 14/2017, and that its SEN policy be reviewed and updated in line with the most recent Circular.

The quality of student care overall is good. Students' behaviour during the evaluation was observed to be exemplary. Additional high-quality measures have recently been put in place to support students' wellbeing. There is a clear ladder of referral in place, supported by an effective system of class head, year head and the student-support team. Responses to questionnaires demonstrate that the vast majority of students feel safe and well cared for in the school.

Guidance Counselling supports include the services of a psychotherapist and a full-time school guidance counsellor who specialises in career guidance. Currently Guidance is timetabled solely for TY class groups. Career talks are held regularly for sixth-year students. Consideration should be given to providing short modules of classroom Guidance to all senior-cycle students. Questionnaire data demonstrate that both students and parents would welcome more information and advice from teachers in relation to subject choices. It is suggested that school management review its guidance counselling provision to ensure a more holistic, integrated, whole-school approach across all year groups.

Questionnaire responses from parents and students indicate that there is inconsistency in the quality and frequency of RSE provision at senior cycle. It is recommended that the school ensures that the full RSE programme is provided to all students, in line with Circular 0037/2010.

There was evidence that the school regularly provides placements for student teachers, many of whom are past pupils. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome. It is equally commendable that a number of staff are involved in *Droichead*, the national induction programme for newly qualified teachers.

Managing the organisation

The day-to-day management of the school is well organised, although policy development requires further development.

The principal works well with the board to create and maintain a learning organisation that delivers good learning experiences for all. In their responses to questionnaires both parents and staff expressed high levels of satisfaction with the manner in which the school is being run. The vast majority of staff also reported a high level of morale.

School management is aware of its statutory obligations, and is currently working to ensure that all legislative requirements are fulfilled. All of the mandatory policies are in place, but many are outdated. Commendably the board has begun a systematic review of its policies in consultation with the relevant stakeholders. Policies that have recently been redrafted include the Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Data Protection and CPD for staff. It is recommended that the board plan a review of its Admissions Policy in order to bring its selection criteria into line with the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, key sections of which are scheduled to commence in 2020/21.

School management understands the school's responsibilities for health and safety matters and recently commissioned an electrical and fire safety audit. The report highlighted the need for significant remedial work, particularly in some of the older houses and school buildings. It is imperative that school management ensure that the risks identified are rectified without delay.

The senior management team manages human resources well. There is good practice evident in the deployment of teachers and the high turnover of new staff is well managed. The principal, board and bursar constantly monitor the use of budgets and other resources and direct them towards identified learning priorities. At the time of the evaluation the school's finance sub-committee was no longer meeting. It is recommended that the board re-convene its finance sub-committee in line with best practice.

Leading school development

The new board and newly-appointed principal are keen to lead and mediate change to respond to the evolving needs of students and staff, with a view to ongoing school improvement.

Building on the work of the previous board and informed by the reports of the principal, the current board has identified a range of appropriate developmental priorities, such as infrastructural upgrade, additional subject options, enhanced student supports, developing leadership capacity and continued support of teachers' collaborative practice and professional development.

While some progress in all of these areas is evident, the absence of a formal school self-evaluation (SSE) process and of collaborative action planning limits the school's capacity to measure actual progress and to engage the school community fully in its implementation.

A very active Parents' Association is in place that is very supportive of the school. Its members assist at a wide range of school events. The association takes a keen interest in developments in the school and in education generally. It is very effective at communicating its views to school management, although questionnaire responses indicate that there is scope to enhance the quality of its communication with the wider parent body. Commendably a sub-committee of the association has been established to assist in the review of school policies.

Developing leadership capacity

The senior management team has prioritised the development of leadership capacity among teachers and students. They encourage staff to take on leadership roles and are willing to distribute significant leadership responsibilities, through the newly-introduced year head system, for example. Teachers give very generously of their time to support students in a wide range of activities. They expressed the view that their work and contributions are valued and appreciated by school management.

The appointment of year heads, independent of the post structure, has impacted on the role of the deputy principal, who previously was assigned many of their duties. During the evaluation it was evident that there was a lack of clarity regarding the specific roles and responsibilities of the deputy principal. It is recommended that the board oversee a process whereby the specific roles of each member of the senior management team are more clearly defined and agreed between the parties.

Responsibilities for various aspects of school provision are distributed amongst a middle management team comprising four assistant principals (AP1) and three special duties teachers (AP2). Management and staff are agreed that the post structure as currently operating is not working effectively. There is scope for a better alignment between the duties and the school's

developmental priorities. Additional middle-management posts have recently been allocated to the school, and the school community has commenced an overall review of the schedule of posts. In the forthcoming review, it is advised that post-holder duties provide greater opportunities for instructional leadership, curriculum development and SSE in line with the recommendations contained in Circular 03/2018.

The senior management team is keen to encourage greater collaboration and teamwork among staff in all aspects of school life. They encourage individuals and working groups to lead developments in key areas. They support students in taking leadership roles by providing opportunities to lead many school initiatives. There remains considerable scope to promote the student voice both inside and outside of the classroom. Questionnaire responses indicate that the vast majority of the wider student body would like a greater say in how things are done in the school.

2. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Learner outcomes and experiences

The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good. In the most effective lessons the appropriate balance was achieved between teacher exposition and student interaction. There was scope to enhance the depth of students' learning in a significant minority of lessons, through the use of more active learning and student-centred approaches, greater use of differentiation, as well as formative assessment strategies.

In all lessons observed, the school's ethos of "forming students into gentlemen who display courtesy and sensitivity to all" was very visible. Interactions among students and between students and teachers were very respectful and positive.

Questionnaire responses indicate that the vast majority of students feel that they are doing well at school. Students demonstrated an enjoyment of learning. They were motivated to learn and they had high expectations of success as learners.

In all lessons observed students were provided with opportunities to work independently in a purposeful and productive manner. At times effective use was made of student self-reflection exercises. The most effective lessons were characterised by collaborative learning approaches such as pair work, group work, and *think, pair and share* activities. In these lessons, student seating had been carefully arranged to facilitate collaborative work.

In almost half of lessons observed an imbalance was evident between teacher exposition and student input. The teachers' voice predominated and opportunities for greater student interaction and discussion were not fully exploited. Students were often given information and they copied notes down that the teacher provided. In a minority of instances students were encouraged to reflect on what they had learned during the lesson and make their own notes, which is commendable practice. It is recommended that the very effective practice observed in some classrooms of promoting student reflection, discussion and note making should be extended to more lessons.

In-class assessment took mainly the form of teachers' questioning of students. These were generally higher-order questions and the quality of answering was of a high standard. Often the questioning was an appropriate mix of directed and global questioning. In a minority of lessons observed questions were asked of the general class, and it fell to the same small number of students to volunteer answers.

Best practice in developing skills as independent learners and critical thinkers were noted in a minority of lessons, where key skills such as managing one's own learning, peer evaluation and higher order reflection were developed. Very effective practice was observed where the success criteria and an assessment rubric were shared with students, and where time was provided for a commendable combination of peer assessment, self-assessment and teacher assessment of student tasks. There is scope to extend this very effective practice throughout the school by facilitating professional peer observation among teaching colleagues in actual lessons.

Teachers' individual and collective practice

In all the lessons visited teachers had high expectations of students' work and behaviour. Teachers demonstrated high levels of competence and proficiency in the skills and knowledge of their subject areas. Through their own enthusiasm for and enjoyment of their subject area, they motivated students to enjoy their learning.

Highly effective enquiry-based approaches to learning were observed in many lessons, where teachers skilfully managed their own input to optimise student participation and response. In these lessons the pace and pitch of the lesson were appropriately challenging. Active methodologies and differentiated approaches were used to stimulate student thought and engagement, and to promote the student voice. Teachers drew on the students' own findings and ideas to build on and extend student learning. Many students demonstrated high levels of participation in such lessons, contributing with confidence their ideas, opinions and experiences to class discussion and applying their learning to real-life situations.

In a significant number of lessons, however, the same content was delivered in the same way for all students. It is recommended that teachers further integrate differentiated, student-centred, active methodologies and formative assessment in lessons to ensure all students are appropriately challenged and supported.

In their responses to questionnaires, students agreed that teachers encouraged them to do their best, but did not always tell them how they could improve. This highlights the importance of formative assessment and the benefits of teachers' providing constructive feedback to students. In a minority of lessons visited, teachers provided regular, constructive developmental oral and written feedback on how to improve their work. It is recommended that the provision of constructive feedback to students on how to improve their work be extended.

As students sit summative tests every six weeks, teachers should use their feedback to work with students on clear strategies for further improvement. At subject department level, teachers should discuss ways of using formative assessment to assess student progress in all aspects of student learning.

Highly effective planning for the Junior Cycle was evident in some subject departments. A minority of plans were based solely on chapters of text books. It is recommended that subject departments ensure that all curricular plans are comprehensive, active documents designed to collaboratively support and enhance teaching and learning. The current development of an e-learning platform should prove helpful in encouraging individual teachers and departments to share best practice.

In order to lead further developments it is recommended that school management establish a core teaching and learning team to lead, support and build on the good work of teachers and subject departments.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

The implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations overall is not satisfactory, although good progress is evident in relation to recommendations regarding leadership and management. In recent years subject inspections have been conducted in English, Geography, CSPE and Physical Education (PE).

Leadership and Management

Very good progress has been made in implementing recommendations regarding timetabling and the provision of PE from first year through to TY. PE is not yet timetabled for students in fifth and sixth year, although good provision is made for games on Wednesdays. It is suggested that school management explore the feasibility in the medium term of offering PE to senior students as an optional examination subject in the Leaving Certificate.

Teaching and Learning

Partial progress has been made in relation to implementing and sharing the teaching and learning recommendations. It is recommended that opportunities be created for teachers to share the outcomes of inspections with colleagues in other subject areas, with a view to devising action plans for further improvement. Previous reports recommended that all students should be appropriately challenged and more actively engaged in their learning, and that teachers should provide more formative assessment and constructive feedback. As observed in lessons during this evaluation, there is considerable scope to implement these recommendations more widely and extend these very good practices to more lessons. These recommendations are re-stated in this report.

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

While the school has a good capacity for school improvement, there is considerable scope to develop its formal school self-evaluation process.

The School's Self-Evaluation Process

The overall quality of the formal school self-evaluation process is not satisfactory. School management has identified areas for improvement and devised a detailed developmental plan for the school. However, there is little evidence that the six-step SSE process was followed, or that there was widespread consultation or collaboration with the school community, when the plan was being devised. School management reports that they are currently promoting a more collaborative culture with all the relevant stakeholders.

In the past, staff have promoted initiatives in literacy and numeracy, and additional subjects have been added to the curriculum. It is positive that the Digital Learning Framework is being developed following the six-step SSE process. Currently there is no school improvement plan or summary report in place as required, in line with Circular 40/2016. A coordinator for SSE has yet to be appointed.

It is recommended that school management oversee the development and implementation of a robust SSE process. Consideration should be given to including responsibility for SSE and leading teaching and learning as part of its current review of middle-management posts.

The School's Capacity for Improvement

During the evaluation both management and staff demonstrated good capacity, a willingness and a strong commitment to bring about ongoing school improvement.

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 of quality the school's provision of 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 <i>very good</i> 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;