

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

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| Ainm na scoile / School name | Chanel College |
| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Coolock Village Malahide Road Dublin 5 |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number | 60550B |

Date of Evaluation: 10-02-2017



WHAT IS A WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING?

Whole-School Evaluations – Management, Leadership and Learning report on the quality of teaching and learning and on the quality of management and leadership in a school. They affirm good practice and make 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 on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

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| Dates of inspection | 10-02-2017 |
| 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

Chanel College is an all-boys voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of the Marist Fathers. The school provides a broad curriculum and participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. Enrolment has increased steadily over recent years and currently stands at 604 students.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- School leadership and management at all levels is very effective.
- Well-organised support for students with additional learning needs currently involves a large team of teachers.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the majority of lessons was very good: further sharing of good practice would benefit students.
- Recommendations from previous inspections have been effectively implemented and the school has a very good capacity to manage and lead improvement.
- Planning for DEIS provision is very effective; student attainment has improved but there is scope for further attention to this area.
- Some preparation for the new Junior Cycle framework has been completed; planning meetings are not taking place at present due to industrial action.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The number of teachers involved in learning support should be reduced and the level of expertise increased over time.
- Staff should re-engage with initiatives designed to promote the sharing of best classroom practice.
- The school should review current strategies aimed at improving student attainment.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

1.1. School ownership and management:

The overall quality of school management is very good. The board of management was established in October 2016, and board members have received training from both the Marist Education Authority (MEA) and the Joint Managerial Body. Meetings are well organised and relevant issues are communicated appropriately to the wider school community. The board is very committed to the success of the school, works very closely with the principal, and provides great support in dealing with ongoing issues.

The board has overseen the development of a school plan which includes planning for DEIS. A range of mandatory policies has been developed. The board is very active in reviewing school policies and has identified priorities for development such as promoting the overall academic progress of students. The implementation of more formal systems for reviewing progress of such priorities in the future would be helpful to the board.

The school patron is very proactive in establishing and maintaining a guiding vision for the school. The MEA provides great support to the school and facilitates links with other Marist schools. For example, the senior management teams from each Marist school meet regularly. A chaplaincy team, including a school chaplain provided by the Marist Fathers, works to maintain and implement the school's guiding vision.

The senior management team, composed of the principal and deputy principal, lead and manage the organisational structures in the school very effectively. They have complementary skills and work very well as a team. Effective systems for communicating information have been implemented and they have developed a strong culture of mutual trust and respect. A very positive school climate is reflected in the high levels of satisfaction with the running of the school shown in surveys of students, parents and teachers.

Senior management encourage and support staff to take on leadership roles. Responsibility for specific aspects of school life has been devolved to a range of posts of responsibility. Assistant principals are year heads and in this role they provide a significant contribution to the student experience. In addition, they provide valuable support to senior management in dealing with various issues. Special-duties posts provide good organisational support to the operation of the school. In light of the increasing enrolment and the changing needs of the school, it is good practice that a review of the post structure has already commenced. In addition to formal posts, many staff have a commendable involvement in supporting the school's mission to maximise student potential.

Survey findings indicate that a majority of students are proud to be in the school and feel safe and cared for. Students' views are valued by the school and their opinions on specific issues, such as transition year, have been sought. At the time of the evaluation, the election of a new student council was being organised. The new council will provide an opportunity to canvas students' views on more general issues; the need for this was indicated in student survey findings. Another opportunity to develop leadership skills is provided by the involvement of senior students as prefects and mentors to first-year students.

School management values partnership with parents as a means of supporting students' learning and wellbeing. The parents association is supported to play an active role in school life. A liaison teacher acts as a direct link with the association and it is commendable that parents are consulted on school development planning and other ongoing issues. An innovative practice is the role parents play as facilitators at an annual meeting of first-year parents. Increased online access to students' records allows parents to keep more up-to-date with their children's progress. Survey results show that parents feel welcome in the school and that the school is well run.

1.2. Effectiveness of leadership for learning

The quality of leadership of, and support for, student learning is very good. Senior management actively promotes innovation and creativity. For example, an online software package is being used to support collaboration between teachers and subject groups. Future expansion of this initiative will more proactively include students through the sharing of learning resources. Senior management values the individual and collective contributions made by teachers to improving the provision for students. They also recognise the importance of regular review and monitoring to support the achievement of agreed priorities. For example, the senior management team develops an annual list of priority areas for attention and reviews progress at regular intervals. School management encourage participation in continuing professional development (CPD) and they liaise closely with subject departments by setting agenda items and reviewing minutes of meetings.

The quality of support and care for students is excellent. Clear policies to ensure the wellbeing of students are in place. The student-support service team plays a very effective role in coordinating various elements of the care structures. Staff have a great awareness of students' needs and the form class at the start of the school day is a very useful way of supporting students. Curricular provision of Guidance, Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Religious Education (RE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is very well coordinated.

Students are very well supported at times of transition during their school life. The school has very good systems for liaising with feeder primary schools and supporting incoming first-year students. Information evenings for parents and students are organised to help students make good subject and programme choices.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that has evolved to meet the needs of students. The Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), Transition Year (TY) and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) are very well organised. The LCA programme has been provided in the past but uptake has been insufficient to run the programme in recent years. An openness to curricular change is evidenced by the different approaches used for implementing the JCSP programme and in the operation of TY. Parents expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the school's curriculum and in particular the TY programme.

Some planning for the introduction of the new Junior Cycle Framework is underway. For example, the timetable is being reviewed. However, it was reported that planning meetings and attendance at relevant CPD events are not now taking place, due to industrial action.

During the evaluation, student behaviour was exemplary. The code of behaviour is very clearly set out in student journals and responses to questionnaires indicate that students are very aware of the school rules. Form teachers and year heads play a very effective role in implementing the code which

promotes the resolution of issues at classroom level and requires the formal recording of relevant information before incidents are referred onwards.

Support for students with additional learning needs is well organised. Planning for learning support is carried out by a core team of qualified learning-support teachers. Learning support is provided mainly through withdrawal of individuals or small groups with some team teaching. The core team provides support for students with the most complex needs and a larger group of teachers provide more subject-focused learning support. Monthly records of work completed by this larger group of teachers are reviewed by the principal. While this monthly review assists in monitoring work completed, consideration should be given to planning ahead, with the assistance of the core team, for the particular needs of the relevant students. It is recommended that the school review how learning support is provided with a view to reducing the size of the team involved and increasing the level of expertise over time.

Confirmation was provided that the board of management has formally adopted the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* without modification and that the school is compliant with the requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

1.3. Management of facilities

Management maintains the school building and grounds to a very high standard. A new extension, including art and technology rooms, is planned for completion in the coming year. The school has a wide range of specialist rooms and has very good access to high-quality sporting facilities through its links with a neighbouring GAA club.

Teachers are classroom based for the most part and good information and communication technology (ICT) facilities are provided in all classrooms. Teachers indicated some dissatisfaction with access to ICT facilities; this issue should be further investigated by management. Extensive displays of students' achievements and notice boards relating to various aspects of school life create a lively atmosphere throughout the school.

The school completed some work towards the achievement of a Green Flag for environmental awareness some years ago; the new student council could adopt this project and bring it to completion in future years.

A health and safety audit of the school has been completed and the relevant policy has been reviewed. Emergency evacuations are practiced once a term and it was reported that all students were able to safely assemble in the designated zones within minutes. It is good practice that a significant number of staff have accessed training in first-aid and the use of a defibrillator.

2. QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

A range of lessons across different subjects and programmes was observed during the evaluation. The quality of teaching and learning was very good in the majority of lessons.

The most effective lessons were well planned and characterised by a high level of interest and participation on the part of students. These lessons were dynamic, purposeful, and there were high expectations of what students should be able to do and achieve.

In the majority of lessons, it was evident that teachers had a clear plan and all materials to be used had been sourced in advance. Resources such as worksheets, notes and the use of ICT were designed to support student learning. While students were made aware of clear learning intentions at the start of most lessons, teachers should be mindful to leave time for a comprehensive consolidation of the learning intentions at the end of lessons.

Lessons were conducted in an orderly environment. Students were encouraged to contribute their opinions and experiences to discussions. They answered questions confidently and were respectful of each other. In a few lessons, students' learning was enhanced by their questioning of the teacher. In many lessons, students asked very few questions. It would be worthwhile for teachers to explore ways of increasing the level of questioning by students themselves, as this is a very valuable part of the learning process.

In very effective lessons, students enjoyed learning and were motivated to learn. This was most evident where the classroom activities were well structured, challenging and when students were engaged purposefully in a variety of tasks. For example, there was some very good use of collaborative learning such as group work and think, pair, share activities. Group work was most effective when students were assigned clear roles and instructions and were allowed to work independently.

The use of ICT in many lessons facilitated learning. Best practice was observed where video, animations and sound effects helped to develop understanding of complex concepts as well as presenting information. In some other lessons, students' understanding of concepts was supported by the use of concrete materials or practical examples.

Care was taken in many lessons to develop students' subject-specific literacy skills. Key words were often noted and explained. All classrooms had good displays of subject-related posters and items of student work. In language classes, students had ample opportunities to use the target language.

Students' learning was supported in many lessons where new content was related to prior learning and to general knowledge. Brainstorming was used to determine what students already knew about topics and to make it easier for them to relate to new material.

It was clear that teachers are very aware of their students' differing learning needs. Best practice was observed where lesson content was scaffolded to make it accessible to all learners. However, there were some lessons observed where the same content was provided in the same way for all students. Teachers should explore strategies that provide extra support, or extra challenge, to cater for the full range of abilities present in mixed-ability settings.

During the evaluation, students' progress was assessed through teacher observation, written work and in-class questioning. Questioning of students was most effective in lessons which incorporated a good balance between direct-recall questions and more open-ended higher-order questions. In these instances, the students were challenged to think, recall, analyse and explain the topic by themselves. However, in line with the aims set out in the school's plan for improvement in the use of assessment-

for-learning techniques, there is scope to develop the use of success criteria and self-assessment or peer-assessment strategies.

Homework was allocated in all lessons. In general, homework was corrected in class as a group activity. Formative comments by teachers were found in some written work reviewed during the evaluation though most written work was simply checked for completion. In some instances, there was a need to ensure that students recorded homework in their journals more carefully at the end of lessons.

In instances where teaching and learning were less successful, students were more passive than active, learning intentions were not consolidated, the pace and amount of content covered were inappropriate, a whole-class teaching methodology did not facilitate differentiation, and students could have been expected to do more. Teachers' commendable interest in promoting improvement in teaching and learning is evident in their participation in subject planning and in initiatives such as a peer-observation project. In some cases, teachers seek the views of students on their classroom practice. When circumstances allow, it is recommended that staff should re-engage more formally with peer observation, and other initiatives such as collaborative lesson planning, in order to share and widen the use of best classroom practice.

Subject plans were reviewed for a range of subjects. Subject planning is well established. Each department has a coordinator and there is very good informal and formal collaboration. Good records of meetings are maintained; however, due to industrial action department meetings have been limited this year. It is good practice that common schemes of work have been developed and that staff share teaching resources and assessment materials. The plans reviewed showed a clear link with DEIS planning such as subject planning for provision of literacy and numeracy.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

3.1. Management

Very good progress is evident in the implementation of recommendations of previous inspections relating to areas of school management. Issues regarding the storage of chemicals have been resolved. Mathematics teachers have actively pursued relevant CPD opportunities and have engaged with peer observation in order to share good practice. The TY mathematics programme has been adapted to include more diverse content.

3.2. Learning and teaching

Good progress is evident in the implementation of recommendations of previous inspections relating to teaching and learning. Mathematics, English and Science teachers have focused collaboratively on incorporating more active methodologies into classroom practice. Teaching resources have been developed and are shared electronically. There is scope for further integration of assessment-for-learning methodologies across all subject areas and for more effective use of learning intentions to assess lesson progress.

Previous inspections have been given good consideration. Subject departments were required to provide a formal report to management on actions planned or implemented following the inspection. All staff were informed of the main findings and recommendations and encouraged to reflect on the implications for their own subject area.

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

The school has actively engaged with DEIS planning and school self-evaluation (SSE) processes over recent years. Notwithstanding the limitations around meeting time due to current industrial action, the leadership of the DEIS planning process is very effective. A high level of devolved leadership is evident in the significant role played by individual teachers in the school's improvement agenda. Focused groups of staff have taken responsibility for leading specific areas of DEIS provision. Strategic plans are in place for all DEIS themes. Significant baseline data has been gathered and reviewed. Action plans have been developed and have led to very good outcomes in key areas. For example, the school has achieved very good success in the area of retention. In line with the Marist vision for education, the school has shown a very significant commitment to delivering equality of opportunity to students. This is particularly evident in the care structures provided.

Improving student outcomes in terms of examination attainment has been a particular focus of DEIS planning. Subject-specific plans for improvement in this area have been developed and strategies for enhancing good teaching and learning practice have been implemented. While some improvements in uptake of subjects at higher-level and overall grade profiles have been achieved, there is scope for further improvement in overall student attainment. The school should review how effective the current strategies to improve attainment are, identify barriers to success and explore strategies to further support students achieving their full potential. For example, in addition to the academic tracking currently in place, students may benefit from a more structured mentoring system.

The school has managed many changes very successfully over recent years including increased enrolment, curricular changes and the ongoing review of school policies and systems. Currently, the school is exploring a new timetable structure in conjunction with the introduction of the new Junior Cycle Framework and also planning for a new building extension. The quality of school management and leadership is very good and staff are very committed to providing the best possible educational and social provision for the students in their care. Parents are very supportive of the school and all partners share the Marist vision of promoting the 'best spiritual, intellectual and physical self'. In light of these strengths, the school has a very good capacity to manage and lead improvement into the future.

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 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 very good standard. | Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement |
| Satisfactory | Satisfactory applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard. | Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas |
| Fair | Fair applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better. | Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve |
| Weak | Weak applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements. | Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties; |