

**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>	Mount Carmel Secondary School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	King's Inns Street Dublin 1
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	60853T

**Date of Evaluation: 09-05-2019**



---

**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 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.

## **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	07, 08 and 09-05-2019
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

Mount Carmel Secondary School is a voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of the Religious Sisters of Charity and has a current enrolment of 383 girls. The school provides the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), an optional Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programmes. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the Department of Education and Skills action plan for educational inclusion.

### Summary of main findings and recommendations:

#### Findings

- The overall quality of school management and leadership is very good.
- A broad curriculum is supported by a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular interventions that respond to the specific needs of students.
- Very effective student care structures are evident and a valuable range of interventions is provided for students; however, aspects of the provision and organisational structures for students with special educational needs (SEN) require improvement.
- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment observed was good; although there were times when some learners were not optimally engaged or challenged.
- The agreed DEIS interventions that support literacy and numeracy targets are proving very effective; interventions focused on developing classroom practice to support attainment targets need development.
- Overall, good progress has been made in the implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations and the school demonstrates a very good capacity for improvement.

#### Recommendations

- Management should ensure that the resources allocated for the organisation and provision of support to students with additional learning needs are deployed in accordance with Circular 14/2017 and the *Guidelines for Post Primary Schools Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools*.
- Teachers should plan for and use more student-centred methodologies to maximise learner engagement; differentiated teaching and assessment approaches should be used to provide appropriate challenge to all learners.
- Subject teams should develop and implement teaching and learning interventions which have a greater emphasis on the improvement of learners' experiences and outcomes at classroom level to support the DEIS attainment targets.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of school management and leadership is very good.

#### Leading learning and teaching

All members of the school community have a shared vision of providing for a holistic education in a caring and supportive environment. A broad curriculum is supported by a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular interventions that respond to the specific needs of students. Very good links with the community are evident through the wide range of initiatives designed to broaden the learning experiences provided for students. For almost all subjects the time allocation is appropriate. However, provision for Physical Education in sixth year is below the recommended time allocation. This should be addressed.

School management promotes a culture of reflection and on-going improvement. The board, in consultation with all stakeholders, has effectively developed a five-year strategic plan which identifies targets for improvement across a number of areas. Targets identified include the development of the LCA programme and the enhancement of provision for students with SEN and from minority ethnic backgrounds.

School management is strongly committed to leading a school that provides high quality teaching and learning. Both members of the senior management team attend continuing professional development (CPD) regularly to support their leadership role in teaching and learning. The board of management has also facilitated a large cohort of teachers to attend CPD in Instructional Leadership and Teaching and Learning in the Twenty-First Century. Teachers are also engaging with a range of subject-specific CPD. Commendably, there is an openness to sharing learning with colleagues, including a willingness to share classroom practice.

Senior management and staff are strongly committed to providing high quality student care. Year heads play a key role in overseeing the academic and pastoral progress of students in their year group. A good wellbeing programme is in operation and tutor time is used effectively to deliver part of the programme. The school has the services of a full-time home-school-community liaison (HSCL) co-ordinator and participates in the School Completion Programme (SCP). Along with a newly-appointed guidance counsellor, the HSCL and SCP personnel play key roles in providing advice and support to students. Weekly care-team and student support meetings provide an integrated and co-ordinated approach to student care.

Teachers are highly committed to supporting students' wellbeing. A wellbeing co-ordinator is in place and a valuable range of activities is organised. Meetings with parents and staff, and findings from questionnaires indicate that there is a good atmosphere in the school. In addition students who met with the inspection team characterised the school as being friendly, welcoming and helpful.

A comprehensive whole-school guidance plan underpins the guidance programme within the school. Timetabled lessons in career preparation are provided for senior cycle students and the *Friends for Life* programme is followed with some junior cycle classes. It is planned to extend the *Friends for Life* programme to all junior students next year.

The school has identified attainment as an area for improvement and has recently appointed an assistant principal to a Culture of Study post to lead this work. The current DEIS plan under the theme of attainment has two specific, measureable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) targets. The development of these targets is based on analysis of good baseline data. While some valuable interventions that support these targets, are detailed in the DEIS plan, many of the

interventions are external to classroom practice. Interventions focused on developing classroom practice aimed at improving learner outcomes should also be included in the DEIS plan to support the attainment targets.

The current arrangement of junior cycle classes merits review. On enrolment most students are assigned to one of two mixed-ability class groups; however, a third class in each year moves at a quicker pace than the other two classes. The students who are assigned to this class are identified from incoming scores on a test of verbal reasoning. It is advised that the school continually assess the validity of the systems used for assigning students to junior classes and adopt a pragmatic approach to grouping students which maintains high expectations and seeks to improve outcomes for all students.

Aspects of current provision for students with additional educational needs require improvement. At the time of the evaluation a significant minority of hours allocated to the school for the provision of special educational needs was not being used for their designated purpose. There was no qualified staff member co-ordinating SEN provision. Planning and timetabling were not sufficiently targeted to meet the individual needs of students. It is acknowledged that senior management has undertaken measures to address this issue and is working to establish a core SEN team. Senior management should ensure that all allocated SEN hours are used in line with Circular 0014/2017 and the *Guidelines for Post Primary Schools Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools*. The school is committed to transitioning to the resource allocation model and some highly effective co-teaching was observed. Further CPD on the model should support the development of a system whereby plans identifying the priority learning and targets of individual students are used by all teachers to inform lesson planning.

Good systems are in place to support new students for whom English is an additional language (EAL). On arrival these students complete an assessment to identify their language levels, and progress is tracked using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

A clear code of behaviour which places appropriate emphasis on positive behaviour is in place. During the evaluation the behaviour of students in and around classrooms was exemplary. Findings from student questionnaires indicates that students' perception of behaviour is less positive; this should be investigated.

### **Managing the organisation**

Senior management operates as a highly effective team. Their individual skill set, together with their collaborative and consultative leadership style serve the school well.

The board works very effectively to maintain good oversight and support ongoing improvements. Some of the new members are awaiting training and this should be completed as soon as possible. Following board meetings an agreed report is circulated to all stakeholders. Notably, the board invites inputs from student council members and from school personnel. The board has identified the need to forge stronger relationships with the parent body. Findings from parent questionnaires confirm there is a need for the board to address this issue.

A very good system of policy development and review is in place. During the next phase of policy review, the section of the admissions policy which addresses special educational needs should be aligned with the principles of the resource allocation model of SEN provision.

All junior cycle students participate in the JCSP programme. The JCSP co-ordinator and the librarian provide a wide programme of engaging initiatives to develop and track students' reading skills and promote their enjoyment of learning. The library is at the heart of the school and provides a well utilised positive learning space.

The school has an optional TY programme. A review of the programme was completed this year and the outcomes have informed on-going developments. Strong links have been developed with the local community and include TY involvement in a peer reading programme with a local primary school.

Two co-ordinators oversee the organisation and planning for the LCA and TY programmes. There are no core teams for these programmes. While it is recognised that informal meetings occur as necessary, senior management, should look at establishing core teams and where feasible schedule more formal core team meetings. This will further facilitate high-quality collaborative planning to support teaching and learning in these programmes.

The school building and its facilities are very well maintained. The information and communications technology infrastructure is being upgraded. Staff are participating on CPD on using digital technology to enhance students' learning.

### **Leading school development**

The senior management team clearly communicates their guiding vision to all stakeholders and to the broader community in a way that inspires commitment to the shared vision.

A culture of collaborative review and improvement is evident. All staff members contribute to the DEIS plan. Teams are created at the start of each academic year and they have responsibility for planning, reviewing and monitoring specific targets to address DEIS planning.

Teachers' collaborative practice is actively promoted. The development of a school-based online system for sharing resources and the move towards teachers' participation in peer observation supports effective collaborative practice. Within this culture of collaborative review, the newly appointed team of assistant principals will meet individually with senior management to discuss their work and professional development. This is very good practice.

A valuable range of tracking systems to support student improvement are in place in the school. For example, many effective systems to track attendance are in place including interventions provided by the SCP and HSCL personnel. It is noteworthy that good improvements in attendance rates are evident and this was reflected in the lessons observed.

A very good tracking system which enables good monitoring of student progress is in place for targeted students. The very good practice in place to track this cohort of students should be extended across the school and a more consistent use of the academic tracking template in the student journal could support this.

The school is strongly committed to building partnership with parents. Questionnaire data and parent contributions during this evaluation indicate that parents feel they are well supported by the school. The parents association has recently been established and this is a positive development. The school is keen to support its growth and strengthen parental voice within the school.

### **Developing leadership capacity**

Senior management provides very good support to staff while empowering them to take on leadership roles. It is clear that the senior management team has prioritised and delegated responsibilities appropriately to the middle management team. Staff members demonstrate commendable levels of volunteerism in leading initiatives that impact positively on the students' experiences in school.

The school regularly provides placements for student teachers and has established strong links with local universities. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome.

Student leadership is meaningfully promoted through a range of opportunities such as the student council and 'academic all-stars'. A recently appointed assistant principal is in place to co-ordinate the development of initiatives and to further develop the student voice. In collaboration with the students, the co-ordinator should investigate the questionnaire findings related to students having a say in how things are done in the school.

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

The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good. While aspects of some highly effective practice were observed in the majority of lessons, there were times when some learners were not optimally engaged or challenged.

### **Learner outcomes and experiences**

Overall, the quality of learner experiences in the lessons observed was good. In all lessons interactions were respectful and positive and the atmosphere was conducive to learning. Students asked questions confidently and reported that they were appreciative of the many ways in which teachers are supportive of them, within and outside of the classroom.

Classrooms and corridors were enhanced by rich displays of student work and posters highlighting positive messages about learning, wellbeing, and key vocabulary.

The quality of learner outcomes in the lessons observed was good overall, with some very good outcomes noted. In a small number of lessons learner outcomes were significantly enhanced where the intended learning and success criteria for the lesson were communicated clearly, and when activities were appropriately differentiated. In many lessons however, there was scope to enhance the quality of learning through greater planning for differentiation.

In the majority of lessons, students were afforded opportunities to work collaboratively. Best practice was noted when the group activity was structured and all participants had the opportunity to contribute, negotiate and collaborate meaningfully to the set task or problem. This approach should be adopted more widely.

There was some variation in the levels of student engagement observed. Most students demonstrated higher levels of interest when they were actively involved in the learning, engaged in tasks or collaborating with peers. Some lessons would have been enhanced by greater balance between teacher voice and student input and more opportunities for students to develop oral language skills, using the target language of the subject.

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

Overall, planning and preparation for lessons was good. In the highly-effective lessons content was pitched at a level appropriate to students' needs and had a suitable pace. A good focus on contextualising the learning in these lessons ensured content was meaningful for students.

Some highly effective lessons were characterised by the use of active learning methodologies and discussion that yielded a sense of partnership between the teacher and students. In all lessons teachers provided support to students who needed direction. At times, there was a need to give students more time to engage fully with the task before the teacher introduced plenary discussion. In a small number of the lessons observed, some students were not challenged sufficiently and completed the set tasks easily and quickly. It is recommended that teachers further integrate differentiated methodologies into their lessons to ensure that all students are appropriately challenged to achieve their full potential.

In some lessons, visual resources such as video clips were used very effectively to support learning. However, there were many instances where the incorporation of additional visuals could have supported learning further. Teachers should be cognisant of the benefits of presenting content in a variety of ways. Greater and more creative use of digital technologies could support this and the school's commitment to their digital learning strategy should facilitate this.

Overall, the quality of assessment was good. Some good use was made of assessment for learning (AFL) strategies such as show-me-boards, success criteria and exit cards.

In a small number of lessons, highly-effective questioning strategies were used to encourage students to think deeply about what they were learning. However, in a significant minority of lessons the style of questioning used often required only very brief answers from students and in a few instances the teachers tended to finish or expand on the answer themselves. There is scope for teachers to plan for the further use of questioning strategies that promote deep critical-thinking skills and challenge all learners. Some teachers should also be mindful of the wait-time provided to students.

It is positive that school reports sent home to parents after summative assessments generally include high quality formative comments. Moving forward, teachers should broaden the use of very good formative feedback and develop strategies that engage students in using the feedback provided to improve their work.

Homework was assigned in many lessons observed during the evaluation. However, in a few instances, the quality and challenge of the homework set did not match the quality of teaching and learning of the lesson itself. Some very good examples of formative feedback were noted in the correction of students' work, but this practice was not consistent.

A review of student journals indicated that some students do not record homework regularly. Some students made little use of their journals for any purpose. Senior management in collaboration with staff should consider the effectiveness of the journal.

The quality of teachers' collaborative practice is very good. Subject departments are well established and plans were generally of a good quality. DEIS planning is evident in subject department planning practice, with a focus on the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills. In the majority of lessons observed, the agreed DEIS interventions to support literacy and numeracy in the classroom were effective. There is scope for subject teams to develop their collaborative planning to support the attainment targets in the DEIS plan.

The majority of subject department plans contained an analysis of attainment in the certificate examinations. In the very best examples the analysis informed action planning for the subject. This analysis is highly commended and should be extended across all subject department plans. Subject teams should use the outcomes of an analysis of attainment data to develop subject-specific action plans that identify teaching and learning interventions which have a greater emphasis on the improvement of learners' experiences and outcomes at classroom level.

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

#### **Leadership and Management**

Overall, good progress has been made in the implementation of many of the recommendations from previous evaluations, the progression of some teaching and learning recommendations were not as well developed as others.



## **Leadership and Management**

Senior management has made very good progress overall in addressing recommendations made in previous inspections which relate to leadership and management issues. For instance there is greater delegation of responsibility for the management of the school to the revised middle management team.

## **Teaching and Learning**

Overall, good progress has been made in addressing the recommendations made regarding teaching and learning such as the increase of students taking higher level subjects. The school has established good practices for dissemination of feedback from subject inspections to all staff. Recommendations relating to differentiation and to building students' capacity in using the target language in language lessons require further development.

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

The quality of the school's self-evaluation process is very good and demonstrates a very good capacity for school improvement

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

The school has engaged well with the process of SSE. A three-year DEIS plan is in place with SMART targets identified under all themes. A new DEIS co-ordinator has been recently appointed. Working groups have been set up to progress areas identified for development. It is noteworthy that a number of interventions in the current DEIS plan in areas such as partnership with parents and others are impacting positively on school life. This is evidenced by the recent establishment of the parents' association and the strong links fostered with the local community.

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

The school displays an openness and commitment to the SSE process. It is well positioned to implement, monitor and review the success of the areas identified for targeted improvement. The teachers demonstrate great commitment to optimising the learning experience for students. CPD is a strong feature of the culture of the school and it is used effectively to support 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 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;