

**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>	Patrician Academy
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Mallow, Co Cork
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	62330U

**Date of Evaluation: 17-01-2019**



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An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Scileanna  
Department of  
Education and Skills

## **WHOLE- EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING**

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning reports on the quality of teaching and learning and on the quality of management and leadership in a school. It affirms good practice and makes recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of educational provision in the school.

### **How to read this report**

During this inspection, the inspectors evaluated and reported under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

1. Quality of school leadership and management
2. Quality of teaching and learning
3. Implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations
4. The school's self-evaluation process and capacity for school improvement

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

### **CHILD PROTECTION**

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.
4. The Child Safeguarding Statement meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.
5. The records of the last three board of management meetings record a child protection oversight report that meet the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2017.
6. The board of management has ensured that arrangements are in place to provide information to all school personnel on the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2017
7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE, Wellbeing).
8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.

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

## WHOLE- EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

Dates of inspection	15-17 January 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

Patrician Academy, Mallow is an all-boys post-primary school, offering the Junior Cycle programme, a compulsory Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). The school also has four special classes; two to support students with autism spectrum difference (ASD), one to support students with moderate general learning difficulties (ModGLD), and one to support students with mild general learning difficulties (MGLD). It has a current enrolment of 538.

### Summary of main findings and recommendations:

#### Findings

- The quality of school leadership and management is good; however there are a number of practices relating to curricular provision and organisation that do not meet the needs of all students.
- An extensive range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities significantly enhance students' holistic learning experiences.
- A significant proportion of the teaching allocation to provide additional support to students with special educational needs (SEN) is being used for mainstream subject teaching and the overall provision for students with SEN requires reorganisation.
- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good; in a significant minority of lessons, students actively engaged in purposeful tasks that facilitated differentiated learning.
- The implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations is very good overall; however, some recommendations relating to teaching and learning have yet to be embedded.
- The school self-evaluation process is good and the overall capacity for improvement is very good; the recent delegation of leadership of SSE will serve to further improve student outcomes.

#### Recommendations

- Senior management, in partnership with the board of management, should review the current curriculum and its organisation, including in relation to aspects of LCA provision,

modern language provision, ability streaming of students and study lessons, to ensure that it meets the needs of all students.

- Senior management, together with the board of management should ensure that the entire additional teaching allocation provided to support students with SEN, is deployed for its intended purpose, and that all practice complies with Circular Letter 0014/2017; whole-school inclusive educational practice should also be developed.
- To enhance learner outcomes and experiences, the use of active and differentiated teaching methodologies should be extended across the school.
- A systematic approach to SSE should be undertaken, in order to devise specific measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) evidence-based targets, related to improved outcomes for students.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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

The quality of school leadership and management is good overall. The new senior management team works effectively together. Systems to support good quality teaching and learning are being developed. Commendably, some teachers are eagerly engaging in teaching and learning initiatives. The board of management is very supportive of this work and of the engagement of senior management and teachers in continuing professional development (CPD). Participation in these teaching and learning initiatives will facilitate the teachers involved in engaging with peer observation with colleagues.

A broad curriculum is provided; all available programmes and a good range of subjects are offered. The TY, LCVP and LCA offer students learning experiences which develop educational, vocational and personal skills. It is positive that the TY curriculum enhances students' holistic development and that students' achievement is assessed using a range of approaches. Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) are appropriately timetabled.

However there are a number of practices relating to curricular provision and organisation that do not meet the needs of all students. These include aspects of LCA provision, timetabling of study lessons, the streaming of class groups according to ability and the timetabling of foreign languages. Therefore, senior management should review these aspects of the curriculum and its organisation to ensure that the needs of all students are met.

Teachers provide an extensive range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities that significantly enhance students' holistic learning experiences. This is highly commendable. The school positively engages with initial teacher education school placement programmes.

There is very good support for students when choosing optional subjects. A subject sampling system operates in first year and in TY.

Whole-school awareness of the Junior Cycle Framework is facilitated through the work of an enthusiastic coordinator and teachers' attendance at CPD.

Overall, the quality of support and care provided to students is very high. This key finding is informed by the following: comprehensive admissions, transition and induction procedures, which include the significant role undertaken by TY mentors; the individual and collaborative work of key personnel and the merit card for first-year students. The school should consider further developing the pastoral role of class tutors. Regular meetings of the student support team and the year head team provide a systematic approach to supporting students.

Provision for students' personal, educational and vocational needs is strong. Guidance provision in senior cycle and junior cycle, in addition to the wellbeing programme, is very beneficial. A comprehensive whole-school guidance plan has been developed. This should be ratified.

Some aspects of SEN provision are praiseworthy. These include very good student-centred planning which facilitates: accessing of mainstream lessons by some students with ASD; and students being facilitated to follow a combination of Level 3 subjects and L2LPs depending on their strengths and needs.

However, a number of matters relating to the deployment by the school of the SEN teaching resources provided by the Department, the organisation of SEN provision and inclusion of students in mainstream settings require attention. The school should ensure that the full teaching allocation of 139 teaching hours provided to support students with SEN, is deployed for its intended purpose and that all practice complies with Circular Letter 0014/2017 and the associated guidelines. At the time of the inspection, approximately forty-four hours were being used to provide mainstream subject teaching.

The school should also ensure that students identified with SEN, including those with an exemption from Irish who are withdrawn from Irish lessons and those who do not study a foreign language are provided with focused teaching supports and with tuition time to which they are entitled. The principal should plan strategically to reorganise overall provision for SEN as a matter of priority.

The school should also ensure that all students in the class for Mild General Learning Disability (MGLD) are included to learn in mainstream lessons. Planning for purposeful inclusion should be informed by individual student's identified strengths and needs, and individualised programmes should be designed. This level of planning should ensure that students are included in meaningful learning experiences alongside their peers. The school should access whole-school CPD offered by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) support services, to help the whole school to adopt and develop inclusive educational practices.

### **Managing the organisation**

The quality of management of the school is good. The very effective board of management is well informed about school life, Departmental initiatives and curricular change. It is appropriately constituted, and related responsibilities are very well understood by its members. Their varied experiences and interest in the school leaves the board well placed to assist senior management and teachers in enhancing the learning organisation. Regular, well attended meetings, with detailed discussion, support fully informed decision making. Strong links exist between the board and the local community and other stakeholders.

Senior management effectively oversees the day-to-day running of the school. Almost all teachers surveyed agree with the statement that 'This school is well run'. Year heads and class tutors make a valuable contribution to the management and leadership of students. Commendably, initiatives have been put in place to strengthen cohesive relationships among staff following two years of working on different sites.

Communication is good and teachers feel consulted and informed. It is suggested that senior management meets assistant principals a number of times throughout the year. These meetings could to be used as a spring-board, focusing on identifying priorities in line with the school's vision and the related, invaluable action planning. Formal end-of-year meetings between senior management and post-holders and other staff members who have leadership roles should also be considered, as these would provide an opportunity to acknowledge work and discuss progress.

Considerable efforts were made to get the school back onto one site and develop a positive learning environment following a recent fire. Space is limited but is well managed and there is good

awareness around safety matters. Continued focus on upgrading and extending the school plant includes the recently laid Astroturf pitch.

Displays of student work, subject specific documentation and visual displays are designed to support learning. Celebration of students' achievements, such as the recently completed BT Young Scientist projects, reinforces the school's identity as a community of learners.

A number of infrastructural issues now require attention as the school proceeds with a new build. These include ensuring that there is greater student access to Material Technology Wood and Construction, and there is gas in all science laboratories. In addition, there is need for the school to use the financial resources provided by the Department to ensure that where needed, SEN students have access to the sensory room and that there are ICT facilities and a calm sensory space in the room for low functioning ASD students.

The health and safety policy and statement has been recently reviewed. The provision of ICT is very good and a school software application (APP) is being launched. A good quality digital learning plan has been developed. The leader of this area has a very good understanding of how ICT can enhance teaching and learning. Teachers are supported in the use of ICT by colleagues. Building on this very good work, a whole-school approach should be developed on how the use of technology would further enhance student learning in the classroom. Such work should also ensure that any targets in the digital plan are SMART and that actions identified will help meet targets.

The school values and supports partnership with parents. The school maintains very good communication with parents and the wider community, and the local community is very supportive of the school. Parents interviewed expressed great satisfaction with the school.

The parents' association fulfils its role very well and had a significant role in fund raising over the last few years. Its involvement in school life could be enhanced by inclusion in aspects such as policy review. The association maintains communication with the parent body through social media and the school newsletter, the effectiveness of which should be reviewed in light of the responses of parents about such communication in the evaluation survey of parents.

### **Leading school development**

School development planning is good. While the key short-term priority is progressing the building project, management and staff are also undertaking initiatives to enhance teaching and learning. Some policies have been reviewed and ratified by the board and there is an awareness of the need to review others. The provision of review dates on policies would inform a natural cycle of review. However, it is recommended that systems and structures be put in place to ensure a cohesive approach is taken to all initiatives and policy development.

The school's admissions policy sets out the procedures around enrolment. The school should remove conditional clauses that do not reflect the school's inclusive practices regarding enrolment. During the inspection, students were very well behaved, articulate, cooperative and friendly. The code of behaviour does not include a ladder of referral which is outlined in the sanctions and rewards policy in the student journal. The code of behaviour should be reviewed with a view to increasing the emphasis on positive behaviour and incorporating the sanctions and rewards policy.

### **Developing leadership capacity**

The development of leadership capacity among teachers and students in the school is very good. Distributed leadership is being facilitated and senior management strategically delegates responsibilities for key aspects of school leadership and management. This is evident in the core responsibilities that the school's post-holders have been supported to assume. In addition, any teacher who demonstrates an interest in leading an initiative is supported to do so. Teachers have responded well to these opportunities and are committed to seeking to ensure the effective fulfilment of devolved responsibilities.

Student leadership is facilitated primarily through the elected members of the student council. These students fully embrace the leadership opportunities that the council provides; they adopt a systematic, coherent approach to their work and all have clearly identified roles. They are encouraged to lead and to develop through the activities assigned to them by the teachers and by co-operatively working with the parents' association. The council is supported very effectively by a liaison teacher.

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

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning was good.

Some lessons were very good and a majority were good. Other lessons required improvement, particularly in relation to the use of active learning methodologies and differentiated approaches to teaching and learning.

### **Learner outcomes and experiences**

The quality of learner outcomes and experiences was good overall. Learning intentions were outlined to students in most lessons. Where they were most effective, they were verbalised in student-friendly language and explicitly shared with the students. However, the use of learning intentions, their scope to allow differentiation, their role in allowing all students to feel successful, and the related use of success criteria, should be interrogated further at whole-school level. This is in line with targets of the school's SSE process. The use of learning intentions and success criteria would be more effective by planning opportunities for students to reflect on the progress that they have made in their learning; this very effective practice was observed in a small minority of lessons.

There was a very positive atmosphere in lessons, and teacher-student rapport was very good. This was illustrated through students' willingness to ask questions that demonstrated their prior knowledge; teachers often used these as opportunities to further the lesson and enhance student understanding.

Overall, questioning was good, with teachers encouraging students' efforts. Where very effective practice was observed, rich questions were used that encouraged critical thinking with time allowed for students to expand on their initial answer. On occasion, advice was given on strategies to reduce chorus answering, so as to ensure that all students had an opportunity, not only to answer, but to actively think as individuals about the questions being asked. Some good practices in relation to how questioning strategies can assist all students to be actively engaged in thinking were observed. The effective use of these should be shared at a whole-school level.

In a number of lessons, active learning methodologies using purposeful, collaborative tasks were central to progressing students' learning. Consequently, students were more actively engaged in



their learning process and were facilitated in further developing the key skills of thinking critically and verbalising their learning. These active learning methodologies and the nature of the tasks facilitated students to work at a differentiated pace. This practice should be developed at a whole-school level.

In one lesson, TY mentors very effectively led the activities for first-year students. Such opportunities provide very good leadership opportunities for students.

In a number of lessons, very effective use of ICT enhanced teaching and learning. This took a variety of forms, including use of videos and graphics, presentation software and visualisers. In many cases, the use of ICT allowed more effective use of time in lessons, in addition to enhancing student understanding. Notably, the use of online instant feedback tools to assess students' knowledge, ascertain their opinion on a topic being discussed and to reflect on learning intentions, was seen to allow all students to be actively engaged in thinking. The very good practices observed, relating to the use of many aspects of ICT, should be extended and embedded at a whole-school level.

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

The quality of teachers' individual and collective practice was good. Lessons were generally well structured. Sometimes too much time was spent correcting homework; as relevant, teachers should more effectively plan such correction so that students could move on to new learning more quickly. The development of peer assessment skills would assist this. The use of very good practices observed, including peer assessment and assigning differentiated homework, should be extended. While there was evidence of formative feedback in some copies, this area should be developed. The school should amalgamate its assessment and homework policies. The resulting policy should outline how homework and the various assessment practices taking place could assist in the development of the students' skills of formative feedback. It is positive that one of the areas of focus in the school improvement plan is the development of formative feedback.

Where very good quality teaching was observed, it was underpinned by student-centred planning, teacher knowledge of the needs of students, and a clear understanding of how to effectively use specific teaching strategies to provide high quality support for the students.

Subject department planning is well advanced and there is a common template for the subject plans, which are at various stages of completion. There is evidence of collaborative planning, related to the implementation of the new Junior Cycle programme that addresses key learning, skills and values for the relevant subjects. It would be beneficial to ensure that in schemes of work, learning intentions are used and that the tasks chosen to address them, allow incorporation of the ongoing development of students' key skills.

Some subject plans also contain reflections from teachers on their previous term. While this is very good practice, the purpose of completing these and other reflections undertaken, should be articulated clearly; and the learning from these reflections should impact on students' classroom experiences. In addition to current targets agreed, subject department action plans should also identify how the department will address the targets set in the school improvement plan and impact classroom practice.

The school recognises the importance of using various forms of assessment. Student performance in the classroom-based assessments (CBAs) is reported to parents. This is very good. It is also positive that the school analyses data from the certificate examinations. This practice could be further

enhanced by each subject department identifying trends from this data and then planning appropriately to address these trends through the development of classroom practice and modification of schemes of work. The formation of a teaching and learning committee is a very positive development and will assist with the sharing of very good practice.

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

The quality of implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations is very good overall.

#### **Leadership and Management**

Many recommendations outlined in previous inspections have been implemented fully. These include: the setting up of a pastoral care committee; facilitating attendance at CPD; the appropriate deployment of qualified personnel and the development of a modular system facilitating informed subject choice at the end of TY.

#### **Teaching and Learning**

Partial progress was observed in relation to the inclusion of active teaching methodologies and differentiation in lessons. A vision and plan towards how ICT will enhance learning in Geography has yet to be developed. The operational areas should be demarcated around machines in the woodwork room.

While the board of management's engagement with school inspection reports is very good, some recommendations relating to teaching and learning have yet to be implemented and embedded.

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

The school's self-evaluation (SSE) process is good and its overall capacity for improvement is very good.

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

The school has identified areas for development within SSE. Current areas for improvement focus on the development of teachers' individual and collaborative practice at classroom level. This is good. The school demonstrates reflective practice on previously identified targets; leadership roles, in the areas of SSE and the Learning School Project, have facilitated the identification of strategies that will positively impact classroom practice. Building on this good work, the school should ensure that there is a systematic approach to SSE, in order to devise SMART evidence-based targets, related to improved outcomes for students.

While there is reference to SSE in subject department plans, this could be further developed. In accordance with Departmental requirements, the board produces an annual SSE report, and a school improvement plan and related, summary reports are communicated to parents via the school's website. This is very good.

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

The overall capacity for improvement is very good. The recent focus on devolving leadership of SSE and its role in enhancing teaching and learning, through a whole-school approach, will serve to further improve student outcomes. The interest displayed by the newly appointed SSE coordinator and other staff will contribute significantly to this improvement. In addition, the personnel involved in SSE, the Learning School project and the Teaching and Learning committee demonstrate an understanding of the importance of a cohesive whole-school approach necessary to achieve any targets in relation to improving outcomes for students.

## 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;

# **Appendix**

**TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

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

The Board of Management of the Patrician Academy welcomes the very positive WSE-MLL report. The Board welcomes the key findings and in particular:

- A broad curriculum is provided and provision for students' personal, educational and vocational needs is strong.
- An extensive range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities significantly enhance students' holistic learning experiences.
- The quality of support and care provided to students is very high.
- The recognition of the considerable efforts that the school is making after the devastating fire in 2016, and that a number of infrastructural issues now require attention as the school proceeds with a new build, including greater access to MTW /Construction (need for a second room) and gas in all labs.

## **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 recommendations are welcomed and will be implemented.

- In order to deal with the issue raised in relation to the review of the current curriculum, the staff at a recent meeting spent time reviewing the curriculum, including the LCA provision, MFL provision and the streaming of pupils; decisions taken were brought to the BOM. A Board of Study will be established incorporating all stakeholders. Study lessons will no longer be offered in Senior Cycle.
- In relation to the SEN teaching allocation, the timetabling of SEN to a central core team should be evident in the 19/20 timetable. Senior management and the SEN team have engaged in in-service with the PDST and the NCSE in relation to team teaching and the new SET allocation model, whole-school in-service will take place in August 2019. We will strive to ensure that all practice complies with Circular Letter 0014/2017.
- The school is currently engaged in enhancing learner outcomes and experiences by sharing active and differentiated teaching methodologies through a pilot programme of peer observation. The establishment of a Teaching and Learning Committee will also support the learning market.
- The school is engaged with the School Self Evaluation process and will involve students and parents in that process. The newly appointed SSE co-ordinator, with the full co-operation of staff, will ensure that there is a systematic approach to SSE in order to devise SMART evidence based targets.