

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Presentation Brothers College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	The Mardyke Cork
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	62570R

Date of Evaluation: 14-11-2018



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 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-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

Dates of inspection	12-11-18 to 14-11-2018
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with board of management• Meetings with principal and deputy principals• 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

Presentation Brothers College is an all-boys fee-paying post-primary school with a current enrolment of 716 students. The school offers the Junior Cycle, a compulsory Transition Year (TY) programme and the established Leaving Certificate. The school operates under the trusteeship of the Presentation Brothers Schools' Trust (PBST).

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of leadership for teaching and learning is good in the school; management is responsive to required changes, supports staff development and is conscious of the role of culture and environment in supporting students to flourish.
- All students, including students with special educational needs (SEN) are well guided, supported and cared for, but management needs to review the manner in which a proportion of the resource allocation is being utilised.
- The senior leadership team, with the support and assistance of the board of management, is managing the school effectively.
- To support the smooth running of the school and to inform decision-making and development planning, the senior leadership team is working to promote enhanced communication and consultation between management and staff; further work is required.
- The quality of learning and teaching in observed lessons was good overall with very good to excellent practice observed in some lessons; some important areas for development were identified.
- The school's self-evaluation process is at an early stage of development and it is building its capacity for school improvement.

Recommendations

- The non-utilisation of a proportion of resource allocation in line with the guidance and direction provided in Circular letter 0014/2017 should be addressed and rectified by management when future timetables are being planned and constructed.
- Further work is required in relation to enhancing communication and consultative processes between management and the teaching staff and the teaching staff and management.
- With a view to advancing the overall quality of learning and teaching from good to very good or excellent, it is recommended that a co-ordinated whole-school approach designed to

support greater incorporation of more active, student-centred teaching and learning be adopted.

- Based on the premise that SSE encourages teaching that is engaging and challenging and enables students to become more active and motivated, the school needs to focus on the possible inclusion of initiatives designed to support teachers in the greater use of more active, student-centred approaches.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the quality of school leadership and management is good.

Leading learning and teaching

The quality of leadership for teaching and learning is good in the school.

An openly communicated motto, 'Viriliter Age', provides a clear goal for students. Work to promote a strong learning culture is informed by high expectations for all. Motivation to succeed is a significant context-specific driving force for students, staff and management.

The curriculum is regularly reviewed and changes are well informed by requirements, as well as requests from parents and students. A broad academic curriculum is provided, with strong provision for business and science subjects and languages. Provision of a junior cycle wellbeing programme is underway; it is important that content be informed by ongoing analyses of students' needs. It is suggested that consideration be given to how the curriculum could be extended, particularly in relation to the technologies. With a view to broadening and further supporting learning in junior cycle, it is further suggested that specific consideration be given to the incorporation of short courses.

As recommended in two former inspection reports, the decision not to timetable Physical Education (PE) in both fifth year and sixth year should be reviewed. It is clear from the outcomes of the questionnaires issued as part of the evaluation, as well as a recent school-based questionnaire, that there is a strong need to improve provision for Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). With a view to enhancing the current good quality TY programme, a review of the structure and content of the programme would be valuable. In particular, and as relevant, the content being explored in academic modules, as well as the approach being adopted to such exploration, should be reviewed against best practice guidelines.

The re-publication of the timetable this year demonstrates management's desire to ensure that sound planning principles inform its construction. Subject sampling in first year, student-centred subject choice systems and a predominant mixed-ability approach to class organisation all support equality of access and opportunity. While the school is noted for its rugby, students have the opportunity to participate in a range of other sports, including hurling and Gaelic football. Non-sporting extracurricular and co-curricular activities are equally accommodated by highly committed teachers. Students' achievements in all pursuits are acknowledged and celebrated.

There is an expectation that teachers develop their teaching, learning and assessment practices and ongoing professional development is well supported. The school is very supportive of initial teacher education, and regularly provides placements for student teachers. There is an openness amongst staff to the sharing of knowledge and experience and to learning from one other.

The quality of support and care provided to students is very good. Admissions, transition and induction processes are well informed and carefully planned. A weekly meeting of key student support personnel fosters communication, consistency and action. Year heads, together with class teachers, are key players in relation to student support and care, although the role of the class teacher should be clarified. There is a growing recognition of the role that every teacher can play in terms of teaching and learning for wellbeing.

Guidance related learning is prioritised in the school and related structures and practices are seeking to meet students' varying needs. Junior cycle students are timetabled for weekly guidance classes, a comprehensive TY guidance programme is provided, and fifth year and sixth year students have periodic but systematic access to timetabled guidance. All students can avail of one-to-one appointments. The very good work relating to student support and guidance should be captured in a whole-school guidance plan. The school's agreed response to a critical incident needs to be documented in line with the advice offered by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the resulting policy should be ratified by the board.

Overall, the support provided to students with SEN is very good. Commendable features include: consultation with the co-ordinator in advance of the construction of the timetable; a small core team; the assignment of 'designated teachers' to support a continuity of support; a thorough process of identifying students with SEN; initial and ongoing planning that is responsive to students' individual needs and abilities; and communication of relevant information to subject teachers. The work of the school's four special needs assistants (SNAs) is a valued element of provision, and in support of further inclusion, team teaching was introduced recently. While the team teaching observed was effectively employed to promote student learning, regular and ongoing review of the impact of team teaching needs to be accommodated, and assigned teachers, as well as co-operating teachers, should be supported to further upskill in the area.

A proportion of the special education resource allocation is not being utilised in line with the guidance and direction provided in Circular letter 0014/2017. This matter should be addressed when future timetables are being planned. In the interim, every effort should be made to ensure that interventions designed to support a student's social and emotional needs should be focused and, therefore, planned in line with targets identified in student support files.

Managing the organisation

The senior leadership team, with the support and assistance of the board of management, is managing the school effectively.

The board functions very effectively and provides a very high level of support to the principal. Democratic principles informed its establishment and the board is properly constituted. Members understand the role, responsibilities and statutory obligations of a board. The principal keeps members well informed in relation to the day-to-day management of the school. Decision making is consensual in nature. As a further support to making informed decisions, formal consultation with members of the parents' association and the students' council is planned.

It is advised that the agenda for board meetings include a section entitled 'Learning and Teaching'. The board is reminded of the need to accommodate a termly report from the principal in relation to cases of bullying. To support board nominees to communicate appropriately with their respective nominating bodies, an agreed report should be prepared following each board meeting.

The senior leadership team is in place since September 2017. Collaboration and co-operation are being fostered in a number of ways including daily team meetings. Individual roles and responsibilities are currently being informed by areas of experience, expertise or interest. Priority

should be given to the agreement of role profiles and the communication of these to staff. This would support the staff in recognising who should be approached with specific requests which, in turn, would support the principal as he works to forge co-operative working relationships with teachers.

The principal is keenly aware of the importance of promoting a positive and safe teaching and learning environment and such efforts are supported by both deputy principals. Recent relevant actions include: maintaining a visible presence; planning for a well overdue review of the code of behaviour; accommodating weekly meetings of key personnel; and instigating a strategic review of the school plant.

Year heads and class teachers make a valuable contribution to the management and leadership of students on a day-to-day basis. There is scope for strengthening the leadership role of the year head. Teachers' expectations of students are heavily influenced by the principles of respect, care, tolerance, compassion and justice.

The principal, with the support of the deputy principals, is working to develop more formal communication systems. Since this September, a number of measures designed to capture teacher voice and develop consultation processes were introduced. Despite this, during the evaluation, a significant proportion of teachers communicated a sense of not being adequately informed, consulted, or valued. It is recommended that management facilitate further discussion with teachers regarding this information.

In order to strengthen communication and consultation processes it is recommended that the task group approach to planning and development, and the related invaluable action planning, be re-embedded in the school. It is further recommended that a regular meeting of the senior leadership team with assistant principal I post holders be convened, in order to enhance the general leadership role of middle management in the school and foster a greater understanding of requirements and required change. Such meetings would also provide a forum in which general opinion on key matters could be harnessed to inform later decision making which, ultimately, is the role of the senior leadership team and the board. Finally, it is suggested that: the rationale for all change be openly communicated; that existing knowledge and experience amongst staff be captured in a way that would inform decision-making; and that all changes be reviewed at timely intervals.

The board fully recognises the important contribution that the physical environs make to the enhancement of students' experience of school and their learning. Work to improve the school plant and facilities is ongoing. Members are fully committed to planning for the future development of the school's physical infrastructure, and this important work is being informed by an inclusive consultation process.

Leading school development

Aspects relating to the leadership of school development are good.

The permanent section of the school plan is well developed. A large number of policies have been ratified by the board. Review dates should be provided on all policies. The admissions policy should be reviewed to remove aspects which suggest that enrolment might be conditional. Both the anti-bullying and health and safety policies need to be reviewed on an annual basis. In the development of new policies, and in the review of existing ones, greater inclusion of staff and parent inputs should be facilitated. Where feasible and relevant, students should also be provided with the opportunity to contribute.

Developmental priorities have been identified. Action plans should be prepared for each. With reference to Section 20 of the Education Act, 1998, it is recommended that the board prepare and circulate an annual report to parents which particularly emphasises progress made in relation to identified priorities, including SSE priorities.

Subject department planning is well supported and planning outcomes are good. Agreed, time-bound programmes of work are in place, but it would be valuable to agree a common template. Planning for units of learning in junior cycle is well developed in Mathematics and this serves as a good model for other departments. The formal documentation of review activities at subject department level, together with the development of action plans, is suggested for consideration.

Partnership with parents is valued and relationships with parents are recognised as pivotal to student wellbeing and learning. As a result, a task group has been established to review the school's approach to communicating with parents. A high degree of commitment, enthusiasm, interest and proactivity was evident amongst members of the parents' association. Members feel informed and consulted. The school has established very strong links with local schools, and a myriad of local, county and national organisations, agencies and businesses.

Developing leadership capacity

A number of positive measures to develop leadership capacity are in place.

The board and the principal recognise the importance of building leadership capacity. Distributed leadership is most evident in the core responsibilities that the school's nine assistant principals have been supported to assume. Post holders are committed to seeking to ensure the efficient and effective fulfilment of devolved responsibilities. Recently introduced team meetings will foster and strengthen individual leadership roles while strengthening a team approach. Leadership could be further distributed through the establishment of task groups, whilst supporting teachers to further inform future decision making and ensuring greater cohesion in relation to development and change. Provision for formal end-of-year meetings with teachers who hold management and leadership roles ought to be accommodated.

Student leadership is being fostered in a myriad of ways including: the annual SHARE collection; the prefect system; peer mentors; and captaincy of various teams. Much work is needed to enhance the leadership role of the student council. To begin, elections for representatives from each year group should take place this year. Following this, the role of the council should be clarified for students; training for members should be facilitated; communication between the council and the whole student body, as well as representatives and their respective year groups, should be strengthened.

2. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

The quality of learning and teaching in observed lessons was good overall with very good to excellent practice observed in some lessons; some important areas for development were identified.

Learner Outcomes and Experiences

Overall, the quality of student learner outcomes and experiences in observed lessons was good; it was very good in some instances.

Generally speaking, students were intrinsically motivated and eager to learn. In lessons where students were enabled to work either independently or collaboratively high levels of interest and participation were observed. Many students displayed a thorough understanding of prior learning.

Many students displayed good levels of engagement as evidenced in the voluntary nature of their contributions and their requests for clarification. In lessons where collaborative learning experiences did not take place, outcomes for less able or more reticent students were more difficult to discern as they were often not provided with sufficient opportunities to display their knowledge, skills and understanding. Observation of students' work as they completed individual or collaborative tasks during lessons suggested that those students who were quiet yet capable achieved the desired learning outcomes. However, it was clear some students needed more time and space to engage with the new areas of learning.

Interactions among students and between students and teachers were very respectful and positive. Students were comfortable asking questions and were encouraged to offer opinions. Their contributions were affirmed. Students were impeccably well behaved.

Teachers' individual and collective practice

In the main, the quality of teaching observed in lessons was good, with excellent practice observed on a few occasions.

Overall, planning and preparation for lessons was good; at times, it was observed to be of the highest quality. Planning for lessons was best when teachers identified tasks, and provided meaningful resources, which supported students to be active in their learning, whilst developing or enhancing key skills.

In the main, the plan was communicated to students in terms of a task to be completed or an area of exploration. By and large, a shift in emphasis is required from sharing of content to sharing learning intentions - what students will know, understand or be able to do by lesson end. In most lessons, students' prior learning and experiences were well utilised to introduce or refine new concepts and skills. In the majority of lessons, there was a commendable focus on developing students' understanding of subject-specific terminology.

A very rich harnessing of student voice, as well as the facilitation of high-level co-operative learning, was noted in a minority of lessons. Teacher-led whole-class instruction predominated across the lessons observed, where teachers presented new information to students as they listened attentively. Questioning was observed to be the key inclusion strategy. Questioning was of a higher standard where teachers included questions which supported the development of higher-order thinking. At times, teachers were advised to consider the distribution of questions, the use of all-student response systems, and how incorrect or poor quality answers might be better managed.

Collaborative learning was facilitated in a good number of lessons. In some lessons, opportunities for collaborative learning were not recognised. Related teacher instruction to students was generally framed as "discuss with the person next to you". Despite this direction, some students tended to work individually. Co-operative learning is an approach that merits further exploration and use, as does the associated large range of teaching strategies. On occasion, the use of note making rather than note taking was recommended.

In a few instances, valuable use of success criteria was observed when an in-class activity or homework exercise was being assigned, and this helped students to see what good quality work looked like. This excellent practice should be extended across the school.

Many lessons began with students' self-correcting homework exercises. The use of peer assessment, in tandem with success criteria, was suggested as another way to correct homework. Students' work in the sample of copybooks inspected demonstrated a good level of engagement with learning and

good teacher monitoring. At times, it was recommended to teachers that they increase or enhance formative commentary on work students submit for teacher correction.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

There has been good progress in the implementation of recommendations from previous reports.

Leadership and Management

Good progress has been made by management in relation to recommendations provided in the 2012 WSE-MLL, as previously noted in the 2014 follow-through WSE-MLL evaluation. A review of the code of behaviour is planned and SSE has commenced. Recommendations which remain to be addressed relate to provision for both PE and RSE.

Teaching and Learning

Progress reports provided by the English, Latin, geography and history subject departments demonstrate that relevant teachers have implemented or are working to ensure ongoing implementation of recommendations provided in recent subject inspection reports.

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

The school's self-evaluation process is at an early stage of development and it is building its capacity for school improvement.

The School's Self-Evaluation Process

The school is behind in terms of the requirements and time frames set down in SSE circulars but management is working to address this shortfall and has recently identified four areas of focus - literacy, numeracy, digital literacy and wellbeing. It is suggested, however, that this is far too ambitious a plan of work at this point in time. It is recommended, therefore, so as to ensure greater impact and to make the process more manageable for management and the teaching staff that the initial focus be narrowed. SSE serves as a fine example of where a task group approach would be beneficial and so provision for same is also recommended.

All concerned are reminded of some of the key features of SSE. Initiatives need to focus on the improvement of learners' experiences and outcomes at classroom level and, therefore, the development of teachers' practice. Areas for development need to be linked to baseline data. Targets need to be set. Strategies for improvement should, by and large, be actionable at classroom level. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation for impact are key. Finally, management is advised of the need to produce and circulate, on an annual basis, an SSE report, a school improvement plan (SIP), and a related summary report for parents. It is positive that board members recognise the role they should play into the future in relation to monitoring and evaluating the impact of related strategies.

The School's Capacity for Improvement

The board and the senior leadership team are working to promote a culture of improvement, the principal and deputy principals plan accordingly, and the staff are responsive to related developments.

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	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;

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The WSE-MLL report from the DES was brought to the BOM meeting on 14/01/2019 where it was accepted as a fair reflection of the work being done in the school. The BOM welcomed the recommendations contained in the report and expressed determination and commitment to implementing same. The recommendations were found to be helpful in charting the future development of the college in advancing the learning and teaching environment. Rowing, soccer and basketball are also played in the school and students can avail of multiple Guidance appointments.

Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

1. A member of the Board of Management has been assigned to oversee that all of the recommendations are put in place.
2. The BOM will rectify the staffing allocation in accordance with Circular 0014/2017
3. Working/planning groups have been established to enhance communication in the school
4. The BOM is committed to development of teaching methodologies through CPD to allow for the development of more student centred learning
5. A new SSE team has been put in place with a new SIP plan being developed with a single focus that is classroom based.