

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

<i>Ainm na scoile / School name</i>	Coláiste Nano Nagle
<i>Seoladh na scoile / School address</i>	Sexton Street Limerick County Limerick
<i>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</i>	64250J

Date of Evaluation: 24-01-2019



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 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 the checks with the exception of 2. The child protection risk assessment ratified by the board was not prepared using a mandatory template published by the Department of Education and Skills. The school has subsequently furnished evidence of total compliance with all aspects of these requirements.

WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

Dates of inspection	9 January – 24 January 2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with board of management• Meetings with principal and deputy principal• Meetings with key staff• Review of relevant documents• Student focus-group interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with parents• Analysis of parent, student and teacher questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of students' work• Interaction with students• Feedback to senior management team, board of management and teachers

School context

Coláiste Nano Nagle is a voluntary Catholic secondary school for girls, originally established by the Presentation Order. It now operates under the trusteeship of Catholic Education, An Irish Schools Trust (CEIST). Students of the school come from a range of ethnic, faith, and social backgrounds, including a proportion for whom English is an additional language (EAL). The school offers all curricular programmes including an optional Transition Year (TY). It participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the Department's action plan for educational inclusion.

The school currently has a post-primary student population of 322, along with 189 adult learners in its Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) College called Central College Limerick. While the same senior management team and teachers are responsible for the timetabling, staffing, promotion, and running of the PLC college, this evaluation did not assess its operation.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- There is a very strong ethos of student care, of teacher professional development, and of commitment to continuous improvement of the learner experience in the school.
- The overall quality of school leadership and management is high; an excellent senior management team, a committed board of management and a professional, collaborative staff have embedded significant changes that support teaching, learning, and policy development; improved curricular and more consistent subject planning outcomes are areas for development.
- Significant progress has been made in developing the school's special educational needs (SEN) planning; some aspects of SEN support still need to be improved.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is high, including very good practice observed in the majority of lessons and satisfactory practice observed in a small number of lessons; there was scope to improve aspects of assessment and differentiation support in some lessons.
- The overall quality of the school self-evaluation (SSE) process is high; practice in relation to DEIS planning is developing and overall good progress has been achieved in implementing specific planned teaching strategies across the school.
- Good practice in the implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations, strategic senior management leadership, and professional expertise within the staff cohort means that the school is very highly capable of achieving ongoing school improvement.

Recommendations

- A core team of qualified SEN teachers should be established to deliver SEN support and school management should consult with the SEN co-ordinator when preparing the whole-school timetable, to ensure that all SEN and EAL resources are used for the purposes intended.
- In-house examples of effective assessment and differentiation practices should be gathered and shared at meetings of all staff and modelled through voluntary peer tutoring.
- A curriculum development group should be established and formal self-evaluation should be established in subject department planning processes.
- The DEIS plan should interlink with the implementation of junior cycle and with the school's digital learning plan.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall quality of school leadership and management is high.

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leading learning and teaching

Three different senior management teams have managed the school over the past three years. The current, permanent senior management team is in role since September 2018. It has brought outstanding energy, commitment and leadership to the role. The two senior team members have been very proactive, making good progress in leading learning and teaching. They are models of continuing professional development, always seeking to learn to achieve improvements.

In recent years, a reflective learning community has been established among the teaching staff, along with a supportive culture of staff formally sharing expertise with each other on particular pedagogical strategies. This distributed leadership of learning has been very effective.

Very positive feedback about the quality of staff and school support provided to students was gathered from Inspectorate questionnaires completed by students and parents and from a student-focus group meeting. Year heads utilise positive student management practices, including restorative justice approaches. Very good links have been forged by the senior management team and other key teachers with outside agencies to help provide student care. The home-school-community liaison (HSCL) co-ordinator has a key link role with parents and external student support link agencies. The guidance department is a key support to students and very positive feedback was gathered about the guidance service from questionnaires of students and parents.

The growing diversity of co-curricular and extra-curricular projects that teachers organise for students promotes a holistic sense of success and pride in the school. Students spoke very positively of the time outside school hours that teachers give very generously to activities and to additional tuition in subject areas to help them achieve.

The quality of support for students with SEN is good at this time. A very hard-working, SEN co-ordinator with specialist qualifications in the area has been in role since November 2018, receiving good transition support from the previous co-ordinator. Very significant progress has been achieved by the new co-ordinator in building up student support files, guided by the continuum of support

model. The co-ordinator has engaged in significant continuing professional development (CPD) to develop school systems in this regard. Senior management has also made a necessary change, broadening the existing SEN team, which meets weekly, to include teacher co-ordinators for EAL and behaviour for learning.

To work toward optimal practice in the SEN area, senior management has identified the need to reduce the number of mainstream teachers in SEN support to a core team, with more teachers needed to qualify in SEN. In addition, more co-ordination time needs to be allocated for SEN and EAL work, as provided for in section 23 of Circular 14/2017. Whole-school CPD needs to be organised in the areas of differentiation, team teaching, and specific student needs, combining in-house and external inputs. Finally, the SEN co-ordinator needs to be consulted on timetable construction before the whole-school timetable is planned, to ensure that SEN and EAL resources are being used for the purposes intended.

Curriculum design is demand-led to meet changing student preferences from year to year, within some constraints imposed by the number of specialist rooms and by the need to staff particular PLC courses. A co-ordinator has been informing staff regularly of key information in relation to the implementation of the Junior Cycle Programme. Also, significant effort has been invested in preparing a wellbeing class programme, with the guidance department as a key leader of this work in conjunction with senior management.

To help the school progress its Junior Cycle implementation, it is recommended that a curriculum development group be formed, representing different subject areas, to review the school's existing curriculum for junior cycle. This group should also consult with parents and students to inform its work. Short courses (either externally or internally designed) should be explored, to meet the needs of some or all students. It is suggested that an extended learning-to-learn induction programme could be created at the start of each junior cycle school year to support wellbeing. Useful elements to consider in such a programme would be grounding students in the key junior cycle skills and helping students to identify transferable knowledge and skills they can bring to the classroom-based assessments they will undertake in second and third year.

TY is well subscribed. It incorporates work experience, subject-sampling to support subject choice, and a variety of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. While TY subject schemes are generally of good quality, there is an absence of programme-wide criteria for TY assessment to guide subject-specific assessments. Senior management and the guidance department worked successfully with parents and students, through a series of meetings last year, to communicate the benefits of choosing the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme, with positive outcomes noted during the evaluation. Overall programme planning for TY, LCA, and the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) is satisfactory at present, with room to improve. There has been significant turnover of teachers and co-ordinators for these programmes in the past school year. It is anticipated that once co-ordinators and teachers access programme-specific CPD, and apply that in their classroom practices and collective planning, there should be improved programme planning outcomes.

Managing the organisation

The quality of governance has been good to date. Many members of the board of management have strong personal links to the school and are deeply committed to its ongoing development. The board oversees aspects of school life such as financial planning, recruitment and promotions, policy ratification, reviewing inspection reports, supporting school ethos, and plant development. While its oversight of learning has been limited in the past, the robust data being presented to it by senior management since September 2018 will enable oversight of DEIS planning, of student achievement,

of the cyclical development of school procedures and policies, and of child protection and data protection compliance.

Multiple, effective communication systems are in place, with a well-planned, annually updated school journal as the cornerstone. Teachers who completed a questionnaire agreed that there is very good communication among staff. Both parents and teachers agreed that the school is well run.

The school operates as an orderly, secure and healthy learning environment, through the combined efforts of senior management, the ancillary staff, teachers, and the student body. Inspectors observed students moving in a relaxed, orderly way on corridors between classes and engaging purposefully in lessons.

The school is very well maintained, with stimulating displays of students' achievements and project work on corridors. A strategic plan to develop school facilities has been created, with funding secured for the replacement of the gym roof and plans to develop aspects of the school and of the PLC college. Very good work has been done this year on establishing child protection practices to manage the movement of post-primary and adult learners within the school campus. A health and safety co-ordinator has been appointed and trained recently, and the preparation of an up-to-date health and safety statement by an external agent has been initiated. Along with the completion and ratification of that statement, teachers need to participate in risk assessments annually.

A number of teachers have been using technology skilfully to support teaching and learning for years. This year, the school has moved to a new shared platform and a team has accessed CPD to begin creating the digital learning plan. It is recommended that the digital plan targets interlink with DEIS planning and with the implementation of junior cycle.

CPD is strongly promoted in the school for established staff, and for new teachers through the Droichead programme. Also, the school reported that it regularly provides placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and is included among the standards in the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers as it can provide valuable professional benefits for teachers, student teachers, students and the teacher education institutions.

Leading school development

The senior management team has a holistic, well-researched vision of how the school now needs to evolve, while also conscious of leading the school's implementation of its CEIST values. The senior management team consistently communicates that vision through staff meeting inputs, assemblies with students, meetings with parents, and internal and external communication channels. Building further links with other schools is also encouraged in order to share good practice, to access supports, and to support evolving student needs.

Questionnaire responses indicate that almost all parents feel welcome in the school, feel that students are doing well in school, and are happy with the school overall. Parents interviewed praised the HSCL-facilitated primary-post-primary transition programme, the school's strong communication of and support for girls' aspirations, and teachers' teaching strategies supporting different learning styles. Increasing the membership of the parents' association is a priority for the school.

Developing leadership capacity

The senior management team keeps up-to-date with evolving requirements and plans proactively for change. A recent post-of-responsibility review was undertaken resulting in more leadership roles

being embedded in middle-management posts. The school has a strong track record of distributed leadership through learning school projects and Teach-Meets.

Team structures, involving all teachers, were introduced in 2017, to create leadership opportunities for volunteers. In the current school year, those teams are focused on school policy development, school planning (literacy, numeracy and ethos teams) and PLC planning and meet during specified Croke Park hours. Previously, more Croke Park hours would have been allocated to subject department planning. Evidence was gathered during the evaluation that some subject departments are not meeting regularly after formally timetabled meetings at the start of the school year. At a time of curriculum change for all subjects due to junior cycle, it is recommended that a balance between subject department and team planning be incorporated into formal timetabled meeting schedules.

To support consistent subject department planning, it is suggested that the senior management team set a few agenda items for subject department meetings at particular points of school year, in tandem with subject-specific items nominated by the teachers in a department. Leadership of learning within subject departments could also be supported by the senior management team holding formal annual meetings with subject and programme co-ordinators to discuss successes, needs, and challenges to support ongoing development.

Evidence was gathered of students demonstrating leadership through multiple projects. The school has a tradition of multiple representative committees for students in different year groups with different remits. In questionnaire responses, the majority of students disagreed with the statement that "I have a say in how things are done in the school." The school has recognised the need to create a single student council, requiring a constitution and training through a student voice post-holder appointment. Building on past practice of gathering student feedback on particular pedagogical strategies targeted for whole-school implementation, the same approach should be extended to key curricular developments, for example Junior Cycle and wellbeing, as well as policy development and supports for learning.

2. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

The overall quality of teaching and learning was high.

Learner outcomes and experiences

The learner experience was good or very good in most of the lessons observed, including some excellent practice. Very positive, respectful relationships were evident between teachers and students. Students engaged very purposefully with tasks and were used to working productively with others. Students took responsibility for their learning, utilising assessment for learning (AfL) strategies. Classroom environments featuring student work and customised desk layout created motivational spaces for learning in most cases. In the best lessons, students' skills of reflection, of problem solving, of management of information, and of working with others were being developed. It is advised that teachers share expertise on developing students' key skills, as they have previously shared expertise on identified AfL and collaborative learning strategies, through learning school projects.

While some good practices were noted in individual classrooms in support of students' vocabulary development and reinforcement strategies, a whole-school approach to this area is now needed. Also, student engagement in Physical Education (PE) needs to be strongly promoted from first year onward and full-year timetabling of PE for fifth-year students is needed.

Teachers' individual and collective practice

The quality of teaching was good or very good in most lessons. Where very good, lessons were very well prepared and set high expectations for students. The teachers balanced active learning phases with information inputs, activated students' prior knowledge, used concrete objects or digital clips to support new concept development, and clearly modelled and explained new processes for students. The lessons integrated peer, self, and teacher formative feedback, using a range of assessment modes, and provided support to students through differentiated learning intentions, task design, support during activity phases, and teacher-produced content sheets.

In a small number of lessons, there was scope to expand and improve aspects of assessment and differentiation practices. With regard to differentiation, there was a need for greater attention to selecting keywords and to systems for explanation and reinforcement; for more structured group work management to gather feedback from groups and agreement of key learning achieved; and for opportunities for students to use digital technology to support their learning, motivation and AfL. Teacher-questioning needed to be improved in a small number of lessons. In some instances, more wait time was needed, and more purposeful questions should have been spread across the student group and used to check for understanding before letting students proceed with a task or homework. Also, where formative feedback on student work needed to be improved, it is advised that the use of visualisers, of peer assessment of exemplars of different standard and of success criteria will support improved learner outcomes.

During the evaluation, a number of teachers utilised excellent assessment and differentiation practices. It is recommended that a formal sharing of in-house expertise on these two areas be organised, building on the school's culture of teachers modelling particular pedagogies with each other. A whole-school focus on sharing of key learning, successes and challenges experienced by teachers whose junior cycle subjects are active would further enhance collective/collaborative practices and ultimately learner outcomes.

The sample of subject plans evaluated ranged from excellent to satisfactory. Noteworthy features of the best plans included targeted action planning for ongoing subject/programme improvement, robust results analysis, teacher reflection, meeting minutes, engagement with new subject specifications and key skills, and student feedback. The use of learner outcomes is strong in a number of subject plans, but needs to be targeted for improvement in others. Subject department action planning, based on robust results analysis and sharing of strategies in related subjects, is recommended, with leadership from senior management to establish this culture.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

There has been good progress in implementing the recommendations of previous inspections.

Leadership and Management

Good progress has been made in relation to the management-related recommendations made in the 2010 WSE report. Areas for continuation include school policy development, the development of literacy and numeracy skills in all subject classrooms on a daily basis, and creating some more time for formal subject department meetings to support improvement planning.

Teaching and Learning

Evidence was gathered of very good implementation overall in respect of recommendations from four recent subject inspections. There has been very good promotion of transferable subject inspection recommendations to all staff. Areas to continue to develop are the use of peer assessment strategies, formative feedback, and differentiation, and a focus on results analysis to further raise learner outcomes in some cases.

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

The overall quality of the SSE process is good, with much improvement achieved during the past school year; the capacity to support ongoing school improvement is very high.

The School's Self-Evaluation Process

While the school has been steadily making improvements in aspects of DEIS over years, through various strategies, there was an absence of systematic setting of targets and monitoring for impact until the past year.

Senior management has shown very committed leadership in this area, engaging in significant CPD to refocus DEIS planning on targets that link with teaching and learning and communicating the message that DEIS targets are the responsibility of all. Teachers have volunteered to act as leaders of particular DEIS areas, reporting on targets and strategies. Senior management is leading the systematic review of in-house data, balanced with the gathering of feedback from teachers, students and parents.

To act as an overall school improvement plan, it is recommended that the DEIS plan interlink with the implementation of junior cycle and with the school's digital learning needs. The DEIS co-ordination team should plan how students will be asked to demonstrate improvement in specific areas when framing targets and actions, and should phase targets over a number of years.

The School's Capacity for Improvement

The school has a very high capacity for improvement, based on the breadth and depth of professional expertise among the staff, combined with exceptional senior management leadership and the board of management's reflective, improvement-focused ethos.

Appendix

TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

(blank)

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

- A core team of qualified SEN teachers are being developed to deliver SEN support and school management have supported a member of the teaching staff in applying for a Graduate Diploma in Special Educational Needs. The senior management team have been meeting the SEN co-ordinator in preparation for the 2019/2020 timetable to ensure that all SEN and EAL resources are used for the purposes intended.
- Teaching and Learning has been an item on the agenda for every staff meeting since August 2018. Effective assessment and differentiation practices will be addressed under this agenda item drawing on the expertise of staff. The Croke Park Calendar 2019/2020 will also address these areas using expertise from the NCSE and PDST. Staff will be encouraged and supported to share expertise through our digital learning platform and teach meet sessions.
- A more formalised approach to curriculum development has commenced. Going forward, all subject departments will be given agenda items for their subject department planning meetings to support formal self-evaluation.
- The digital learning plan is currently being finalised and is interlinked with the DEIS plan. In relation to Junior Cycle, the school is currently looking at the key skills of the Junior Cycle and this work is being integrated into the DEIS plan.

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;