

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

School name	Presentation Secondary School
School address	Clonmel Co Tipperary
Roll number	65340P

Date of Evaluation: 10-05-2019



**An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna**
Department of
Education and Skills

WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

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

How to read this report

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

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

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

The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment 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	8, 9 and 10 May 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

Presentation Secondary School, Clonmel is a voluntary secondary school for girls. Its history dates back to the opening of the original school in 1814. The school is under the trusteeship of Catholic Education, an Irish Schools Trust (CEIST) since 2009. It offers the Junior Cycle programme, an optional Transition Year programme, the Leaving Certificate (Established), and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). The school has a current enrolment of 461 girls.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The board of management, together with the senior management team, provides good leadership and management of the school. However, a checklist of policies has not been maintained, and as a result, key policies have not been drafted or reviewed.
- The quality of the supports for students, and the structures in place, are very good, and include the junior and senior pastoral care teams.
- Students with special educational needs (SEN) are generally very well supported; however, this support is partly delivered through the creation of small class groups in some core subjects which is not consistent with Circular 14/17.
- Provision for the delivery of the curriculum is very good and includes a range of subjects and curricular programmes.
- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment was very good in the lessons observed.
- Very good progress has been made in the implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations.
- The school's engagement with the school self-evaluation (SSE) process is good and very good capacity for school improvement is evident; however, some aspects of SSE require attention.

Recommendations

- The board should complete a policy and legislative checklist each year, as an internal record of its ongoing process of policy development and review, and in order to ensure its compliance with requirements.
- The creation of small class groups in core subjects for students with SEN should be reviewed in accordance with Circular 14/17, and alternative ways of supporting students, such as team-teaching, should be further developed.

- The number of teachers involved in the delivery of additional teaching supports should be reduced in order to allow for more continuity of support.
- In line with circular 40/16, the school should continue to prioritise engagement with the school self-evaluation process with a focus on teaching and learning in the classroom, and a summary of the school improvement plan (SIP) and the annual SSE report should be shared with the school community.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of school leadership and management is good.

Leading learning and teaching

The quality of leadership for learning is good, and the work of the senior management team in promoting a culture of continuous development and improvement, is commendable. The principal and deputy principal work to promote a school culture that focuses on students' holistic development as well as on their academic progress. Their management and leadership of the school is effective. It is evident that they plan for the ongoing development of the school and its curriculum, as well as supporting involvement in initiatives by staff and students.

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum. The range of curricular programmes provided includes the Junior Cycle School Programme (JCSP). A wide range of subjects is offered including a choice of two modern foreign languages, while the subject-sampling programme in first year ensures that students are well informed when they choose their subjects for Junior Cycle. This subject-sampling system is currently under review by management and staff in order to facilitate the introduction of short courses such as Coding.

Good work has been undertaken in the development of the curriculum for Junior Cycle, including in the area of Wellbeing. There is a very evident commitment to student wellbeing throughout the school, and it is positive that the school has opted to provide a range of co-curricular and extra-curricular events throughout the year, targeted at student wellbeing. However, care should be taken to record the hours allocated to each year group, and the ways in which these events contribute to student wellbeing should be documented as per the guidelines for Wellbeing.

A well-organised and successful, optional Transition Year (TY) programme is offered in senior cycle, and includes a subject-sampling programme. The school is also involved in the phased introduction of Computer Science as a subject for Leaving Certificate.

For students transferring from primary school into first year, very good transition arrangements are in place. The range of measures include an open night and visits to local feeder schools, as well as the use of standardised assessment tests as a means of ensuring that students' needs will be met.

It is clear that the school strives to be an inclusive school. This is evident in the caring atmosphere and the respectful interactions of staff and students, as well as in the school's response to the emerging needs of its students. In their responses to the questionnaires, a very high percentage of students indicated that they felt safe and cared for, while a similar percentage of parents also agreed that their daughters felt safe and well looked after in the school.

Very good care structures are in place to support students, and the organization of this support is a significant strength of the school. There is a junior and senior pastoral care team in place, and each team has a timetabled weekly meeting with management. In order to complement the work of the guidance counsellor and to further support the school's commitment to positive mental health and wellbeing, additional counselling is also made available to students by the school, and there are strong links with a number of external agencies. The contribution of the year heads is an important factor, as their role is primarily a pastoral role with no day-to-day link with discipline. The class tutors also contribute to good practice in supporting students.

Policies for Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) are in place and implemented, while additional policies relating to aspects of student care and inclusivity are in preparation. However, a Whole School Guidance Plan is lacking and the drafting of this policy should now be prioritized.

The focus on providing support for students with SEN is very evident throughout the school. This support is led by the SEN coordinator and a small core team, in conjunction with senior management. The valuable contribution of the special needs assistants (SNAs) is also noted. There is a very good understanding shown of the complex and varied needs of these students, and it is very positive that the school has introduced a Level Two Learning Programme (L2LP) in Junior Cycle in order to address the learning needs of a small number of students.

A number of models of support are employed, including withdrawal from class for one-to-one tuition. However, the number of teachers involved in the delivery of resource hours is high. While all students are taught in mixed-ability classes for the majority of their subjects in junior cycle, they are banded for the core subjects of Maths, English and Irish in second and third year, with classes divided for Maths from mid-way in first year. A small additional class group for students with SEN has been created in English and Maths in order to address the students' learning needs, and to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for them in the junior cycle. However, this practice may impact on students' social development and sense of inclusion, and is not in line with Circular 04/17. A move away from this arrangement has already been suggested by staff, and should be progressed. Alternative ways of supporting students, such as through an increased use of team-teaching, should be developed, and management should look to reduce the number of teachers involved in the delivery of resource hours in order to ensure continuity of support for students.

Managing the organisation

The board of management provides good management for the school. The board is properly constituted and is in place since October 2017. Members of the board have undergone training for their role and are supported in their work by CEIST. Their commitment to the school is very evident and they are very supportive of senior management.

The board is aware of its statutory responsibilities and it has ensured that the required child protection procedures are in place. As part of its role, it has identified priorities for the school including the development of information and communications technology (ICT), most recently through the acquisition of tablet devices for staff, and the use of a school-wide learning platform.

A school plan is in place and it is positive that a number of new policies have been drafted since the board was established. However, there is currently no checklist of policies maintained, and as a result, a number of key policies have not been developed or reviewed. The board should now ensure that a policy and legislative checklist is completed annually as an internal record of its ongoing process of policy development and review, and to ensure compliance with requirements. In addition,

a number of key policies such as the admissions policy and the code of behaviour, should be prioritised for review.

While some of the communication systems in place are very effective, such as the weekly newsletter, the responses of parents and teachers to the questionnaires indicate that opportunities exist for the board of management to further strengthen communication with key stakeholders.

The management of school facilities is very good and the buildings are maintained to a high standard. Well-equipped specialist rooms are in place, as well as a library and school canteen. The updating of facilities in the senior college building, as well as ongoing alterations and reconfigurations, are planned in order to further improve the school campus. A health and safety statement is in place and is updated annually.

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 and the teacher education institution.

Leading school development

The leadership of school development is good, and the senior management team demonstrates a good capacity for looking to the future, and for responding to the evolving needs of the school. The principal has been responsible for overseeing significant educational changes during her time as principal, and has initiated many positive developments. Her significant contribution to the school over many years is acknowledged.

An active parents' association is in place and its members meet regularly throughout the year. Partnership with parents is valued as a means of supporting students' learning. In their responses to the questionnaire, the parents agree that they are kept well informed about school matters, and that they are happy with the school.

The development of partnership with the wider community, and in particular with the local primary schools, businesses and industry, is also valued and is seen as a way of enhancing the students' educational experience.

Developing leadership capacity

The development of leadership capacity is good and effective structures are in place to support and develop leadership. A review of the posts of responsibility has taken place, and distributed leadership is facilitated through assistant principal roles in areas such as coordination, programme review, and school self-evaluation. A number of staff committees and cross-curricular groups have been established in areas such as curriculum review and for projects such as the Creative Schools programme. In addition there is very good support for teachers who wish to engage in professional development or in leading new initiatives. These structures support the functioning of the school and facilitate the further development of priority areas such as teaching and learning.

Opportunities for student leadership are provided through the student council. The elected members carry out their work with the assistance of a member of staff. The council members are enthusiastic about their role, and have been actively involved in school events such as the Positivity Week, as well as in school issues. They have also been provided with training by CEIST. Their leadership roles could be further increased by giving them responsibility for taking the minutes at their meetings, while their visibility within the school should be expanded through the provision of a

notice board, and a student council page on the school website. Leadership capacity is also developed through the opportunities given to senior students to act as mentors for first year students, as well as in leading the student retreats.

Students are afforded the opportunity to engage in a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular sporting, academic, artistic and cultural activities which enhance their learning experience, and provide them with leadership opportunities. Students have experienced success at local and national level in many areas. The commitment and leadership shown by staff in providing and facilitating these activities is also acknowledged.

2. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment was very good in the lessons observed.

Learner outcomes and experiences

During the evaluation, the inspectors visited lessons across the range of subjects and curricular programmes offered in the school.

The quality of learner outcomes and experiences was very good. Very positive relationships between students and teachers were evident in the lessons observed, and as a result, the classroom atmosphere was conducive to learning. Learning intentions were shared with students in most lessons, although sometimes the intentions were phrased in terms of the material to be covered in the lesson rather than in terms of student learning. Allowing time for the consolidation of learning at the end of the lesson was a feature of some lessons, and this is an area that could be further explored.

In many instances, a very good collaborative learning environment was created by the teacher through the effective use of active learning methodologies. Students were motivated and high levels of student engagement were evident, especially when working collaboratively and purposefully in pairs or small groups, which was a feature of many of the lessons. Their interest in their work was also demonstrated by the quality of their contributions to often challenging whole-class discussions, and by their confidence in asking questions and seeking clarification.

In their responses to the questionnaires, a high percentage of parents agreed that their child was doing well, and that teaching is good in the school. The majority of students also agreed that they are getting on well with their school work, and that they are encouraged by their teachers to do the best that they can.

Teachers' individual and collective practice

The quality of teachers' individual and collective practice was very good. Lessons were well prepared and paced, and the time available was used to very good effect. Activities for all year groups were well chosen to suit the time of year, and were very well managed.

The teachers had high expectations for students, and their approach was both positive and affirming of student effort. Very good questioning techniques were utilised at times, both to elicit information and to encourage students to engage in critical thinking. Where very effective practice was seen, the questions facilitated deeper engagement by students and extended learning beyond the lesson.

In all year groups, but particularly in junior cycle, there was a very good emphasis on oral communication and production by students, both in English and in the modern languages. The use of

the target language by teachers and students was very good in these modern language lessons. Teachers responded to the students' individual learning needs and provided them with constructive feedback on their oral presentations. As a result, students were confident in expressing their views and in making presentations.

Teachers were enthusiastic about their subject and shared their enthusiasm with students. Best practice was seen where teacher-led instruction was well balanced with student input. However, at times, a reduction in teacher talk would have provided a better balance of teacher input and student input, and would have been more effective.

Very good use of formative feedback was evident in senior cycle classes where students were engaged in final preparations for the certificate examinations. Students were encouraged to look critically at what they had written and to work on strategies for improvement. It was evident that teachers had a very good understanding of the requirements of the syllabus and shared that knowledge with their students.

As the teachers were not classroom-based but moved from room to room, they were sometimes limited by not having sufficient space for the display of subject-relevant material such as key words. The proposed move to teacher-based classrooms will provide opportunities for further development of the learning environment.

Subject departments are well organised and subject plans have been developed. Patterns of uptake and achievement in the certificate examinations are good and reflect the high expectations that the school has for its students.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

Overall, the implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations is very good.

Leadership and Management

Recommendations from recent evaluations including French, Geography and Irish were considered. Good practice is evident in the sharing of recommendations with the whole staff, and in ensuring that recommendations are used to inform future planning, in particular regarding the review of posts of responsibility and the ongoing development and integration of ICT into teaching and learning.

Teaching and Learning

Where recommendations were made, they focused on subject department planning and the development of students' language skills. There was evidence of very good progress in their continued implementation.

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

The school's engagement with the SSE process is good and very good capacity for school improvement is evident.

The School's Self-Evaluation Process

The school's engagement with the SSE process has been re-activated through the appointment of a co-ordinator and the establishment of a committee. As part of its initial focus on an aspect of assessment for learning, the use of an assessment cover sheet has been piloted, and data-gathering has included surveys of students and parents.

The school should continue to prioritize engagement with the six-step SSE process with a focus on a new aspect of teaching and learning in the classroom. The proposed move to teacher-based classrooms will provide new opportunities for further developing practices in the area of literacy and numeracy. The school improvement plan (SIP) and the SSE report should also be communicated to stakeholders annually as required by Circular 0040/2016.

The School's Capacity for Improvement

The renewed commitment to the SSE process demonstrated by management and staff during the evaluation, are evidence of a very good capacity for ongoing change and improvement.

The Inspectorate's Quality Continuum

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	<i>Very good</i> applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is <i>outstanding</i> and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	<i>Good</i> applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	<i>Satisfactory</i> applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	<i>Fair</i> applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	<i>Weak</i> applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management and school community welcomes this overwhelmingly positive report. The Board of Management is pleased that the Presentation ethos was evident in the guiding vision for the school. The Inspectorate acknowledged that the work of the school community is characterised by team work, commitment, professionalism and a shared vision.

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 Board has put the following in place to address them and we will continue to implement all recommendations, as with previous reports.

The Board, as well as completing a policy and legislative checklist, will also start the process of a strategic plan for 2020-2030 in the coming year.

The school has already engaged with NCSE to examine alternative ways of supporting SEN students through meetings with SEN team and whole staff support.

The school has also engaged with the Inspectorate for guidance regarding our engagement with the process of SSE. The summary of the SIP plan and SSE Report for 2018/19 will be shared on our website over the coming weeks.