

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

**Whole School Evaluation**  
**Management, Leadership and Learning**

**REPORT**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Ainm na scoile /<br/>School name</b>       | Hansfield Education Together Secondary School |
| <b>Seoladh na scoile /<br/>School address</b> | Barnwell Road<br>Hansfield<br>Dublin 15       |
| <b>Uimhir rolla /<br/>Roll number</b>         | 68101M  |

**Date of Evaluation: 16-10-2019**



---

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

| Date of inspection   | 16-10-2019  |
|--|---|
| 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

Hansfield Educate Together Secondary School is a voluntary co-educational school which operates under the patronage of Educate Together. The school first opened in 2014 and has a current enrolment of 646 students. The curriculum includes the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY), the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

### Summary of main findings and recommendations:

#### Findings

- The quality of school leadership and management is good; the board of management and the principal work hard to promote an inclusive and caring school community and a culture of continuous improvement for staff and students.
- Good student support systems have been established and staff are very committed to student care and welfare; very good teacher-student rapport was in evidence throughout the evaluation process.
- Some areas for development were noted: the ratification of mandatory policies; enhanced tracking and monitoring of student attainment; appropriate allocation of special education needs (SEN) resources; and more focused strategic planning.
- The quality of teaching and learning was good or very good in almost all of the lessons observed and some excellent practice was noted; in a small number of lessons, the quality was adequate
- The school operates in a reflective manner and has very good capacity for change and improvement based on its ongoing school self-evaluation (SSE) work and the highly committed staff.

#### Recommendations

- The board of management should oversee the formulation and implementation of a strategic school plan, including a curriculum advisory group, based on the current and future needs of the school.
- A focused Students with Additional Needs (SAN) core team should be established; regular meetings should be facilitated and effective systems of sharing information established so that targeted interventions can be made to support relevant students in line with the best practice outlined in Circular 0014/2017.
- The board of management should further strengthen its leadership role by ensuring that all mandatory policies such as Guidance and RSE are ratified, by engaging with areas of teaching and learning and by overseeing the introduction of the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme.

- A whole-school approach to formalising a robust academic tracking, monitoring and goal setting system that involves input from year heads, subject teams and the students themselves, should be further developed.
- School-wide systems to share and embed effective classroom practice in differentiation and formative assessment should be established.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

Overall, the quality of school management and leadership is good, encompassing the board, senior and middle management, student support and curriculum.

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

The board of management and the principal promote an inclusive and caring school community, which demonstrably values diversity and challenges discrimination; and a culture of continuous improvement for staff and students. The principal and acting deputy principal work well together and are committed to the ongoing development of the school.

The board of management is very supportive of the school and the senior management team (SMT). The board monitors teaching and learning through the discussion of state examination results, inspection reports and the principal's report. In order to bolster such discussions, the board should continue to be provided with regular detailed progress reports on the implementation and review of SSE targets as-well as annual reports from post holders.

Senior management encourages and supports teachers to develop and extend their teaching, learning and assessment practices. For example, templates are provided at subject-team meetings to guide discussions on teaching and learning. Teachers are encouraged to share good practice and work together collaboratively to improve student learning. For example, an identified priority in the school's digital learning strategy is developing an online sharing platform for teachers to collaborate on long-term planning and to share resources.

Hansfield Educate Together Secondary School fosters students' holistic development by providing a broad range of curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular learning opportunities. A ten-week subject-taster programme has been established in the school for first years and was commended by parents, staff and students as an opportunity to experience a range of subjects and to make informed choices. Conversely, staff acknowledged some difficulty regarding the programme, specifically regarding how students stored and presented their work. It is good practice that the school continues to keep the programme under review.

The school has taken steps to improve provision of Physical Education (PE) in first year, allocating it a double period. Implementation of the Junior Cycle is on-going, however, there are some areas of timetabling that warrant further exploration, specifically regarding the provision of PE and the spread of subjects across the week.

In line with its ethos, the school offers a number of non-curricular subjects such as Ethical Education and Integrated Learning. The school has recognised challenges regarding the development and assessment of these programmes. Commendably, a language-development strategy was initiated following a school-wide identification of students whose first language is not English. The school has also introduced a number of new subjects at senior cycle such as Politics and Society and LCVP. The school intends to introduce the LCA programme next year. A very valuable TY programme offers a range of new learning experiences that serve as a continuum of learning from junior to senior cycle.

Attendance has been identified as a concern and an attendance strategy has been ratified by the board last year and implemented on a school-wide basis. Procedures for monitoring attendance and strategies to encourage good attendance are in place and the roles and responsibilities of the school community have been set out. Attendance continues to be a key focus of the school.

The care and wellbeing of students is at the heart of this school and is recognised as the responsibility of all staff. Care team meetings take place weekly and are facilitated by the SMT. Year heads play a pivotal role in the school in general but specifically in student-care structures and are well supported by a tutor system. A breakfast club and areas of recreation have been established in the school to support social interaction among students. Programmes such as *Check and Connect*, *Friends for Life* and *Alert*, further support the wellbeing of students.

The school has recently appointed a guidance counsellor; however, the guidance plan has yet to be completed and ratified. This should be addressed as a matter of urgency. Commendably, all first-year and second-year students are timetabled for one lesson per week for seventeen weeks as part of the Wellbeing programme. Class contact time with other year groups should increase as the school population increases. Provision for Guidance could form part of an overall curricular review.

Valuable work has been put into planning for Wellbeing in recent times and the Wellbeing team, comprising members from pillar subjects, has conducted significant consultation as a basis for action planning for the Wellbeing programme. For example, under the evolving Wellbeing programme, PE is scheduled for two classes of fifty minutes each week in first year. However, there is a shortfall in terms of the required hours for PE and the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) short courses that are currently being implemented. Addressing this shortfall as the school plans for full implementation of the Wellbeing programme could form part of an overall curricular review.

It is good practice that the Wellbeing team conducted an internal review of SPHE and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) which resulted in the establishment of an SPHE core team. Currently the RSE programme is incorporated into the SPHE policy and to ensure compliance with circular letter 0037/2010, the board should now ensure that a distinct RSE policy is developed and ratified.

A curriculum advisory group, led by a member of the SMT, should be established to oversee an overall curricular review in relation to timetabling; the development of non-curricular and curricular subjects; the subject-sampling programme; the possibility of reintroducing tutor time and junior cycle curricular planning regarding Wellbeing. Such a group could incorporate the views of parents, students and staff and support the overall strategic planning for future improvement in the school.

High expectations are set for student achievement. Students are encouraged to take subjects at higher level and learner outcomes have been positive. However, school management and staff have recognised the need to use attainment data more systematically to assist students to reach their full potential. This should be a key developmental focus. Some very good work is underway in devising a student-tracking and target-setting system. Therefore, it is timely that a school-wide formal system for tracking student attainment that involves input from year heads, subject teams and the students themselves should be progressed and implemented.

The school has an inclusive intake, including students from other countries, students with additional needs and those with English as an additional language (EAL). Students are supported through various interventions such as small-group withdrawal, one-to-one support and with team-teaching. Special tuition is given to those with exemptions from Irish. Good links with local primary feeder schools have been established. The recently appointed Special Educational Needs (SEN) co-ordinator is in the process of developing SEN structures within the school. The school should now focus on the establishment of a Students with Additional Needs core team, incorporating support for EAL

students. The Students with Additional Needs team should be facilitated to meet regularly and should develop a system of appropriate sharing of student support files, baseline information, and a wide range of beneficial resources and strategies to assist teachers working with students with additional needs, including EAL. The core team should continually evaluate the effectiveness of team-teaching to ensure it's the best model of targeted support for identified students.

In keeping with the school's commitment to inclusion, An Cosán - an Autism Spectrum Disorder unit has been established. The unit is very well managed and students are integrated into mainstream classes where possible.

The school provides placements for student teachers and a Droichead programme is being established in the school. Such engagement in initial teacher education programme is welcome and is included among 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 institutions. A mentor system for new staff members could be considered in the context of a growing school.

The code of behaviour in the school, prepared with guidance from the National Behaviour Support Service, has a strong restorative focus and seeks to promote and support a culture of positive discipline. It is communicated very effectively to students as evidenced in student questionnaire reports. A strong emphasis on respect for the rights and responsibilities of the individual underpin the code and a clear ladder of interventions is detailed. Throughout the evaluation, very good relationships between staff and students were evident and the behaviour of students both on the corridor and in classrooms was exemplary.

### **Managing the organisation**

The board is properly constituted and provides positive and supportive leadership to the school. Members have received training for their role and meetings are held regularly. The board oversees the development and implementation of policies which inform the day-to-day running of the school. Priority should now be given to ratification and implementation of mandatory policies such as Guidance and RSE.

There is regular communication between the chairperson of the board and the principal. An agreed report is provided for teachers after each board meeting. The board is kept very well informed on school business by the principal through the comprehensive principal's report at each board meeting.

Physical resources are well managed and the buildings and grounds are maintained to an impressive standard. Classrooms and specialist rooms provide a good physical learning environment with stimulating displays of students' achievements and project work on corridors and many classrooms.

### **Leading school development**

The school communicates a guiding vision through its mission statement and initiated a school plan early in the schools' development. However, it would be timely now for the board to develop an overarching strategic school plan that sets out the goals and expectations for the school as a learning community into the future. The board, supported by the SMT, should now identify appropriate goals, including the curricular review referred to earlier in this report, based on the current and future needs of the school.

A very good digital learning pilot plan has been initiated to support the Mathematics department in effective use of ICT in the classroom and to encourage inter-departmental collaboration and the sharing of resources through an online sharing platform. It is now opportune to move towards a school-wide digital learning plan and this goal could form part of the strategic plan for the school.

The school and the parents' association recognise the importance of developing strong links with the community, particularly important in a developing and culturally diverse area. Commendably, plans are already underway to reach out to parents through the organisation of cultural evenings and parent information evenings.

### **Developing leadership capacity**

There is very good development of leadership capacity and a high value is placed on using in-house expertise for upskilling staff. For example, the Mathematics department is leading a pilot academic tracking and goal-setting system. Posts of responsibility are reviewed in order to meet the changing needs of the school. For example, an assistant principal position was realigned to focus on attendance last year.

The SMT works hard to promote a learning culture in the school. Teachers are empowered to take on leadership roles and sub-groups leading developments in teaching and learning have been developed.

Students have good opportunities to develop leadership skills. Students have been part of the consultative process in relevant policies such as dress code, the code of behaviour and healthy eating. The students' council meets regularly and has presented to the board. Other important initiatives, such as the student mentor system and Green Schools committee, contribute effectively to building students' leadership skills.

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

The quality of teaching and learning was good or very good in almost all of the lessons observed and some excellent practice was noted; in a small number of lessons the quality of provision was adequate.

### **Learner outcomes and experiences**

The quality of learner outcomes and experiences is 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. Explicit links to prior learning and allowing time for the consolidation of learning at the end of a lesson were features of some lessons.

In some lessons, the teacher organised a starter activity to engage students and create a positive mind-set at the beginning of a lesson. In most lessons, students listened attentively to their teachers and each other and were given plenty of opportunities to be active learners. In the best lessons, group work was structured co-operatively, with specific roles designated, clear instructions, was time bound and students had ample time to share their learning with their peers.

In a very small number of cases, some student passivity with regard to learning was observed due to an over emphasis on teacher delivery which should be rebalanced in favour of more active student participation. Strategies to optimise students' active participation should be planned for all lessons.

In many lessons, students were appropriately challenged and high expectations were set for them. Individual help was given when it was noticed that a student was struggling. Sometimes tasks were further scaffolded, allowing for differentiation of content and task. Some excellent examples of this were observed during the evaluation; for example, in one lesson, tasks were grouped into bronze, silver and gold sections, while in another lesson, differentiated activities were colour coded in traffic light colours. However, ensuring the learning needs of all students are met, including students

whose first language is not English, remains a significant area for development. Explicit emphasis on subject-specific key words was noted in some lessons but not in all. Students would benefit from the embedding of key words and an enhanced emphasis on oral-language development.

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

Effective individual practice was observed in the majority of lessons. The majority of teachers planned for a variety of methodologies, including active and collaborative learning. Teachers' approach to students was positive and affirming. Teachers were enthusiastic about their subjects and shared their enthusiasm with students. Many teachers went to impressive effort to create welcoming, interesting and attractive learning spaces in their classrooms. Teachers showed very good professional engagement in the feedback sessions with inspectors and were very willing to accept suggestions for developing practice: this is indicative of the commendable reflective practice amongst teachers in this school.

A variety of teaching approaches was used to engage students in their learning. Often clear instructions were provided to students and learning was encouraged through well-structured tasks. In the best lessons, students created their own notes rather than taking down notes from the data projector screen.

Some very good questioning strategies were noted during the evaluation. The best examples reflected good awareness by the teacher of wait time and the utilisation of strategies to encourage and scaffold substantial student response. In some lessons, teachers used a randomiser to ensure that a wide range of students in the class had an opportunity to contribute.

The school has adopted formative assessment as a key focus for SSE and while some very good examples of developmental written feedback was observed in sample copybooks, in general, this remains an area for further development.

The implications of new subject specifications for planning and practice and their impact on students' learning experiences are generally understood. The quality of subject department planning varied from excellent to adequate. In some subject departments, most notable Mathematics and Art, excellent analyses of student outcomes are documented and the impact of that analysis on improving teaching and learning was included in the subject plan. As previously noted, students would benefit from a school-wide focus on academic tracking and monitoring.

Use of ICT was generally limited to static presentations and some film clips. The further development of the school's digital learning plan will encourage more student use of technologies in lessons to aid learning.

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

### **Teaching and Learning**

Very good teaching and learning practices were observed in many lessons and some of the recommendations from previous evaluations have been implemented, such as the sharing of learning intentions with students at the beginning of lessons; the use of questioning strategies and enhancing the learner experience through use of active learning methodologies.

Some key areas of teaching and learning where further development is needed such as the provision of regular formative feedback in students' copybooks; the use of differentiated teaching strategies and the development of a school-wide academic tracking and monitoring system remain to be addressed.



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

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

The school has a strong culture of review and self-evaluation. A range of data is analysed to identify areas for improvement across a range of themes such as literacy, numeracy and formative feedback. The school has identified learner centeredness as an additional key area. Committees have been established to gather and analyse data and agree strategies for use in lessons to ensure a whole-school approach and to form a school improvement plan (SIP). The board has been kept informed of developments in this area. A summary of the SIP should now be shared with the school community so that parents and others can support the school in its journey of improvement.

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

The school has a very good capacity for improvement. There is an increasing understanding of the evolving needs of this vibrant, growing school and an impressive commitment by school management and teachers to respond to these changes. A self-reflective culture of review is already established in the school. This all augurs well for the future improvement of the school.

## 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**

## **Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report**

Hansfield ETSS broadly welcomes this Inspection Report and considers it a good reflection of the current stage of development and future priorities. The inspection process and experience, in overall terms, was positive and affirming and conducted in very collaborative and supportive manner. Very good guidance was provided by the inspection team on how to maximise current strengths to address areas for development and improvement. This is very welcome.

It is noted that given the growth pattern in student and teacher numbers, coupled with national discussions on leadership and management only a small middle leadership and management team (two Assistant Principal 1 positions) was in place until towards the end of 2017/2018. This grew considerably since the beginning of 2018/2019 and is currently at 11 (4 Assistant Principal 1 Positions and 6 Assistant Principal 11 Positions (3 of which are vacant) and a Programme Co-ordinator. Expansion at middle leadership level will continue this year and until the school reaches full capacity (circa 2022).

Increased leadership and management time and capacity has had a considerable positive impact on the pace of development in the last two years and will enable more focussed strategic planning into the future. This will be underpinned by reflective and collaborative practice and will make provision for the involvement of all the key stakeholders.

## **Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.**

The Board of Management had already prioritised whole-school planning for development and will agree an immediate action plan to include consultation with the whole - school community. The emergent strategic plan will make explicit reference to priorities and actions that build on learning to date, feedback from all the stakeholders and recommendations from inspections conducted by the Department of Education and Skills.

As the staff team is growing particular expertise in special and additional needs, including English as an Additional Language, has being recruited. After successive recruitment processes a qualified Guidance Counsellor joined the team in September 2019. This has enabled a core Students with Additional Needs (SAN) Team to emerge which had not met formally before the inspection process. It now meets fortnightly and will be central to creating a strong structure for SAN, including the development and review of systems and supports and planning for capacity development among staff.

The availability of a Guidance Counsellor from September 2019 is now enabling more specialised and targeted guidance support for students. The Guidance Counsellor will lead the development of a Guidance Plan, drawing on a review of earlier and current work. Following consultation ( October 2019 – March 2020 ) with staff, students, parents and other relevant players a Draft Guidance Plan will be available for consideration by the Board of Management before the end of this academic year.

The Wellbeing Team Co-ordinator, supported by an Assistant Principal 1 and the Deputy Principal is leading a review of the Relationships and Sexuality Policy – RSE and monitoring current provision for students with a view to a separate RSE Policy being approved by the Board of Management before the end of this academic year.

Each year the Board of Management and staff consider significant curriculum issues. Planning for the introduction of the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme will commence earlier this year and it

is envisaged that the availability of a Guidance Counsellor to support students and parents in making informed choices will have a significant positive impact.

The staff team have been reminded to nominate members to a Curriculum Advisory Group which will support a review of areas such as the Taster Programme and the re-introduction of Tutor Time. Sub- groups to review both of these areas have been established. Feedback from students, staff and parents will be considered and the Leadership and Management Team, Senior Management and the Board of Management will review recommendations in a timely manner so that relevant changes can be introduced for the next academic year.

The school, now in its 6th year, has been incrementally developing an approach to tracking to ensure that student progress and academic achievement is monitored. An Assistant Principal 1 is leading this area and has completed a comprehensive review of how we manage and engage with the data available across all subject departments. This will strengthen staff capacity in this area which will be reviewed regularly at department and staff meetings and planning sessions.

Staff planning and development sessions and subject department meetings will make more explicit and regular provision for sharing effective practice in teaching and learning drawing on internal and external expertise. With particular reference to differentiation and formative assessment measures will include support for peer activity, structured support for co-teaching and the development of ICT strategies.