

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

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

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Cabra Community College
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Kilkieran Road Cabra Dublin 7
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	701500

**Date of Evaluation: 04-10-2018**



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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 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 did not meet the requirements in relation to 7 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, the school has subsequently furnished evidence of compliance with these requirements.

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

Dates of inspection	04-10-2018
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

Cabra Community College is under the patronage of the City of Dublin Education and Training Board and has a current enrolment of 120 students. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. All curricular programmes except the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) are provided. Transition Year (TY) is a compulsory programme. The school also provides Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) and Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) courses. Lessons provided on these adult-education courses were not included in this evaluation.

### Summary of main findings and recommendations:

#### Findings

- The quality of school leadership is very good and the overall quality of school management is good; teacher job-share arrangements are restricting the timetabling of some subjects currently.
- Students with special educational needs (SEN) are very well supported and the quality of care provided for students is excellent.
- A good range of curriculum programmes is provided but student enrolment figures limit subject choices; aspects of the TY programme require attention.
- There is very good practice in respect of developing leadership capacity within the school; decision-making processes are inclusive and consultative.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was satisfactory with a significant variation noted across individual lessons; teachers' collaborative practice would benefit from further development.
- There has been good implementation of recommendations made in previous evaluations and the school has very good capacity for improvement but aspects of DEIS planning need to be refined.

#### Recommendations

- A review of the job-sharing arrangements for teachers should be conducted so that the entire school week is available for timetabling all subjects.
- The core, sampling and vocational elements of the TY timetable should be rebalanced, and supports that enable students to engage in a wider range of work-experience placements need to be developed.
- Systematic procedures that facilitate the sharing of effective teaching and learning strategies and monitor the impact of CPD on classroom practice should be implemented.
- A more individualised approach to DEIS target setting should be implemented and the DEIS targets and actions should be reflected in all subject department action plans, and should inform teaching and learning.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of school leadership is very good and the overall quality of school management is good. The work of the recently-appointed principal and the post-holders is very effective and staff members demonstrate high levels of commitment to the school.

#### Leading learning and teaching

Leadership for learning is of a high standard. Teacher continuing professional development (CPD) is widely facilitated by school management. Relevant Junior Cycle CPD has been provided. Teachers are currently participating in *Instructional Leadership* to further the use of active methodologies in the classroom. There is a number of newly-qualified teachers who will be engaging in the Droichead programme with their more experienced colleagues. A mechanism for sharing the learning from engagement with these valuable initiatives should be devised, and school management should monitor the impact of CPD on classroom practice.

The school provides placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome as it can provide valuable professional benefits for teachers, student teachers, and students.

Students with SEN are very well supported. There is a comprehensive system in place to identify needs and to develop student-support profiles. Parents and students are consulted appropriately in this process. A range of interventions is provided. Communication between the mainstream teachers and the SEN teacher is highly effective.

Excellent quality care is provided for students. The student support team assesses and implements relevant strategies to meet students' care needs. The warm and affirming relationships between staff and students contribute significantly to the quality of student care. The School Completion Programme (SCP) provides a comprehensive transfer programme which supports first-year students. The school maintains very good links with feeder primary schools.

The time allocation for Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and RSE is in line with syllabus requirements. However, the full RSE programme is not delivered to all senior-cycle students. An outside speaker currently provides aspects of the RSE programme to the senior-cycle girls. It is recommended that the senior-cycle boys be given access to this important provision.

The home-school-community-liaison co-ordinator (HSCL) provides essential support to students who are at most risk of non-attendance and leaving school early. The school provides courses and activities in a range of areas of interest to parents. The school's book rental scheme is also a valuable support to families.

The SCP provides essential support through the Mentoring for Achievement, Friends for Life, and the Working Things Out programmes. The SCP also facilitates lunchtime clubs for students. The SCP co-ordinator is a highly valued member of the board of management whose insights inform school decision making. A homework club has been introduced recently. A breakfast club was available in the past; it would be worthwhile investigating the possibility of reinstating this support for students.

The quality of guidance provided for students is good. Students have access to guidance two days per week. The guidance counsellor provides advice through timetabled lessons and individual appointments for students from first to sixth year. The guidance counsellor also provides valuable

assistance to students at key transition points in their school life. Personal counselling is accessed through outside agencies where necessary.

The size of the school has a limiting effect on subject options available. It is good practice that Music is provided as a module in TY to augment the curriculum. While Geography is provided in both the Junior and Senior Cycle programmes, History is only provided for the current third years. Consideration should be given to providing History in TY so that it could remain a possibility for Leaving Certificate.

The TY programme requires attention. Work experience is one day per week and the core subjects are under-represented on the timetable. The core, sampling and vocational elements of the programme need to be rebalanced. Additionally, the practice in relation to the organisation of work experience in TY should be reviewed; a wider range of options and additional support in finding placements should be provided.

There is a good range of extracurricular activities available. The school has recently expanded the extracurricular programme in response to consultation with parents and students.

### **Managing the organisation**

The school is well managed. The board is properly constituted and discharges its legislative responsibilities in relation to policy development and review effectively. There is a high level of expertise on the board and its members have received suitable training. The minutes of board meetings show appropriate oversight in relation to child protection and DEIS. While it is good that teaching and learning is included as a standard item, this section should provide for clearer oversight in relation to student outcomes and achievement.

The principal demonstrates the skills of highly effective leadership and management. When faced with challenges, senior management takes a measured and well-considered approach. The relationship between senior management, staff and students is one of inclusive communication where all members of the school community are listened to and their views are acted upon. At the time of the evaluation a new deputy principal was appointed. This development will provide welcome support in the day-to-day management of the school.

The practice in relation to job sharing requires review. Timetable provision for some subjects is restricted to three days per week currently. In order to provide the school with the flexibility to deploy teachers in a more student-centred way, the full school week should be available for timetabling all subjects.

There is a range of worthwhile measures in place to support good attendance; monitoring, texting and phoning home, a reward system, and for more serious non-attendance the involvement of the HSCL co-ordinator.

The management of facilities and provision of resources is good. The main school building presents as a clean and welcoming space. Outbuildings are used for the adult-education section of the school and there is scope to improve the physical environment in this area. The furniture in some of the classrooms could be better arranged to support teaching and learning and this should be addressed as resources allow.

### **Leading school development**

There is highly effective practice in respect of leading school development. The principal demonstrates a clear understanding of change processes and approaches the management of change in a collaborative, flexible and sensitive manner. School management has a clear vision which centres on strengthening the post-primary profile of the school and on students reaching their potential. The principal plays an essential role in ensuring that the school is a calm and respectful

place to work and learn. Collaboration has begun on a new phase of DEIS planning and the plan is emerging as a valuable framework to guide the school on improving outcomes for students in key areas.

The board leads school development effectively. The board has identified DEIS planning, teaching and learning, increasing enrolment, and building leadership capacity as priority areas of focus. Worthwhile measures have been initiated to address these priorities.

The assistant principals (AP1s) are highly effective in their roles of junior and senior leaders. Each class group is assigned a caomhnóir who plays a key role in ensuring that the care needs of students are met. During the evaluation, students' behaviour was very good and behaviour management was strongly pastoral. A restorative approach is taken by some staff members when dealing with issues that arise. This practice should be extended to all staff and used as a formal means of implementing the code of behaviour.

There is very effective communication and cooperation with parents. The input of the parents' association is highly valued. The parents' association makes a valuable contribution to the school through reviewing policies. There is scope to increase the level of consultation with parents around aspects of the school such as curriculum provision and teaching and learning.

### **Developing leadership capacity**

There is very good practice in relation to developing leadership capacity. The principal understands the importance of developing leadership amongst staff and students and has established teams to work on identified priorities.

The two AP1 post-holders provide excellent support to the school and are viewed as leaders in the school. Individual teachers also provide valuable leadership on a voluntary basis. A review of the posts of responsibility has recently been conducted. This review was based on an audit of school needs with priorities agreed amongst staff and school management, in line with Circular 0003/2018.

Senior management values and welcomes ideas from all stakeholders. Leadership is distributed very effectively through consultation committees in a range of development areas. The current review and development of the DEIS plan provides an example of a whole-school decision-making process that was highly effective. The teachers made a valuable contribution to this process and were appreciative of having their views sought and respected.

Students are given leadership opportunities through participation on the student council. Student representatives address the board of management on items of importance to them, and their views are acted upon. Students have been surveyed in relation to aspects of teaching and learning. This very good practice should be extended to student-focus group consultation.

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

Overall, teaching and learning in the lessons observed was satisfactory; the quality varied significantly between individual lessons with very good and exemplary practices observed in a significant minority of lessons. A programme of collaborative planning for teaching and learning, supported by the sharing of CPD should be put in place to ensure that all classroom activities are fully effective in facilitating genuine and deep learning.

### **Learner outcomes and experiences**

The overall quality of students' learning experiences and outcomes was satisfactory. Where highly effective practice was noted the students worked collaboratively and demonstrated very good group

and pair work skills. In these lessons, students contributed to discussions, expressed their views, and listened respectfully. Very effective learner outcomes were noted when students were enabled to personally identify with the learning and draw on their own experience and interests. In a majority of lessons, the students were more passive, mainly listening to teacher instruction, and there was a need for more meaningful learner engagement.

Students demonstrated high levels of interest when engaged with problem solving and enquiry-based activities; they investigated, measured, linked concepts and applied their learning to the environment around. Students demonstrated achievement of key skills when they were involved in projects or practical activities. Learning was less effective when the tasks required limited thinking. Further opportunities for students to develop key critical thinking skills should be provided.

Highly effective learning was noted when students took responsibility for their own learning. Students completed suitably challenging tasks with the individual support and assistance of their teachers. They were expected to achieve as learners and were motivated by the learning challenge. They made meaningful connections between prior and new learning, discussed the tasks at hand and articulated their reasoning. Furthermore, they were purposefully engaged for the duration of the lesson and enjoyed their learning. However, this rich learning experience was not consistent across all lessons.

In a significant minority of lessons students' learning was enhanced through the use of information and communications technology (ICT). Very good learning was evident when students used tablet devices and laptops to conduct research and prepare presentations. In a few lessons, the inclusion of carefully considered video clips and quizzes enhanced student engagement. Students paid better attention when tasks were set for research or in advance of viewing video clips, than when no task was provided or when research was less directed. There was scope for ICT to be used further to improve the quality of learner experience.

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

Overall, the quality of teachers' individual and collective practice was satisfactory with a wide variation across lessons. There was very good and excellent practice noted in a significant minority of lessons.

In highly effective lessons, teachers had prepared a range of purposeful learning tasks and used suitable resources to motivate students to learn. Very good practice was noted when lessons were guided by clearly-stated learning intentions which were appropriately assessed. Teaching approaches worked best when students were given clear instructions and the learning activities, such as group work, were well managed. There was scope in a majority of lessons for some or all of this good practice to be replicated.

The most effective lessons were delivered at an appropriate pace and were pitched at a level that challenged all students according to their individual ability and needs. For some lesson activities there was a need to adjust the pace to allow students to engage in a meaningful way. Additionally, some lesson tasks were insufficiently challenging and/or not suitable for supporting achievement of the learning intentions. It is recommended that all lesson activities and tasks be designed to progress the learning intentions effectively.

In some lessons, teachers communicated high expectations for student achievement very effectively. They demonstrated trust in students' own ability by encouraging them to work independently. They used differentiated questioning strategies and provided appropriate levels of support. Additionally, they ensured that the methodology and classroom activities enabled students to build on their strengths. Lower expectations were communicated where lessons were overly teacher led, with the

same content and tasks delivered in the same way for all students. Further use of differentiated methodologies is recommended.

The overall quality of assessment was satisfactory. In the majority of lessons, one-to-one oral questioning was the dominant assessment practice. At times, questioning required brief answers, with teachers then expanding on the answer themselves. Consideration should be given to how students' learning is assessed in order to ensure that assessment supports effective learning. Higher-order, probing and directed questioning, with increased wait time, should be used to foster deeper understanding.

In-class learning support was delivered in some of the classrooms visited. The teachers involved had broad expectations of each other's roles and responsibilities but had not planned the teaching and learning aspects of the lessons together. It is recommended that this planning be carried out for all co-taught lessons in order to ensure that classroom activities and tasks are designed to best meet the identified needs of students and are delivered using a suitable methodology.

Subject planning is good overall. Best practice was noted where the learning intentions demonstrated incremental progression and were linked to specific teaching, learning and assessment strategies. New subject specifications in Junior Cycle are being implemented. However, not all individual lesson planning was fully reflective of the subject department plans and this should be addressed.

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

#### **Leadership and Management**

There has been good implementation of recommendations made in previous evaluations in the area of leadership and management. The science evaluation recommended that the time allocation for the subject be brought in line with syllabus guidelines; this has been fully implemented. There was also a recommendation to ensure that chemicals are stored in a safe manner, this recommendation is being progressed currently. However, while Business is now provided in first year, there is still a need to review all factors that influence subject choice at Junior Cycle.

#### **Teaching and Learning**

There has been good implementation of the teaching and learning recommendations made in previous evaluations. Variety in teaching, learning and assessment practice was recommended in the past. This current evaluation saw some good variety in classroom practice. However, teachers should continue to implement this recommendation to support students to be more active learners and to reflect on their learning. Planning for Junior Cycle Business now includes the new specification and outlines strategies to enhance the learner experience. These strategies need to become embedded in classroom practice.

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

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

DEIS planning is progressing very well. The school has just come to the end of a three-year DEIS planning cycle and has made significant progress in establishing baseline data and priorities for



improvement. Active teaching methodologies and formative assessment have been identified for development as additional priorities. All of this valuable work has been conducted with very high-quality teacher and student input.

The sections of the DEIS plan for attendance, literacy, numeracy and attainment contain targets for overall student achievement. A more individualised approach to target setting and analysis should be implemented to facilitate more realistic target setting. Additionally, the information gathered should be monitored to see how students could be further encouraged to study subjects at the highest level possible. The DEIS targets and actions should be reflected in all subject department action plans and should inform teaching and learning.

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

The school has very good capacity for improvement. There is a new senior management team with a clear vision for the future of the school. There are posts of responsibility soon to be filled which will enhance the school's leadership profile. Recent reviews of the posts of responsibility and the DEIS plan outline a framework for significant change. All members of the school community welcomed and embraced these new developments. Recent CPD has been accessed in a range of areas to improve teaching and learning and there is a willingness to share practice. This engagement will contribute to positive development in classroom practice over time.

# **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 welcome this affirming WSE MLL Report and is pleased that it highlights many of the key strengths of Cabra Community College. The board would like to acknowledge the many positives identified in this report:

- The warm and affirming relationships that exist between staff, students and parents.
- The excellent quality of care provided to all students.
- The high levels of commitment and expertise of staff and the inclusive communication between all members of the school community.
- The high standard of school leadership and the very good capacity for school improvement highlighted.
- The highly effective management of change by the senior management team.
- The development of a clear vision for the future of the school after a period of significant change.

### **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 acknowledges the recommendations made by the inspectors and is committed to acting on them and to the ongoing development of Cabra Community College.

Work has already begun in a number of areas:

- Job-sharing arrangements are currently being reviewed by the board of management in consultation with the City of Dublin ETB. The board is committed to ensuring that the entire school week is available for the timetabling of all subjects from September 2019.
- The full RSE programme is now being delivered to all students in senior cycle.
- A review of Transition Year work experience has begun. A database of suitable work placements will be established and greater support and guidance will be provided to transition year students.
- The senior management team is currently reviewing the TY timetable with a view to providing a better balance between the core subjects, sampling and vocational elements for September 2019.
- The school leadership team has identified and planned a number of professional development opportunities for teachers which will further develop classroom practice and enhance the overall quality of student learning experiences.
- The senior management team has developed a plan to further build on teacher collaborative practice. Teachers are open and committed to developing collaborative practice and the sharing of expertise to enhance student learning.
- The school is currently collating baseline data and identifying priorities for improvement for the new three-year DEIS planning cycle. The new DEIS plan will include more individualised targets that will better meet the needs of our students. The recently formed DEIS core team will also lead a whole school approach to the integration of these targets into all subject department plans and daily classroom practice.

## 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;