An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Terence Mac Swiney Community College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Hollyhill Knocknaheeny Cork
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	71123Q

Date of Evaluation: 15-03-2017

WHAT IS A WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING?

Whole-School Evaluations – Management, Leadership and Learning report on the quality of teaching and learning and on the quality of management and leadership in a school. They affirm good practice and make 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.

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Date of inspection	15-03-2017
Inspection activities undertaken • Meeting with board of management • Meetings with principal and deputy principal • Meetings with key staff • Review of relevant documents • Student focus-group interview	• 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

Terence Mac Swiney Community College is a co-educational post-primary school with a current enrolment of 159 students. The school is managed under the auspices of Cork Education and Training Board (CETB). The school campus now includes early-years education provision, Terence Mac Swiney Community College, CityNorth College of Further Education, and Youthreach and Youthlink provision. The board of management of Terence Mac Swiney Community College is also responsible for the management of CityNorth College of Further Education but has no management role in the other education and youth support provision that has clustered around the school. The school is part of the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action plan for educational inclusion.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS
- The quality of management and leadership, including that of the board of management, the principal and deputy principal, and middle leadership, is very high.
- The support structures that are provided for students are excellent.
- The Framework for Junior Cycle is being fully implemented.
- Significant achievements are evident in the integration of information and communications technology (ICT) within a significant and effective initial developmental phase; the school is now well placed for the further integration of ICT as a learning and teaching support for students.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment ranged from very good to good with examples of excellent classroom practice in evidence.
- Very positive achievements are evident in the context of the personal and social development of students as learners, while levels of attainment in certificate examinations reflect some patterns of improvement.
- DEIS action-planning and implementation are of very high quality and, in combination with school self-evaluation (SSE) initiatives, inform very advanced levels of school development planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- A plan should now be developed to enable the further integration of all aspects of ICT as a learning and teaching support to students.
- Student attainment should now become a clear developmental focus, building on the evident practice and achievements in the social and personal development of students as learners.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

    1.1. School ownership and management:

The quality of school governance and management is very good. The board is highly effective and is clearly committed to the provision of a quality learning environment for students, a quality teaching environment for teachers, and a welcoming place for parents. The board has been strategic in its upskilling of staff and in its oversight of the range of support agencies that engage with the school. It is clear, however, that the management of the CityNorth College of Further Education, in addition to the management of Terence Mac Swiney Community College, presents a number of challenges for the board.

The recent engagement with a locally-based multinational technology company represents a significant success for the board. A very effective and potentially very successful support link has been established with this company. Personnel from the company are currently providing continuing professional development (CPD) for staff and targeted support for students in the effective integration of tablet computer technology into teaching and learning in the school.

A comprehensive policy framework that is overseen by the board, and that provides a context for policy development, ratification and review, informs the work of the school. DEIS action-planning and associated SSE initiatives inform the developmental agenda of the board. The level of suspensions relating to poor student behaviour by some students is clearly an area of concern for the board. The evident decrease in the numbers of these suspensions, combined with incremental increases in enrolment and in the retention of students points to successes of the student management and support initiatives that have been introduced and that are clearly supported by staff.

The board should, in the context of its ongoing policy review process, address some wording in the admissions policy that conflicts with current fully inclusive enrolment practices. The board should also combine the current principal's report to CETB with its SSE school improvement plans to form an annual report to the school community on the performance of the school.

A very articulate and confident student-voice group is facilitated to have a significant voice and a say in the operation of the school. This group acts as a student council representing the views of students and it has been significantly engaged in discussions on curriculum and classroom practice with teachers, school management and with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment on curricular reform. The empowerment of this group and meaningful engagement with students as stakeholders in the school reflects very positively on senior management and on the board in their wish to create and maintain a vibrant and inclusive learning community in the school.

Staff, parents and students very strongly endorse the work of the school, and their experience of the school itself, through questionnaire responses provided as part of this evaluation. Linkage with parents has been significantly advanced through the resources provided to the school by the DEIS action plan for educational inclusion. These resources have been used to provide a well-designed parents' room that is used to provide educational and social supports for parents. These and other initiatives are organised by the very effective deployment of the home-school-community liaison (HSCL) and school completion programme (SCP) resources. To build on these achievements and successes, a representative parent association should now be established.

Confirmation was provided that the board of management has formally adopted the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools without modification and that the school is compliant with the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

1.2. Effectiveness of leadership for learning

The principal and deputy principal are a very effective team and they provide very high quality leadership to the school community. The principal, through involvement in both teaching and management in the school over a prolonged period, demonstrates a clear empathy with the students, and with their parents, and a definite understanding of both the background of the students and of their complex needs. Both principal and deputy principal articulate a clear vision to progress the work and core values of the school.

This senior management team, with the support and commitment of staff, has built upon and extended the work of previous management teams in maintaining and developing a curriculum to meet the needs of the student cohort. They have centralised DEIS planning through a focus on eight strategic and well-developed targets for change and improvement. They have engaged with meaningful, developmental and reflective SSE and have developed an extensive and very well-organised student support structure in the school. They have maximised the effectiveness of resources to support numeracy, literacy and the social skills of students, and have very effectively targeted the resources and supports provided by DEIS.

An effective middle-leadership team has been empowered to lead significant aspects of the work of the school. The middle-management team now also plays a role in school leadership through its consultative function. A weekly leadership meeting is central to this consultative and leadership role. In addition, other teachers have been encouraged and empowered to take on a range of leadership roles, in particular initiatives that significantly benefit students in the school. These include roles in leading SSE, student-voice initiatives, a 'station teaching' initiative, literacy and numeracy interventions, art projects, and a range of other activities that support student engagement and participation. The evident team work among staff members towards the shared goals of the DEIS plan is very positive.

Curriculum provision has been maximised. All students engage with the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) and are provided with a subject-sampling period in first year. This is followed by an open choice within available subject options for their second and third year. Students are appropriately supported in making informed choices and in their transition to their chosen senior cycle programme. Timetabling of subjects and programmes is appropriate and in line with guidelines. The Framework for Junior Cycle is being fully implemented in the context of subject specifications, engagement with CPD and professional time, arrangements for classroom-based assessment (CBAs) and subject learning and assessment review (SLAR) meetings.

As they progress to senior cycle, students are offered an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme. It is very positive that all students can access the well-structured and organised TY programme in advance of the other senior-cycle options. The LCA programme is equally well-structured and organised, and is very effective in retaining students in senior cycle and in supporting their progression to further education and employment. Very good quality work experience is provided within each programme. The provision of the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) should remain under consideration as a further senior cycle option for students.

ICT integration is a developing element of students' classroom experience. Individual tablet devices are used by all junior cycle students. Teachers have become innovators in this area following engagement with new technologies and access to skills training provided by the aforementioned locally-based technology company. CPD should now focus on support for students' learning through engagement with tablet devices. To further advance these initiatives, it is recommended that a plan should also be developed to enable further integration of all aspects of ICT as both a teaching and a learning support to students.

A range of very effective interventions is provided to support students' wellbeing, attendance, participation, learning and progression. These supports are of excellent quality and are co-ordinated, targeted and reviewed through a very effective and focused weekly care team meeting.

Support for students with special educational needs (SEN) is comprehensive, appropriate and very well organised. A range of supports is provided including modified learning programmes, withdrawal, small-group supports, timetabled split-class groupings, team teaching, and in-class individualised supports. These supports are informed by planning, reflection, review and attention to best practice. Supports are very well co-ordinated and are provided by a teaching team and special needs assistants. Consideration should be given to the inclusion of the SEN coordinator at the care team meeting.

Comprehensive guidance provision supports students as they progress through the school. These supports include timetabled guidance, support for transitions and counselling for students experiencing difficulty. Guidance is underpinned by policy, comprehensive planning, and communication, and is central to the range of supports provided by the school.

The resources provided through the school's DEIS status add a further and very high quality range of supports for students. Underpinned by DEIS action-planning and target setting, these include: the School Completion Programme (SCP); Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) provision; the JCSP and the JCSP library; 'Behaviour for Learning' supports; third-level access and support programmes and local youth service interventions. These programmes and interventions are focused on supporting students' attendance, retention, progression and attainment. These are very well co-ordinated for maximum impact and were observed to be very effective.

Student management is based on the code of behaviour but emphasises positive relationships, inclusive classroom practice, participation, and the provision of a secure learning environment in classrooms. Teachers have volunteered to act as year heads and class teachers, and they work in cooperation with subject teachers, and with both middle and senior management, to support positive student behaviour. This is visible on the corridors, at assembly and at break times as students are greeted, spoken to, and encouraged to be organised and punctual for their classes.

A range of incentives, celebrations and appropriately stepped sanctions also underpin the management of students to ensure positive engagement and participation in classrooms and in the range of opportunities offered. The visible, active and holistic nature of student management and support is very effective.

'Behaviour for Learning' strategies, supported by National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS) personnel, very effectively underpin and complement the management of students and the approaches undertaken by teachers. 'Behaviour for Learning' personnel provide very high quality interventions that are tailored to support individual student behaviour within and beyond the classroom.

An extensive range of other initiatives to support students' learning, attendance, retention and attainment is also provided. These include: accelerated reading and a paired reading programmes that are supported by third-level students; a mentoring programme referred to as 'check and connect' to support targeted students who could be at risk of disengagement, and the aforementioned 'station teaching' initiative that acts as a bridge to learning from sixth class to first year. The 'station teaching' initiative was observed to be a very positive and effective strategy to engage students as they transfer into second level. After school study, combined with extra tuition for students provided by their teachers, is also provided and is available to all students free of charge.

An extensive range of extracurricular activities is also offered to students. These include athletics, boxing, football, hurling, soccer and hillwalking. Music and film production projects are offered based on supports from the staff of the locally-based technology company. A youth-focused motorbike restoration project and other community and youth leadership initiatives provide further local after-school engagements for students. The commitment of staff in engaging with, and in sustaining, all of these projects and activities is acknowledged in this report.

1.3. Management of facilities

School facilities are of very good quality. School corridors and classrooms are bright and colourful and display a range of student activities and achievements. Classrooms and open areas are maintained to a very high standard and are respected by students. Very significant steps have been taken both to enhance and develop ICT provision to support students' learning and to maximise the physical appearance of the school as a learning environment that encourages respect for, and ownership of, the school by the school community. Issues relating to the roof of the school are being addressed by CETB.

Support rooms including the breakfast club are welcoming and are of very good quality. The school's JCSP library is of exceptional quality and is a key social and learning hub for students. During the period of the evaluation, very active and visual numeracy initiatives including murals, posters and number lines were in evidence in corridors and classrooms. Similarly, at the time of the evaluation, a whole-school safety audit was underway to update the school's safety statement and risk assessment. This work should be progressed.

2. QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

2.1. The quality of learning and teaching

Twenty-one lessons and learning settings were observed as part of this evaluation. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment ranged from very good to good with examples of excellent classroom practice in evidence. The classroom atmosphere in all lessons was positive, and mutually respectful relationships between students and teachers were in evidence. Students' behaviour was very good in the lessons observed.

The very good and excellent practice observed reflected clear and coherent lesson planning that integrated tasks and activities that were differentiated and targeted to meet the learning needs of the range of students in the mixed-ability classroom settings. These lessons had clear learning intentions and strategies to review learning as the lesson progressed. Lessons were very well paced based on the needs of the student cohort, and were underpinned by strategies to actively engage students in learning activities. There was an appropriate balance between inputs by the teacher and the

responsibility placed on students to engage. Teachers, in these lessons, had appropriately high expectations of their students and introduced an appropriate level of challenge in lesson tasks. Careful lesson planning and time management facilitated very good quality individual attention to some students while appropriate differentiation allowed students to progress and engage positively in the lesson.

Attention to literacy and numeracy development, and strategies used to develop students' oral literacy and confidence in expressing their views and opinions, were observed to be very effective. Attention to homework, both the recording and the review of homework tasks, was a very positive feature of lessons. Strategies to review the learning achieved, when used, were also very effective.

Skilled classroom management and clear expectations of acceptable levels of engagement and behaviour facilitated students with varying attention spans to engage and to participate. In some lessons, it was clear that a community of learners had been created by teachers, where learning goals, expected outcomes and levels of participation were clear and shared. Behaviour management in these cases was skilled, pre-emptive and individualised. These lessons reflected excellent classroom practice.

Where recommendations for improvement were made, they focused on the need to clarify and specify the learning intention of the lessons for students, and then the need to use strategies to review the learning achieved. The need to structure collaborative-learning strategies in lessons relating to roles, reporting and outcomes was also discussed. The need to rebalance the level of teacher input and direction with the provision of time for students to engage with tasks and skills in single lessons in some practical settings, was also discussed. Attention to questioning strategies was recommended in some lessons, as was the need to focus on the pace of the lesson to achieve meaningful learning for students.

To develop current practice, and to maximise students' learning, a number of recommendations for discussion and action are made to all teachers. Agreed strategies for cooperative learning, the sharing of learning intentions and success criteria, and strategies to review learning in lessons, should be discussed and shared. Effective questioning strategies and the provision of formative commentary on students' written work should also be discussed by the teaching team to identify and agree whole-school practices.

Patterns of uptake of higher level in subjects, and patterns of uptake of ordinary level in subjects that provide a foundation level, are low. There are some patterns of change and improvement evident in uptake and outcomes in certificate examinations. All subject departments should now action-plan towards appropriate and incremental improvement in uptake of levels, and in outcomes for students, in certificate examinations. The inclusion of academic goal setting from an early stage in a mentoring and individual learning-planning process for some students could assist in further raising students' expectations of themselves, and their confidence as learners. This role in leading learning could be considered as a future assistant-principal responsibility, if resources allow. These goal setting and academic mentoring initiatives should combine with existing student support strategies to increase uptake of higher level in subjects, and to improve outcomes for students in certificate examinations. Student attainment should therefore become a clear developmental focus for the school, building on evident practice and achievements in the social and personal development of students, and on their growing confidence as learners.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

3.1. Management

There has been good progress in the implementation of recommendations arising from previously completed evaluations. Recommendations made to school management from the WSE report completed in 2009 relating to attendance, timetabling issues, and to policy development have been implemented. The development of team teaching, as recommended in the report, has now become established practice in the school.

3.2. Learning and teaching

Recommendations from subject inspection reports completed since 2009, relating to skills development for students, patterns of uptake of higher level in Geography, TY subject planning, and the integration of tablet devices in subjects, are being addressed within ongoing school initiatives.

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

The very effective DEIS planning process and engagement with SSE that underpin the deep-rooted commitment to students' wellbeing and learning in the school are clearly indicative of high levels of collaborative practice, school development planning and distributed leadership. There is a clear capacity within the school community for ongoing, contextualised and reflective 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 the school's provision of each area.

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

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management and staff of Terence MacSwiney Community College are very pleased with the inspection report. Staff feel that their hard work and efforts have been recognised and validated, particularly in the area of student management. Efforts of recent years to improve the quality of student management have contributed greatly to a better school atmosphere.

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 staff is already working on the two recommendations of the Inspectorate. Percentage targets for students taking subjects at Higher Level and Ordinary Level will now be part of each Department's Subject Planning. Extra supports for students attempting Higher Level subjects will be put in place. The school will also appoint a Mentor for Achievement to help more able students to attain their goals. The expansion of our ICT platform continues with the introduction of JCT short courses in Coding for First Year and Second Year students. The locally-based technology company has offered to assist in the delivery of these courses. School Management is visiting a UK based school over the summer in order to gain further insight into the type of development happening in other European countries. A new ICT team will form in September 2017 to devise a five-year technology development plan for the school.