

**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>	Beaufort College
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Trim Rd Navan Co Meath
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	72010I

**Date of Evaluation: 17-01-2019**



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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; a response was not received from the board.

## **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

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	<b>17-01-2019</b>
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

Beaufort College operates as a co-educational post-primary school under Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB). The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the Department of Education and Skills action plan for educational inclusion. The school provides the Junior Cycle, the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), the Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA).

### Summary of main findings and recommendations:

#### Findings

- The overall quality of school leadership and management is good; however there is scope for development regarding the deployment of Special Educational Needs (SEN) hours and in optimising the strategic use of collated data.
- The quality of teaching and learning observed during the evaluation was good.
- The quality of assessment was satisfactory; there is scope to improve planning for in-class questioning and formative assessment.
- A high rate of student absenteeism is a cause for concern; the school uses a range of strategies to monitor attendance but the electronic recording system is not being used consistently by all teachers.
- The school has made good progress regarding the implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations; however, the whole school community should be aware of recommendations in relation to teaching and learning that are made in subject inspection reports.
- The school's self-evaluation process is of a very high quality and the school has very good capacity for improvement.

#### Recommendations

- Senior management should ensure that the SEN provision is reviewed in order to bring it in-line with relevant departmental guidelines and to ensure deployment of SEN resources is for intended purposes.
- In order for the whole school to accurately progress DEIS targets, senior management should strategically plan for improvements using the available data.
- A whole school approach to planning and the use of effective feedback and assessment strategies should be agreed and implemented.
- The challenges being experienced in embedding the electronic recording of attendance should be addressed immediately.
- Where recommendations in subject inspections are made, they should be disseminated to other subject departments in the school so that they have a whole-school impact.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

The quality of school leadership and management is good. There is highly effective practice evident in most areas of school life; however, there is scope for development regarding the deployment of SEN hours and in optimising the strategic use of data in relation to attainment and attendance.

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

The quality of leadership for learning and teaching is good. The principal and deputy principal share a common vision which places learners at the centre of all decisions made and which is underpinned by the school's motto, "knowledge begins with a question".

The principal and the deputy principal form the senior management team. They work very effectively as a collaborative and unified team. Their roles and duties are agreed but both are flexible in the management of the school on a day-to-day basis. Senior management is commended for its commitment to ongoing improvements in teaching and learning.

A broad and balanced curriculum is in place with good efforts made to meet the needs of the students. In Junior Cycle, the school has introduced the Level one and Level two Learning programmes for students with particular needs. The school is also proposing to extend the range of programmes to include the introduction of Transition Year (TY) in September 2019. This would be a worthwhile development for the school. The school's admissions policy sets out clearly the procedures regarding enrolment to the school.

Appropriate time is allocated to each subject on the school timetable. On entry to the school, students are assigned to mixed-ability groupings and all students follow the JCSP from first to third year. In the context of this school, this is appropriate for the current cohort of junior cycle students who benefit from this provision through the completion of statements of learning and engagement with literacy development. It is recommended that the school monitors each intake of students annually in order to measure the effectiveness and suitability of the programme. In addition, as students met with during the evaluation were unaware of their participation in the programme, a greater focus needs to be placed on ensuring that they are informed about the JCSP.

The quality of student care is highly effective and is a significant strength of the school. Year heads track academic attainment and support the pastoral needs of their year groups. The student care team meets weekly with senior management. Under the school's Wellbeing programme it is good that all students have one-to-one access to the guidance counsellor. In addition, timetabled guidance lessons are provided to the majority of students in the school. This is effective practice. A newly appointed guidance department consists of three teachers and since the beginning of this academic year, have developed a valuable whole-school guidance plan which indicates curricular and co-curricular guidance activities to promote students' social, educational and career development.

The school has developed very good systems for gathering baseline data. Reports have been generated across a range of themes, including attendance, which provide valuable information to management. This information is also used by teachers to track and monitor progress under the various themes of DEIS. Responsibility for improving attendance has been delegated to an attendance team and the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) co-ordinator. This arrangement has led to significant improvements in attendance patterns although the overall rate of student absenteeism is still a cause for concern. Attendance was recorded in all lessons during the

evaluation. However, while there is an awareness that student attendance is still an issue in the school and is impacting on attainment, a review of attendance records indicated that the electronic recording system is not being used consistently by all teachers. The challenges being experienced in embedding this practice should be addressed immediately. The school should review its attendance strategies using *Tusla's guidelines: Developing the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance (2015)*.

DEIS supports for students are very good in the school. The school completion programme hosts a breakfast club known as the "Youth Café" and lunch. Evening study is also provided and there is a homework club provided through the Navan school completion programme. Attendance at breakfast and homework clubs is tracked and is very good.

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) provides targeted support for a small number of students. The 'Skills' class and the appointment of a 'behaviour for learning' support teacher are positive initiatives. These supports are highly effective in re-integrating students with particular behaviour needs back into mainstream classes.

A Behaviour for Learning team comprises of a number of staff members and senior management, who meet regularly in order to devise strategies to reduce the high number of suspensions in the school. This team works closely with students on a one-to-one level and focuses on developing strategies for these students to improve their behaviour in lessons. There is clear evidence that the interventions around behaviour for learning is having a positive effect. The school's Code of Behaviour has been recently reviewed and staff, students and parents were appropriately consulted. The code of behaviour is underpinned by the principles of positive behaviour and mutual respect. It is good that the Code is in line with the National Education Welfare Board, *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*. The behaviour of students during the evaluation was observed to be exemplary and teacher-student rapport was positive.

A highly effective process of tracking students' academic progression has been developed. Information is collated and improvement plans developed which contain targeted interventions. At whole-school level, there is a systematic approach to tracking and monitoring of students' progress by many teachers. In order for this process to continue to have the necessary impact on learners, it is recommended that all teachers engage with this approach to tracking and monitoring students' progress.

The school is actively engaged in developing procedures to reduce the number of bullying cases. At present the anti-bullying policy is under review. A core team is in place to improve whole-school outcomes regarding anti-bullying. To date a number of whole-school events have occurred and this work has had a positive impact on reducing the number of bullying incidences within the school.

The school reported that it regularly provides placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and is included among the standards in the Teaching Council's *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers* as it can provide valuable professional benefits for teachers, student teachers, students and the teacher education institution.

Beaufort College is committed to supporting students with SEN and good structures are in place. However, aspects of the organisation and operation of learning support provision need to be addressed. Following a recommendation made in a SEN inspection report in 2017, a SEN co-ordinator is now in place, which is very good practice. The SEN core team comprises three teachers; two members of this team hold specialist SEN qualifications and the third teacher is currently undertaking study in the area. At present the main methods of providing support is through

individual and small-group withdrawal in addition to co-operative teaching. There is a team of seventeen teachers involved in delivering learning support in the school. The size of the team should be reviewed in order to ensure a more consistent delivery of support for students.

The school is in receipt of a significant allocation of resource hours to provide support for students with SEN. At the time of the evaluation, a significant minority of SEN hours allocated by the Department for supporting students with SEN were not being used for their intended purposes. It is recommended that school management ensures that the allocation of these resources is in accordance with guidance provided in Circular Letter 0014/2017 so that deployment is for its intended purposes.

It is positive that the development of student support files has begun. The school should continue to progress this work.

Support for students for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is facilitated. Systematic assessments of students' language levels are carried out to inform programmes of support. To build on this good work, closer links should be developed with teachers in mainstream classes to further embed strategies to support the language needs of EAL students.

Appropriate provision is made for Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) for all year groups.

### **Managing the organisation**

School governance is good. The current board of management, established in 2014, meets regularly. All members have received training from the LMETB and they are aware of their statutory roles and responsibilities. The board is functioning at a very high level. It is committed to the school.

A very good range of policies has been developed in consultation with stakeholders. It is good practice that a cycle of review has been established and all policies have been ratified by the board of management.

A Health and Safety review is undertaken in the school in line with LMETB procedures and a safety committee meets annually. Very good attention is paid to managing risk assessments. Health and safety audits of specialist rooms have been conducted and reports on these are maintained in subject department folders.

The school building and grounds are very well maintained. Teacher-based classrooms predominate and are well maintained. Facilities within classrooms include modern Information and Communications Technology (ICT) resources.

In the recent development of the building, a sensory room was made available for all students. This room is being well utilised to support students with SEN who require periods of reflection. However, in the future this may be a valuable space to meet the needs of students with more complex needs.

### **Leading school development**

The school's guiding vision sets out goals and expectations for the school as a learning community. Senior management is committed to providing good quality teaching and learning and to support teachers in this regard. The majority of staff surveyed agreed that teachers are encouraged to avail of professional development opportunities.

It is commendable that a number of staff has engaged in CPD to develop leadership capacity and support teaching and learning in areas such as instructional leadership and through the Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) support services. However, a coordinated approach to whole-school CPD is recommended so that greater consistency in the use of effective teaching strategies to support overall student outcomes can be implemented.

The principal and deputy principal have been working on fostering a culture of collaboration. In promoting professional accountability, they frequently hold informal discussions with teachers on learner outcomes. While this is very good practice, there is scope to formalise this.

The quality of curriculum planning for teaching is very good. Most of the staff surveyed during the evaluation agreed that purposeful subject and programme planning are informing developments in teaching and learning. Subject and programme plans are well established. However, subject department planning should be further developed to better reflect the DEIS plan and support classroom teaching and learning.

The principal and other leaders in the school value and support partnership with parents as a means of supporting students' learning and wellbeing. This is evident in the re-establishment of the Parents' Council. Findings from the parents' surveys are positive and indicate that parents feel very welcome in the school. There are good links between the Parents' Council, senior management and the community; in particular links with local feeder schools, past pupils and businesses in the community are strong.

### **Developing leadership capacity**

The middle management team consists of six Assistant Principal One posts and seven Assistant Principal Two posts in the school. In light of Circular letter 0003/2018, a review of the post structure was completed by the board to reflect the school's changing needs and to give due consideration to posts that support teaching and learning. Currently this review has identified the need to amend roles and responsibilities and the school is urged to progress this. The school is also awaiting sanction of a number of new Assistant Principal posts from LMETB.

There is an active Student Council which is democratically elected by students and is assisted by a liaison teacher. Students have recently had opportunities to meet the board of management which is to be commended. The Council has been involved in policy development and a number of school initiatives. This is highly effective practice.

Staff members demonstrate an enthusiasm and commitment to their work and a good level of volunteerism is evident across the school. Senior management affords staff the opportunity to take on leadership roles and has provided a number of opportunities for teachers to engage in professional development to develop their leadership capacity. This is evident through teachers' involvement in the CPD programme on Instructional Leadership. Additionally staff members serve on DEIS and school policy groups. This has a positive impact to date on the school community.

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

The overall quality of teaching and learning was good in the lessons observed. However, there was scope for development in the area of in-class assessment in order to provide for more effective learner outcomes and experiences.

## **Learner outcomes and experiences**

All of the lessons observed were well planned and the learning intentions were shared with the students at the outset. In a few highly effective lessons, teachers reinforced the lesson content by revisiting and summarising the learning intentions. This highly effective practice should be extended to all lessons.

Students' learning experiences were positive when teachers facilitated active methodologies which allowed students to take ownership of their learning. In some lessons, there was scope to enhance the quality of learning through greater planning for differentiation, assessment and more use of student-led activities.

In the majority of lessons, effective strategies for supporting literacy were evident. There were posters on display which contained the recently designed Beaufort College literacy checklist. The JCSP key word posters and statements were on display in a small number of classrooms but greater use could have been made of them to develop students' literacy skills. Commendably, teachers highlighted key words to support students' understanding of the material being taught. Confident use of subject-specific terminology by students was evident in most lessons. In language lessons, there was very good use of the target language by students and teachers.

While there was good provision for EAL students overall, in some lessons there was a need to differentiate the learning resources and tasks to better meet the literacy needs of these students. Further attention should be given to developing practice that supports the full engagement of EAL students within mainstream classes.

Exemplary practice was observed in a few lessons where examples of high quality students' work were used as exemplars of good practice. When teachers facilitated the identifying and affirming of good quality student work they provided a key strategy for sharing success criteria and developing student capacity for self-assessment.

It is commendable that the school has identified co-operative teaching as a key strategy for meeting the needs of students with SEN. During the evaluation, co-operative teaching was observed in a few lessons. The model of co-operative teaching observed was less than satisfactory as it was evident that the teachers concerned had not collaboratively planned the lessons. In order to maximise students' learning in these lessons a greater level of planning is required. It is recommended that senior management provides staff with CPD in the area of co-operative teaching in order to ensure that this model of delivery is having a positive impact on students' learning.

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

In all lessons observed, the interactions between students and teachers were very respectful. This facilitated a positive learning environment. Students' participation in classroom activities was monitored closely and good circulation by teachers helped to improve student participation levels.

While some good examples of student-centred learning were observed through group or pair work, teachers need to increase the opportunities for students to work more effectively as part of a group in order to enhance their learning. For instance, students were often not afforded adequate time to process information from group tasks or, when questioned, to demonstrate the full extent of their understanding.

The quality of teacher questioning to monitor progress and engage students was satisfactory overall. Oral questioning was the dominant methodology used to check students' progress, knowledge and understanding. In many instances student answering was brief with teachers then expanding on the answers themselves. Best practice was evident when the questions challenged students to apply and



evaluate information and knowledge. A greater use of higher-order questions with appropriate wait time would develop learner experience and should be included in all lessons.

The quality of assessment was satisfactory overall. Teachers assessed learning through observation and provided one-to-one support to students where necessary. Some very good examples of students receiving oral formative feedback were observed. In order to maximise the benefits of such feedback, students should be encouraged to record suggestions given by teachers and to follow up on improving their work. Some very good formative feedback was apparent in some students' copybooks and there is scope to develop this practice at whole school level. The provision of formative feedback should be further used as a means of encouraging students to reflect on and to improve the quality of their written work.

Homework was set in all lessons during the evaluation. However, a review of students' journals indicated that there is irregular recording of such work. Beaufort College's homework policy is currently under review and, in-line with the *Staff Handbook*, teachers should ensure that all students record their homework at the end of every class.

A variety of well selected ICT resources was used by teachers; these included a bank of electronic devices, a range of media clips and presentations, all of which enhanced the quality of teaching and learning. The benefits of information and communications technology (ICT) as an assessment tool could be considered as a further support to learning.

Regular reports signed by year heads and senior management are issued to parents. The school has provided useful references to explain key assessment terms for increasing parents' and students' understanding of the assessment framework that supports junior cycle.

Subject departments are well established with a good level of collaborative practice evident. Formal subject department meetings are regularly held with minutes recorded. Additionally, a few subject departments are engaging in peer lesson observation and review; this is very good practice.

Overall the quality of subject and programme plans reviewed was good. In a few instances there was an over-reliance on use of text books evident in planning and limited references to new junior cycle specifications. Best practice was evident in subject plans that aligned incremental learning intentions to specific teaching and learning strategies. All subject plans reviewed contained a record of student attainment in certificate examinations and comparisons with national norms. Subject planning would further benefit from increased teacher-reflective practices leading to the development of action plans which would identify short, medium and long term goals for improvement.

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

The school had a number of inspections in recent years, including DEIS (2014), Home Economics (2016), SEN (2017) and Irish (2018). Overall, the school has made good progress regarding the implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations.

#### **Leadership and Management**

There has been very good implementation of recommendations made in relation to management from previous inspections. All of the management-related recommendations made in previous subject inspection reports and in the 2010 WSE MLL report have been implemented.

## **Teaching and Learning**

There has been good implementation of recommendations in relation to many areas of teaching and learning. While good mechanisms have been put in place to address teaching and learning recommendations, scope for improvement still remains in relation to assessment and meeting the diverse needs of students in mainstream. Where recommendations in subject inspections are made, they should be disseminated to other subject departments in the school so that they have a whole-school impact.

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

The quality of the school's self-evaluation process is very good and the school has very good capacity for improvement.

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

The DEIS planning process is well established, inclusive and collaborative. This is evident from the formation of teams focusing on each of the DEIS strands, which is led by members of the middle management team and includes all teachers in the school. Positive SSE processes are in place such as the gathering of data from a range of sources and the development of teams to explore the DEIS strands. Committed staff members have contributed to a range of strategies including literacy, numeracy and improvements in attendance.

School management and staff have clearly demonstrated a readiness to undertake initiatives that are believed to be in the best interests of all learners in the school. The school has engaged very well with the six step SSE process. Examples of this include the redefining of the school's digital usage policy and developing a new Code of Behaviour.

The board has completed the SSE-required legislative and regulatory checklist, as per Circular 40/2016. The school should communicate a summary of the SSE report and School Improvement Plan (SIP) to parents and the community.

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

The school has very good capacity for improvement; the board and senior management place high value on providing the best possible learner experiences and seek ongoing improvement. The school has a good level of collaboration with feeder schools in the community. Senior management and the attendance team have identified and developed a strategic approach to improving attendance which is an on-going focus of the whole school community.

Senior management has a clear vision that is centred on ensuring the highest quality of student care in Beaufort College. It has clearly identified the need for on-going development in teaching and learning.

## 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;