

**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>	Coláiste Phobal Ros Cré
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Corville Road Roscrea County Tipperary
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	76069P

**Date of Evaluation: 04-12-2019**



---

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

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

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

### **How to read this report**

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

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

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

The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.
4. The Child Safeguarding Statement meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.
5. The records of the last three board of management meetings record a child protection oversight report that meets 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>	28/11/2019, 3/12/2019 & 4/12/2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting with board of management</li><li>• Meetings with principal and deputy principal</li><li>• Meetings with key staff</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Student focus-group interview</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting with parents</li><li>• Analysis of parent, student and teacher questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Interaction with students</li><li>• Feedback to senior management team, board of management and teachers</li></ul>

### School context

Coláiste Phobal Ros Cré is a co-educational post-primary school operating under the auspices of the Tipperary Education and Training Board (TETB). The school was founded in 1999, with parts of the building dating back to the 1940s. The TETB is in talks with the Department in relation to new premises. Enrolment is inclusive and numbers have been consistent for the last number of years and currently stand at 528 mainstream and 135 Post Leaving Certificate students. The majority of its students come from primary schools participating in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the Department's action plan for educational inclusion.

### Summary of main findings and recommendations:

#### Findings

- The quality of leadership is good; there is scope to improve some communication channels, evolve assessment practices and reform and lead student-centred teaching and learning.
- There is a very high standard of student support, and the care provided for students, the very broad curriculum, and the very respectful student-teacher rapport all lead to a very positive atmosphere in the school.
- The standard of teaching was good overall; this ranged from very good and good practice in the majority of lessons to satisfactory and fair practices in a number of lessons.
- The quality of learning was good, with scope to develop active and collaborative learning, differentiated learning experiences and a formative assessment culture.
- The school has implemented previous inspection recommendations to a high standard; the school plan still needs to be shared as a time-bound action plan and some recommendations in relation to teaching and learning practices need whole-school implementation.
- The school self-evaluation (SSE) process is effective and there was evidence of teachers implementing agreed strategies during observed lessons.

#### Recommendations

- Management should explore strategies to enhance communication with students, parents and teachers in some areas, with a focus on capturing their voices more effectively.
- Management should facilitate increased opportunities for teachers to share classroom practices and learning from continuing professional development (CPD), and systems should be introduced in order to monitor progress in the teaching and learning strategies undertaken.
- A whole-school review of teachers' assessment planning and practices should occur with a focus on collaborative planning approaches using learning outcomes and success criteria.

- Management and staff need to develop and monitor whole-school improvement work in some aspects of teaching and learning including active and collaborative learning and differentiation practices, and embed a culture of balancing classroom-based, ongoing formative assessment and summative assessments.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

The quality of leadership and management is good overall.

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

The leadership of teaching and learning is good. The school has been leading teaching and learning through the formation of a number of committees, especially in the areas of SSE and special educational needs (SEN). Management has provided opportunities for teachers to avail of CPD in a number of areas. The digital learning team is working with the support services in relation to online portfolios. This work involves the effective sharing of digital practices amongst colleagues. To build on this good practice, the school should look to establishing a mechanism for the formal sharing of learning from CPD in other areas.

The school has made steady progress in the implementation of the Junior Cycle Framework. It was decided to operate with forty-minute lesson periods and to have nine subjects for certification as well as two short courses. Some areas of the Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) leadership CPD still need to be enacted, particularly in relation to assessment practices. This development work should include ongoing reporting with a focus on valuing different modes of assessment, especially formative assessment. End-of-unit assessments should be planned and designed to include a variety of modes of assessment such as oral, practical, written and performance-based assessment with the associated success criteria shared with students. Going forward, it is recommended that such an approach would replace in-house written examinations.

A system of academic tracking is in place. This system should be reviewed in order to evaluate the impact on student learning. CPD in this area should be sought to ensure that the potential of the process is developed more fully. The school introduced an effective 'Learning to Learn' programme as part of the approach to curricular Wellbeing. To support this commendable beginning, a modular Wellbeing programme, which takes into account the views of teachers, students and parents, as well as identified student needs, should now be developed.

Within the school, the SSE process has led to the identified foci of effective questioning and formative feedback. New initiatives, selected to bring about improvement in these areas of focus, were observed being implemented successfully, in the main, by teachers. In the future, other areas of formative assessment, such as the effective use of learning intentions, should be strengthened in order to make the learning as clear as possible for students. For example, learning intentions could be posed through an image, through questioning or set by students. The senior management team is also advised to arrange for further CPD in differentiation, and active and collaborative learning for teachers. Systems should be introduced in order to monitor progress in any new teaching and learning strategies undertaken so that senior management can assess adequately the impact that agreed practices, which are embedded in classroom practices, are having on learner experiences and outcomes.

The school offers a very broad curriculum including the Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate Applied and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme. Timetabling is good overall, and first-year students enjoy a sampling programme of subjects until the October midterm. There are some

timetabling issues which senior management should address: study periods should not occur during tuition time; the curriculum for senior-cycle Physical Education needs to be fully implemented; class contact of some subjects should be spread out more effectively during the week; and all Junior Cycle subjects should have equity in timetabled hours over the three years.

The optional programmes are well subscribed. In TY, the use of online portfolio-based learning is providing a platform for students to begin peer assessment. During the evaluation, it was noted that groups of learners were able to share the project process and product with other groups and the teacher readily and effectively. Success criteria, shared as part of the process, enabled teachers to provide feedback that moved students' learning forward collaboratively. This commendable practice should be shared across all subject areas. As a next step, the TY assessment practices for all modules should be clearly stated so that a more effective accreditation of the programme can occur.

The care for students is of a very high standard. A care team meets regularly to agree on actions to support students. The school has established a breakfast club and, through the chaplaincy system, invested in a therapeutic pet as part of many mindfulness programmes established with the assistance of external agencies. Student and parent survey responses indicated very high levels of satisfaction with regard to student welfare.

Student, parent and teacher responses to the Inspectorate survey indicated some feelings of inconsistency and unfairness in relation to the implementation of the code of behaviour. Appropriately, the school's written code includes a tutor and year head system with a ladder of referral. It is, however, a lengthy document which includes a large number of rules. In reviewing its code, school management should consider how it might be simplified with further focus placed on promoting positive behaviour. In addition, ways in which to include the voices of the student council and student focus groups should be considered when drafting the revised code, with areas such as anti-bullying and gender equality being prioritised within the document.

The organisation of SEN is very good. Individualised student support files are prepared in consultation with parents and the plans outline the strengths and areas of need as well as support strategies and goals. Mainstream teachers have access to the SEN files where appropriate. In some mainstream settings, there was need for teachers to ensure that the support strategies and targets contained in the student support files were implemented in lessons. Teachers should evaluate, with the core SEN team, any adaptations required in classroom practices to support inclusion, based on the individual student needs. The SEN department has begun in-class support, though there is a need for consistency of practice in this regard. Co-teaching and team teaching should be considered as the next step in optimising the use of SEN hours in the school.

### **Managing the organisation**

The management of the organisation is good. The board of management has been very attentive to the management and oversight of staff recruitment and the ongoing maintenance of facilities. Statutory policies, such as the child safeguarding statement, health and safety policy, and anti-bullying policy, are in place. To assist the board in its future work, a register of the review dates of policies should be created, and the board should prioritise the review of the code of behaviour and the admissions policy. Some other areas of focus for the board should be working to increase its oversight role in relation to teaching and learning and the progress of SSE. The board should also review the length of the school year, ensuring that all year groups are provided with the required 167 days of tuition time in line with Circular 0009/2017, as this is not currently the case. The board might also consider sharing agreed reports from board meetings on the school website.

The staff and senior management team oversee the effective day-to-day running of the school and teachers and parents, both in discussion and in surveys, were of the view that the school was well

run. During the evaluation, a calm and orderly atmosphere prevailed and, despite the spread-out nature of the campus, students were routinely on time for lessons.

Effective communication channels are in place in the school for the various stakeholders. Parent, student and teacher feedback indicated that some of these channels of communication could be enhanced further. The school should look strategically at improving any underperforming channels of communication, especially in relation to student voice. Also, the new terminology of grading and learning for the Junior Cycle should be used on school reports going forward.

Effective internal management structures are in place and the post structure provides good support to the school. An effective staff handbook has been created for teachers new to the school; it would be useful if the roles of the principal and deputy principal were also outlined in this document. Teachers should look to use the professional time available to them for whole-school professional activities to further support the implementation of the Junior Cycle Framework.

### **Leading school development**

The quality of leading school development is commendable. Strong links have been established between the school and the wider community, external agencies and the other schools in the TETB. A parents' association (PA) is actively involved in a number of areas that support the school such as policy formulation and guest speakers. To help support the school's further development of student participation, the PA could consider meeting with the student council. The board could also consider meeting both the PA and student council on an annual basis in order to further enhance communication channels.

The school's developmental priorities in relation to the new premises and the plan to achieve DEIS status are progressing. It would be beneficial if the strategic plan were streamlined so that timeframes, targets and actions to be undertaken are as clear as possible. In addition, all stakeholders should have knowledge of the school's developmental priorities and there should be ample and systematic opportunities for staff, parents and students to contribute ideas to assist the school in realising its goals and vision.

As a future priority, the school should also undertake a whole-school review of assessment planning and practices. There are a number of areas in need of further development including ongoing formative assessment, the development of creative modes of assessment, formative reporting, avoiding over-assessment, and appropriate application of the language of reporting. Teachers should share with colleagues the knowledge, skills and values that are assessed across subjects so that they can work collaboratively to enhance students' knowledge, skills and understanding.

### **Developing leadership capacity**

Good work is underway in developing leadership capacity. The staff work in a dedicated manner and place a strong importance on the welfare of students. Management enjoys a high degree of support from the board and from staff. Distributed leadership is evident through the post structure, through teachers' involvement in committees and through a range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities. The post holders reported that they are consulted about their duties. Teacher survey responses indicated that some teachers felt that their views were not valued. In addressing this, senior management and the board should work to provide a clearer rationale and greater transparency in relation to the decision-making processes within the school.

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

Student leadership is promoted in a variety of ways including the mentoring system for incoming first-year students, GAISCE, Green Flag committees, the student council, the prefect system and a range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities. The student council has a constitution and is democratically elected. In the student survey, very few students felt that they had a say in how things are done in the school. To help address this, the school should investigate ways in which the student council could be more visible throughout the school, strengthen the links with class captains and prefects, and use student focus groups as a way in which to better capture the student voice in the school.

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

The quality of teaching and learning was good overall.

### **Learner outcomes and experiences**

The quality of learning observed in lessons was good or very good in the majority of lessons, and satisfactory or fair in a significant minority. Learning intentions were shared with students in almost all lessons, and some use of co-created success criteria was also observed. There is a need for more teachers to use learning intentions and success criteria to check on intended learning and to encourage students to take ownership of their learning during lessons.

Homework is assessed regularly by teachers. The vast majority of examinations undertaken by students are summative assessments. There is a need for students to experience a wider variety of assessment modes which incorporate ongoing formative assessment and which factor in the skills of classroom-based assessments (CBAs) and reflect the learning outcomes of the relevant specification. The practice of students undertaking practice CBAs should cease. Formative feedback on students' work was a regular feature of lessons. As a next step, the subject departments need to consider the success criteria for the task and what feedback is most appropriate.

The behaviour of students throughout the evaluation was exemplary. Student-teacher interactions in lessons were very positive. Teachers should capitalise on such co-operative behaviour to make progress on effective peer assessment. Many of the classrooms had a purposeful layout for the promotion of collaborative learning. In addition, the vast majority of rooms had subject-specific material on walls, though this material could have been used more regularly as a learning aid in lessons.

Student engagement in learning was good or very good in the majority of lessons. In a significant minority of instances, however, the lessons were largely teacher-centred. There is a need for all teachers to plan for a greater variety of active methodologies so that long periods of student passivity are avoided. Differentiation was an area in need of improvement in many lessons; there was need for teachers to ensure to provide differentiated tasks with the purpose of both further including students with SEN, and extending learning for high-achieving students.

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

The standard of teaching was good or very good in the majority of lessons. Satisfactory and fair practices were also observed. In some lessons, there were very good examples of student-centred approaches and active methodologies were very effective and varied. In instances where there was satisfactory and fair practice, a better balance between the time spent on teacher instruction and student activity was needed. It was noted also that there was excessive time dedicated to note-taking, which led to long periods of student passivity. Teachers should help students to develop their note-making skills or use digital technology to provide students with electronic notes so that more time is available in lessons for student activity.

The preparation for lessons was good overall and teachers demonstrated very good classroom management skills. The pace and timing of lessons were areas for improvement in some cases, and this should be addressed through careful teacher planning and facilitation of activities. Commendably, collaborative learning was a feature of many lessons. In some cases, better structures were needed for collaborative learning tasks. Timeframes, assigned roles, mixed-ability groups and the size of groups should be planned carefully to enhance the effectiveness of these activities. The best method of receiving feedback from groups should be considered carefully at the planning stage in order to maximise the learning for all students.

Questioning was of a high standard overall. Oral questioning was best when it was distributed, inclusive and differentiated and where adequate time was provided for students to formulate a response. Other good formative assessment strategies were observed in lessons, and such practices should be shared more widely across departments.

The quality of teachers' collaborative practice was good overall. Teachers reported good levels of collegiality and sharing of practice. As part of the digital strategy, currently in development, the school should look to expand upon the involvement of teachers so that a wider variety of strategies for whole-school discussion can be trialled.

Subject co-ordinators have been appointed, though the agreed duties of this role should be documented. Detailed information is available in relation to CPD undertaken and the structures of the departments. Some inconsistencies were noted in terms of the quality of subject department planning. For example, there is a need for a more consistent approach to developing units of learning across departments. Where not already the case, schemes should ensure that learning outcomes are linked to specific methodologies and a variety of assessment modes. All schemes should provide detail in relation to timeframes and a teacher-review section for more efficient planning. These practices would enable schemes to be used as working documents and facilitate greater sharing of pedagogy and practices.

Subject departments analyse state examination results. They should now broaden that analysis. The context of the year group should be taken into account and strategies and targets devised for year-on-year improvement. Minutes of meetings should record progress in relation to any agreed strategies or targets, and it would be good practice to share minutes with management, thereby providing the board with more information about the various initiatives underway in the leadership of teaching and learning.

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

The implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations is good overall.

#### **Leadership and Management**

There have been eight inspections in the school since the last whole-school evaluation in 2008. Very good progress has been made by senior management in relation to whole-school recommendations including refurbishment of the facilities and progressing health and safety recommendations. Scope still exists for the production of a widely shared action plan for developmental priorities and for continued leading of improvements in teaching and learning.



## **Teaching and Learning**

There has been some good progress in relation to previous teaching and learning recommendations, most notably in the provision of formative feedback. There is still room to improve the effective use of learning intentions, and active engagement in learning and differentiation.

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

The engagement with SSE is good and there is a strong capacity to implement future improvements.

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

The school focused on literacy, numeracy, effective questioning and formative feedback as strands for improvement. Some qualitative and quantitative evidence was gathered. Going forward, the school should gather such evidence more systematically from all stakeholders, especially students and parents. The agreed SSE strategies were purposeful and have led to worthwhile whole-school changes in classroom practices. For example, teachers have engaged with effective questioning and formative feedback in a positive manner.

Some of the earlier strategies, especially with regard to literacy and numeracy, would have benefitted by having stronger links with teaching and learning practices. As part of the monitoring and review stage of SSE, the school should look to provide any additional CPD needed and further opportunities for teachers to share good practice so as to ensure that agreed strategies are implemented consistently.

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

The school has strong capacity to implement future school improvements based on the success in engaging with many improvements to date.

# **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 of Coláiste Phobal Roscrea welcomes this positive and affirming WSE-MLL report. It has given us the impetus, support and advice to continue moving forward in all areas of Teaching and Learning and Curriculum & Policy Development. The report notes the many very good practices in the school and particularly:

- Senior Management and leadership at all levels of the school are of a very high quality.
- During the evaluation, a calm and orderly atmosphere prevailed and, despite the spread out nature of the campus, students were routinely on time for lessons.
- Effective internal management structures are in place and the post structure provides good support to the school.
- The school met the requirements in relation to all of the Child Protections Checks during the inspection.
- There is a very high standard of student support, and the care provided for students, the very broad curriculum, and the very respectful student – teacher rapport all lead to a very positive atmosphere in the school.
- The school has implemented previous inspection recommendations to a high standard.
- The organization of SEN is very good.
- Student leadership is promoted in a variety of ways including the mentoring system for incoming first years, GAISCE, Green flag committees, the student council, the prefect system and a range of extra and co-curricular activities.
- The behaviour of students throughout the evaluation was exemplary. Student teacher interactions in lessons were very positive.

## **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 of Management acknowledges the recommendations made in the report and is committed to acting on them and to the ongoing development of Coláiste Phobal Roscrea. The Board is very pleased with this positive report and intends to use the recommendations to further serve the needs of our students in accordance with our Mission statement.

- The process of enhancing communication with students, parents and staff has begun. Student Voice is also being developed. All student council members, class captains and vice captains along with School prefects have now undergone leadership training and will be part of student focus groups throughout the year. They will also address the Board of Management and Parents Council before the end of the school year. A review of communication with parents and teachers will be initiated and prioritised.
- Considerable work on planning has already taken place, particularly in relation to Subject department planning, the new junior cycle, and how to increase the cross-curricular collaboration between different subjects. This will be further enhanced to include learning outcomes and success criteria.
- The further development of active and collaborative learning strategies and differentiation remain a priority as part of the school's advancement of teaching and learning practices.
- To assist the Board in its future work, a register of the review dates of policies has been created since the evaluation and the Board will prioritize those policies which need to be reviewed.

## 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;