

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Presentation Community College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Terenure Park Terenure Dublin 6 W
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	76092K

Date of Evaluation: 8-11-2017



What is 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.

WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

Date of inspection	8-11-2017
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with Board of Management• Meetings with principal and deputy principal• Meetings with key staff• Review of relevant documents• Student focus-group interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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

Presentation Community College is a co-educational school under the auspices of the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb), the Archdiocese of Dublin and the Presentation Order. The school has a current enrolment of 330 students and serves an urban catchment in south Dublin. Boys were admitted for the first time to the school in September 2017. The school provides the junior cycle and established Leaving Certificate programmes, and an optional Transition Year (TY) programme.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- Overall, the quality of leadership and management in the school was satisfactory; while the elements of a school plan are in place, a guiding vision for the school needs to be developed.
- The school is a generally inclusive positive learning environment, with effective policies and practices to support students' educational, social and personal well-being; special educational needs provision is currently somewhat fragmented.
- Communication and professional relationship issues have impacted negatively on the functioning of the senior management team and on staff morale.
- Teaching and learning was very good in the majority of lessons observed and high expectations were set for students; assessment for learning is well-established in classroom practice, but formative written feedback on students' work was not widespread.
- There has been good progress in the implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations.
- The school is currently limited in its capacity to improve owing to internal difficulties.

Recommendations

- The board should oversee the development of a guiding school vision to inform strategic planning for improvement.
- To utilise the school's considerable expertise in special educational needs (SEN) and further develop inclusive practices, a smaller core team of SEN specialists should be deployed in order for the team to develop their specialist skills, and more inclusive ways of providing in-class support should also be explored.
- The CDETb, board, principal, deputy principal and teachers should work as a community to bring about a resolution of communication and professional relationship issues to improve the quality of professional working relationships and staff wellbeing.
- To build on the effective teaching and learning practices observed, teachers should work collaboratively to develop and implement formative written feedback practices on students' work.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1 QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management in the school is satisfactory. While there are elements of good practice, the shortcomings that exist have the potential to constrain the quality of teaching and learning and need to be addressed.

Leading learning and teaching

The principal and other leaders in the school work to promote a learning culture. They have generally high expectations for students and endeavour to lead staff in striving for improved outcomes. Those with leadership and management roles promote equality of opportunity for students and strive to ensure that all members of staff support this ethos.

The principal and the board monitor the use of resources. It was reported that the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum can be challenging in some instances, due to the late notification of staff allocations from CDETB to the principal. Currently, curriculum changes are often implemented as a result of constraints on human resources. An example of this is the removal of the LCVP programme or the suggestion to restrict the TY programme to one class group. The principal and deputy principal do not currently plan collaboratively for improvement. Strategic planning is required in order to identify student learning priorities and to maintain curricular provision within resource constraints. To this end the principal and deputy principal should hold regular collaborative planning meetings aimed at informing the strategic development of the school: for example, maximising the medium-term and long-term development of the curriculum, as well as the identification of CPD of staff. Senior management should strongly consider the formation of a curriculum review team to look at this issue and to discuss strategies for meeting future needs of the school.

Senior and middle leadership, in collaboration with teachers, have developed and implemented effective policies and practices to support students' educational, social and personal well-being. Effective systems for monitoring students' progress and development are also in place. It was reported by teachers and management that the previous tutor system was highly effective, contributing greatly to student wellbeing and providing leadership opportunities for teachers. It is therefore welcomed that the board plans to reintroduce this tutor system. Initiatives such as the Ember team and the prefect system are reported to have been effective in encouraging student participation in promoting the wellbeing of others.

Effective support is provided for students with special educational needs. Currently, the SEN team consists of nine teachers. This constitutes a third of the teachers in the school. While some of these teachers have special needs qualifications or an interest in this area, SEN hours are also used to fill gaps on teachers' timetables. A smaller core team of SEN specialists should be deployed in line with best practice in order for the team to develop their specialist skills. Currently, students are supported by withdrawal in small groups from class. Other more inclusive ways of providing support should be explored to enable students to remain in the classroom. SEN allocations are currently used to reduce class sizes in certain subjects. This is incorrect use of SEN funding as detailed in Circular 0014/2017 and this practice should cease.

Planning and delivery of the TY programme is effective. A varied programme is offered to students giving them the opportunity to learn new skills and sample Leaving Certificate subjects. Student feedback regarding the programme was very positive. A collaborative approach was taken to developing an effective whole-school guidance plan. This plan has been developed in line with guidelines and incorporates student wellbeing.

Subject departments have been established and teachers have been provided with opportunities to engage in collaborative planning. Collaborative review of the Junior Certificate examination results is

encouraged. This should be further extended to include a review of Leaving Certificate results. Subject departments should then use these analyses to inform future planning. A rotating subject department meeting schedule is in place. This has been designed to ensure that teachers have the opportunity to attend all planning meetings in the subjects they are qualified to teach. The school should further promote this culture of professional collaborative review.

The school is implementing the new specifications of subjects that have been introduced in Junior Cycle.

Managing the organisation

The board and the principal are aware of their statutory obligations, and have worked to ensure that legislative and policy requirements are met. Teachers were invited to join collaborative policy development groups and policies have been drawn up, adopted and regularly reviewed. Most of the elements of a potential school plan are in place.

The principal and the board of management ensure that the buildings and grounds are maintained to a very high standard. They also ensure the provision and maintenance of teaching aids and equipment to a high standard to enable their optimal use.

When the principal and deputy principal were first appointed to the school they divided their roles to effectively deal with the challenges they faced, including declining enrolments. The deputy principal focused on the day-to-day running of the school, while the principal took charge of improving the learning environment and liaising with CDETB to ensure necessary changes took place. As a result of their commitment and the commitment of the board and teachers, student numbers have increased and visible improvements have been made in the school building and in school management procedures. In addition, both the principal and the deputy principal have developed support networks with other ETB schools and beyond.

Current management structures do not fully meet school requirements. Partnership between the principal and deputy principal should be developed to provide a firm basis for the effective operation of a senior management team. There is an inequity in senior and middle leadership roles in terms of time commitment and responsibility. In order to ensure that the current and developing needs of the school are met, a full collaborative review of roles should be undertaken without delay. Consideration should also be given to further devolving leadership responsibilities to interested teachers in order to develop their skills.

Evidence gathered from questionnaires and interviews with management and teachers confirmed that communication and professional relationship issues have impacted negatively on staff morale. Feedback from teacher interviews revealed that there is scope to improve change management systems in the school. It was reported that a number of changes were made without adequate consultation. Examples given included the removal of the tutor system, curricular changes and modifications to the length of classes.

The CDETB, other trustees, board, principal, deputy principal and teachers should work as a community to bring about a resolution of these issues to improve the quality of professional working relationships and staff wellbeing.

Leading school development

There is currently no written guiding vision in place, therefore it is welcomed that the board has prioritised the establishing of a guiding vision for the school. This guiding vision should be developed collaboratively with the whole school community and should set out the goals and expectations for the school as a learning community. The school vision should be communicated to teachers, parents and students in a way that empowers the whole school community to translate the vision into action.

Partnership with parents is seen as a means of supporting students' learning and wellbeing. Parents receive regular reports on their child's progress. The intended move to a system where parents can access electronic student progress reports is welcomed. Parent-teacher meetings are organised yearly. Evidence was observed in lessons that the school journal is used effectively as a means of communication between the school and parents. Feedback from the parents' association representatives and responses to parent questionnaires were very positive about the school and almost all parents responded that they were happy with the school. The parents' association plays an active role in supporting school events. It is welcomed that it is planned to involve the parents' association in consultation on school policies.

Developing leadership capacity

There are many opportunities for students to develop their leadership skills within the school. In addition to the Ember and prefect system mentioned above, there is an active student council. Each class also has a captain and deputy captain. Teachers run a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities which also provide many student leadership opportunities. These activities contribute positively to the student experience in the school.

Teamwork and distributed leadership among teachers have been developed with the creation of subject departments and policy planning groups. There is some evidence that devolved leadership is taking place; one example is middle leadership leading school development planning teams. This good practice should be further progressed. Regular meetings are scheduled between senior management, the assistant principals and the care team; however, evidence from document review and interviews suggests that these meetings are not always convened. This should be addressed.

Senior management offers support to new teachers. Feedback from staff questionnaires suggests there is some scope for improvement in this area. Currently, new teachers receive informal support from colleagues. It is suggested that a formal staff mentoring system be established to support teachers new to the school. This would also serve to develop the leadership capacity of mentors.

Child Protection Procedures

Confirmation was provided that the board of management has formally adopted the child protection procedures for primary and post-primary schools without modification.

2 QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Learner outcomes and experiences

The quality of learning was very good in the majority of lessons observed.

Twenty-one lessons were observed across a range of subjects and year groups. In the majority of lessons, students were actively engaged in their learning. They were closely monitored throughout and were encouraged and supported by teachers. In all lessons, students were well organised and applied themselves to their learning. Students were offered many opportunities to work collaboratively and responses from student questionnaires show that this is normal practice in lessons. Students' behaviour towards each other and their teachers was very respectful at all times and contributed to a very positive learning environment. The positive experience inspectors observed in lessons was reflected in the questionnaire responses and in the student focus group.

Learner outcomes were very good in the majority of lessons. In these lessons, students demonstrated very high levels of interest and participation in learning. They were articulate and showed very good

levels of understanding and recall of prior learning, contributing their opinions and experiences to class discussion with confidence.

In a few lessons, students were confused as to the learning intentions and how to approach learning activities. In these lessons, activities were not differentiated, which meant that they were too challenging for some students while not extending others. This impacted negatively on students' confidence in their learning and should be addressed.

Teachers' individual and collective practice

The quality of teaching was very good in the majority of lessons observed.

Highly effective individual practice was observed in the majority of lessons. Teachers planned for a variety of methodologies, prioritising active and collaborative learning. There was a good balance between student and teacher input in lessons. Teachers identified and thoroughly prepared in advance resources that developed the stated learning intentions and catered for individual students' learning needs. Tasks were well organised, their purpose was clearly communicated, and an appropriate choice of individual or group task was made to suit the learning intentions of the lesson. Transitions between tasks were well managed. The general pace of the majority of lessons was very good. A few lessons lacked the planning and preparation required to engage all learners.

Assessment for learning techniques were used effectively in most lessons. Learning intentions were shared with students and in the highly effective lessons a review of learning took place, throughout and at the end of the lesson. Teachers regularly provided students with oral feedback in class. In a few copybooks, teachers provided students with written strategies for improvement. In most lessons, there was scope to improve written feedback from teachers to guide student improvement.

In the majority of lessons, teachers used their subject expertise effectively to make learning accessible and engaging for students. Highly effective practice was observed where teachers used their expertise and enthusiasm to create and exploit rich learning opportunities for students.

Classroom management was very good in most lessons. In all lessons, interactions among students and between students and teachers were very respectful and positive, and conducive to wellbeing.

Digital technologies were used regularly to enrich teaching and learning. Examples of highly effective practice included well-chosen audio-visual clips that were fully exploited to deepen learning. The school's digital learning platform was used in many lessons. Teachers uploaded their class notes and presentations for students to consult at home and students said that they found this helped their learning. In one instance, a flipped-classroom approach was taken to homework and this was reported by the teacher to be very effective in increasing student engagement and learning.

In-class support for students' learning was effective or highly effective in most lessons. Differentiation strategies were observed in many lessons. For example, co-operative learning strategies were used to differentiate tasks by giving students different roles in group work. In most lessons, students worked productively and collaboratively and teachers circulated providing support. Good and very good questioning was used in the majority of lessons to differentiate between students. A range of question types was used from basic recall to questions requiring students to think about their answers.

Teachers collaborate effectively to enhance teaching and learning in the school. Teachers reported that informal collaboration occurs in the staffroom. Formal collaboration occurs during subject planning meetings. The quality of long-term subject department planning varied. In a few instances time-bound curricular plans referenced integrated learning outcomes, methodologies, resources and assessments. This good practice should be extended. The school's digital learning platform could be used very effectively to facilitate collaborative active planning and sharing of resources.

Teachers are based in their own classrooms and this has enabled most teachers to create a very positive learning environment through colourful displays that included student work. In many classrooms, desks were laid out in learning pods, thus encouraging collaborative learning.

3 IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

Leadership and Management

There has been good progress in the implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations. Previous inspection reports contained recommendations relating to areas such as policy, leadership, the development of staff relationships, strategic planning, timetabling, the use of team teaching, peer observation, and ICT in teaching. School management has progressed many of these recommendations such as those relating to timetabling, policy development and provision of the infrastructure required to enable teachers to use digital technologies. However, some recommendations are still outstanding, for example those referring to professional working relationships, long-term strategic planning, the development of a school plan and the development of team teaching.

Teaching and Learning

Recommendations in previous inspection reports focused on improvements in the areas of subject planning, the provision of stimulating learning environments, students' and teachers' use of the target language, differentiated learning strategies, use of learning resources and the provision of written formative feedback on students' work. Subject departments and teachers have made substantial progress in implementing many of these recommendations. There is scope to further develop subject planning and the provision of written formative feedback to students.

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

The School's Self-Evaluation Process

The school has engaged with school self-evaluation (SSE) with a focus on improving literacy, numeracy and homework. Evidence of the focus on literacy was observed during some lessons. The SSE focus on homework led to the school-wide adoption of a digital learning platform where homework and classwork can be uploaded. This was reported to have been successful in improving the completion of homework. The SSE process was reported to have stalled last year due to industrial action. The Parents Association was unaware of the SSE process. The school should provide a summary of their self-evaluation report and school improvement plan to the whole school community. The school is currently engaged in the CDET B second-level strategy, based on the SSE process. It is praiseworthy that the principal is currently being trained as a facilitator in this initiative. The next phase of the school's SSE process should now be progressed in line with *School Self-Evaluation Guidelines 2016-2020* and circular 40/2016.

The School's Capacity for Improvement

The school is currently limited in its capacity to improve owing to internal difficulties with regard to communication and professional relationship issues. When these are addressed, the expertise and professional commitment within the school can flourish.

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 Presentation College welcomes the WSE/MLL report and is particularly pleased with the affirmation of the inclusive, positive and respectful learning environment as well as the highest judgement possible for the teaching practice in so many of the lessons observed. This is the core work of our College and explains why our parents and students demonstrated such satisfaction in the questionnaires and interviews with the inspectors.

In particular, the board would like to recognise the acknowledgement of:

- the commitment of the board and senior management to effectively deal with challenges they faced at the time of the Principal's appointment and that they have succeeded in making all of the visible improvements noted during the inspection
- so many teachers' highly effective planning, preparation, use of interactive teaching methodologies and differentiation
- the good levels of student learning as well as their confidence in articulating effectively their contributions and experiences to class discussion
- the effective policies and practices to support students' educational social and personal well-being such as those noted in relation to Guidance
- the successful integration of ICT into teaching and learning by the teaching staff

Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

Given the very considerable changes staff have already successfully embraced in the last nine years, the board has the utmost confidence in their capacity to address the recommendations in the report. The board has initiated many actions already:

The school's vision is being informed by CDETB's developing Second Level Strategy, due to be completed by the end of 2018. All stakeholders in Presentation College have been consulted on this strategy.

The existing comprehensive elements of a school plan have been collated into a singular document as suggested.

A facilitator is engaged in addressing communication and professional relationship issues between named stakeholders to supplement the capacity for continuous improvement

Team teaching has begun.

SEN¹ provision is being reviewed with the aim of making suggested changes.

The current practice of annual review of Junior Cycle results has been extended to include Leaving Certificate results. This will also inform future planning.

Student Voice² has been introduced. The deputy principal will be a leader of this work across CDETB schools.

Additional professional development will be provided for staff on team teaching, formative feedback and differentiation as recommended. This year a curriculum review team will be established to further develop the effective collaborative professional practice of staff as noted in the report. The board will shortly initiate a leadership and management review³ to incorporate change management and communication systems.

¹ Note that the revision will be under the new allocation model for SEN(now called SET)

² Student Voice recognises the right of students to have a greater say in significant decisions that affect them.

³ This will be conducted under Circular 03/2018 from the Department of Education and Skills.

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;