

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

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|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Ainm na scoile / School name | Colaiste Pobail Setanta |
| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Phibblestown Clonee Dublin 15 |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number | 76098W |

Date of Evaluation: 26-01-2018



**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.

WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

| Dates of inspection | 26-01-2018 |
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| 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

Coláiste Pobal Setanta opened in 2008 to serve the needs of a large urban area with a rapidly expanding population in Dublin 15. It is a large co-educational school with a culturally diverse population many of whom are multilingual and do not speak English as their first language. The school offers a number of curricular programmes. The Transition Year (TY) is optional. The school is under the auspices of the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB).

The current enrolment is 1,080 students. The current principal was newly appointed at the start of this academic year and there have been a number of changes in personnel in the senior management team in the past fifteen months.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The school's policy which stipulates that students must take all subjects at Junior Certificate higher level does not cater for the range of student abilities within the school's cohort nor does it afford the opportunity for all students to experience success.
- The senior management team (SMT) is exceptionally hard working and committed to the school.
- The quality of teaching and learning was very good with many examples of excellent practice also in evidence.
- Students in junior cycle do not have textbooks and are reliant solely on school-created digital content which varies in quantity and quality and has not been monitored adequately by school management.
- The structures in place to ensure high-quality care for students are very good.
- A significant number of mandatory policies are out of date and in need of review.
- At the time of the evaluation a significant amount of the resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills for students with special educational needs (SEN) were not being used for the intended purpose.

Recommendations

- School management should lead a consultative review of the policy in relation to the mandatory uptake of subjects at higher level in Junior Certificate with a view to ensuring that students take subjects at the highest level that is appropriate to them.
- The principal should review the school's digital strategy and put in place a robust system for review of school-created digital content so as to ensure the best possible learning experience for students which is consistent across all subjects.
- In developing the school's strategic plan, the board should make greater use of school data, including the data from student and parent surveys carried out as part of this evaluation and should ensure that all mandatory policies are updated in a consultative manner with stakeholders; a calendar for systematic review of policies should be established.
- Senior management should address the issues outlined in this report in relation to the provision of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Relationships, Sexuality Education (RSE), Guidance and SEN and, in particular, capacity among staff in these areas should be developed through increased distributed leadership, the formation of core teams and significant continuing professional development (CPD).
- The DDLETB and the board should ensure that the school is compliant with Department's regulations in relation to the use of resources allocated for the provision of support for students with SEN and for the implementation of the Design and Communication Graphics (DCG) curriculum.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leading learning and teaching

The quality of school management and leadership is good with some excellent practices evident and equally some practices where there is scope for development.

Since the foundation of the school, management has been committed to leading innovation and excellence in teaching and learning. The development of a community of learners and the establishment of very high standards in learning among staff and students have been key priorities. Excellent practices in leadership were noted in relation to embedding the principles of Assessment for Learning (AfL) in classroom practice, and the use of Bloom's Taxonomy. In relation to the school's digital strategy, very good practices were noted with scope for development in a number of critical areas. Management is most proactive in ensuring staff engagement in continuous professional development (CPD) and there is excellent uptake among teachers in an extensive range of CPD pertaining to teaching and learning.

As a central part of the school's teaching and learning plan, all junior cycle students use digital devices. This has led to excellent opportunities for students to develop a number of the key skills of the Junior Cycle Framework (2015). Instead of using textbooks, teachers are required to create content for their subject specialisms. However, the quality of the content available to students varies considerably and this may impact negatively on student learning in some subject areas. The newly-appointed principal has initiated a review of digital content and this needs to be prioritised. In the context of the current significant curricular reform at Junior Cycle, the content of all subjects should be reviewed to ensure that the materials are updated in light of the new subject specifications.

Good structures exist to provide technical support. Notwithstanding this, technical issues cause challenges for some students and their expertise varies regarding capacity to use the devices. The school's Acceptable Internet Usage Policy (AUP) is not fit for purpose and is in need of review. The information in the students' journal pertaining to eLearning should be reviewed and the new AUP should be included. The first cohort of students who used digital devices will take certificate examinations this year, so a complete review of the eLearning plan should take place with input from all stakeholders. The school's systems of quality assurance of subject content created by teachers should be clearly documented.

A strong culture of high expectations permeates all aspects of school life and this is highly commendable. School policy dictates that all students take subjects at higher level throughout junior cycle and in the Junior Certificate examination. This has resulted in a positive experience for some but not for all students. Senior management should review this policy and all available data should be used to ensure that students take subjects at a level that is appropriate to them and likely to result in successful learning experiences and outcomes.

School management is committed to a culture of inclusion and equality of opportunity for students. Very good strategies to ensure cultural integration are in place. Parent and student surveys indicate that there is very good awareness of anti-bullying procedures. Student behaviour was excellent during the inspection.

The school's curriculum is broad and balanced with a good mix of practical and academic subjects. The school plans to introduce new subjects in senior cycle next year and has introduced these in a modular fashion in TY so as to generate student interest. This is excellent practice and evidence of good advance planning.

The school offers a very good TY programme. Students currently undertaking the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme reported very positively on the benefits they are experiencing. All fifth-year students take the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) link modules which is beneficial in relation to preparation for the world of work. All students in TY and in fifth-year and those following the LCA programme engage in work experience. School management could usefully seek to increase links with local employers.

Many aspects of the quality of provision for students with additional learning needs are very good. There are two units catering for students with autistic spectrum disorders. The staff and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) are exceptionally committed to developing the potential of these students.

There are good systems in place to identify, track and support students with SEN. The main model of support is team teaching. Other focussed interventions to support students' needs in relation to social and organisational skills should be provided as appropriate. The number of staff with expertise in SEN should be increased. The school is in receipt of a large allocation to support students with SEN and, at the time of the evaluation, a significant portion of these resources was not being used for this purpose. This must be addressed as a priority.

The quality of provision of SPHE is in need of review. SPHE is timetabled once a week for all third-year students but in some of these lessons SPHE was not being taught. All tutors teach SPHE, resulting in a subject department of over thirty teachers. Management should review all aspects of the delivery of SPHE. This should include an audit of teacher CPD undertaken, the establishment of a core team and development of expertise in SPHE. Inconsistencies identified in relation to the delivery of the core SPHE curriculum are borne out by the data gathered from student surveys and student focus groups. In addition, not all students are receiving Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) and this should be addressed in line with circular letter 0027/08.

The quality of the structures to ensure the care of students is very good and the tutor system is key. Care teams meet on a weekly basis. The relevant year heads, tutors and guidance personnel attend these meetings and use a clear system to address the care needs of the students. Students with care needs which cannot be met within the school are referred to appropriate agencies. As many tutors are new this year, it is important that ongoing training be provided to ensure consistency in this very important role. Review of student attendance data suggests that this important area needs focus in the context of the care team as well.

Students entering first year are supported by *Tús Maith* which is a most effective induction programme. There are very good links with the feeder primary schools and the excellent practice of reciprocal visits of teachers from local primary schools is noted. The school's open night provides effective opportunities for incoming students to gain an understanding of subject options.

The guidance department supports a variety of students' needs. However, there is currently no qualified guidance counsellor on the staff. Two staff members are now upskilling in this area and senior management should ensure that a guidance team is established. Consideration should be given to expanding that team and the skill set of the personnel. The current provision in relation to timetabled guidance classes to support students' educational and vocational needs is very good. However, provision in relation to personal counselling is inadequate for a school of this size. This is an area to be prioritised by senior management. The guidance plan has not yet been ratified by the board and this should be expedited.

The provision of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities is excellent and staff display great commitment to supporting students' learning outside of the classroom environment in a variety of highly effective ways.

Managing the organisation

The board of management is appropriately constituted and comprises very dedicated members. New members have joined recently and it would be timely to ensure that they receive training. Mandatory items such as child protection, bullying cases, teaching and learning and school self-evaluation (SSE) are on the agenda for meetings. This year, under the guidance of the newly-appointed principal, the board has established a committee of teachers to review mandatory policies as a significant number of them are out of date. Some policies have been brought to draft form very recently. The board should ensure that these policies are ratified, should instigate a robust system to review policies and maintain a policy review calendar in line with the ETB Ireland's guide for its boards of management.

The deployment of human resources is mostly very good. Teachers are assigned to teach their subject specialisms and for the appropriate hours. However, the current practice of allocating more than four hours non class contact time to assistant principals needs to be reviewed as all teachers must be scheduled to teach for the minimum required eighteen hours.

The physical environment of the school is very well maintained and facilities are very good. In 2015 the school was allocated a grant by the Department to purchase new computers necessary for the implementation of the DCG curriculum for Leaving Certificate students. However, these computers have not yet been purchased. Management should expedite the purchase of same as the lack of these facilities is likely to impact negatively on student learning and attainment in DCG. The board should oversee that monies allocated by the department are used for their intended purposes.

Leading school development

In order to lead school development, the board draws on information about important school matters through presentations from staff, students and the principals' report. The board's current priorities are quite broad and it is timely for the board to interrogate data more thoroughly, in particular in relation to student outcomes in the certificate examinations and attendance. The board should review the data from all surveys undertaken by the inspectorate in the context of this evaluation and should identify the areas of concern in data, investigate further and use all available data to identify strategic priorities.

The school is welcoming of parents and parent surveys endorse this. Communication with parents via letters, newsletters and texts is effective. The school website is in need of updating. Mandatory policies should be available on the website and, in particular, all current available information in relation to enrolment should be made publicly available to ensure transparency.

Developing leadership capacity

The SMT comprises the principal and three deputy principals (DPs), one of whom was in an 'acting up' capacity. The SMT is exceptionally hard working and committed to the school. The individual roles and responsibilities of the team are clear. In order to build capacity among this team, the principal should ensure that all members of the team are upskilled across the full range of duties that are part of DPs' responsibilities. The team of assistant principals carries out a significant workload, with great commitment to students, and provides significant support to the SMT to ensure the smooth running of the school.

Teachers have some opportunities to lead initiatives, mostly pertaining to excellent practice in teaching and learning. TL 21 and the active-learning workshops are among such initiatives. The production of a series of videos by experienced teachers, to provide peer support for colleagues to

engage in best practice in teaching and learning, is also an excellent initiative. There is now a need to extend this culture of distributed leadership and to establish core teams of teachers around areas such as information and communications technology (ICT), timetabling, SEN, programmes and guidance.

The quality of student leadership is excellent. Students have a comprehensive range of opportunities to develop their skills through a variety of student leadership programmes in the school. These include the student council, the Green School team, the Sports Council, the Reader Leader programme, the mentoring and prefect systems. Particularly impressive is the Digital Leaders programme which enables students with excellent digital skills to teach both teachers and students to improve their own digital skills.

2. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

In total thirty-two lessons were observed. The quality of teaching and learning was very good with many examples of excellent practice.

Learner outcomes and learner experiences

In lessons observed, high levels of student engagement and motivation were evident. Student engagement was optimal when clearly structured and meaningful tasks were assigned. The good routines, such as lining up outside the door and showing homework or answering questions as they entered lessons, created a sense of readiness to learn among the students.

Students exhibited a highly effective sense of ownership over their own learning and demonstrated great capacity to speak about their learning. They referred to their own learning styles in a unique way, using an impressive range of educational vocabulary to talk about learning experiences in lessons. The practice in some lessons of providing the learners with flexible options on how to demonstrate their learning served to significantly enhance student interest and offered increased opportunities to experience success.

Students engaged in tasks which were learner centred and which facilitated the mixed-ability nature of the groups. The most effective practice in accommodating mixed-ability learners was where students were able to engage in tasks at varying degrees of difficulty and had choices in how to represent their learning. This practice should be extended to all lessons to ensure effective differentiation. In most lessons students had opportunities to work with one another and thereby develop good skills in communication and collaboration. Independent learning was also facilitated and encouraged. Students were provided with opportunities to work alone and develop autonomy. Students knew how to seek and use information correctly and demonstrated excellent digital literacy.

The quality of the learning environment throughout the school was outstanding. The displays of learning materials and of student work were excellent and provided strong evidence that this is a school where the focus of all is on high quality learning. Positive teacher-student rapport was very evident.

Teachers' individual and collective practice

The quality of teachers' planning and preparation for lessons was high. Materials and resources were very well organised in advance of lessons and tasks were well prepared to ensure that students' skills were developed and that learning was well progressed.

Classroom management was very good and student behaviour was managed positively. Lessons were well sequenced and had an effective structure. The classroom layout facilitated good student collaboration and student-centred teaching approaches. Teacher circulation was good and teachers administered good levels of verbal formative feedback to the learners. In some instances very good written formative feedback in relation to student work was noted. However this remains an area for development.

A variety of highly effective AfL practices was noted in lessons. AfL is a key focus of teachers' practice and this is paying dividends for students. In some instances strategies were used without clear rationale. Teachers could usefully revisit the rationale for AfL and consider why certain strategies are useful in ascertaining students' learning and how this informs the next steps in teaching.

In many lessons, effective differentiation practices were noted but there was scope to develop these in some lessons. Teachers need to ensure that challenging yet achievable tasks and targets are set for all students. Very good teacher collaboration exists within subject departments. Some excellent collaborative practice was noted regarding the development of digital learning materials.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS

Leadership and Management

The implementation of recommendations from previous reports has been very good. Art is now offered in senior cycle and strategies have been put in place to raise its profile. One recommendation that still merits consideration is the possibility of a taster programme for modern languages at the start of first year.

Teaching and Learning

The quality of teaching and learning in previous inspections reports has consistently been very good. The recommendation regarding consistency around the provision of written formative feedback to students merits renewed focus.

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

The School's Self-Evaluation Process

The school has a proven track record in relation to SSE and in the effective use of data to inform practice across a wide range of areas. The school's own 'teaching and learning journey' which is exceptionally well documented and progressive provides strong evidence of the school's commitment to engaging in reflective processes and to focussing on innovative teaching and learning. The process has, to date, been led and implemented by the SMT and it is timely now to consider setting up an SSE committee and to engage all stakeholders. The data available to the school from the student surveys carried out as part of this evaluation should be used to inform future SSE. The school improvement plan should be shared with the whole-school community.

The School's Capacity for Improvement

The school has consistently sought to improve and to innovate. Management and teachers demonstrated capacity to seek out best practice and to implement the recommendations in this report.

5. CHILD PROTECTION

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

1. The school principal is aware that revised child protection procedures for primary and post-primary schools came into effect on 11 December 2017 and arrangements are in place to begin the process of implementing these procedures.
2. The name of the designated liaison person for child protection matters was prominently displayed near the main door of the school / in the school's reception area.
3. The school has a Child Protection policy in place.
4. All teachers are aware that they are mandated persons and of their responsibilities in that regard.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

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; |

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

- The BOM of Coláiste Pobail Setanta welcomes this comprehensive report and all the positive findings on Management, Leadership and Learning at the College. The report comes at a timely period in the overall development of the College.
- The BOM wishes to acknowledge the hard work, commitment and innovative practices in evidence as well as the dedication of the SLT and teachers, SNAs and ancillary staff to the College as highlighted in the report.
- The BOM would like to acknowledge the following very positive findings:
- The many examples of excellent and very good quality teaching and learning practices observed.
- Some excellent collaborative practice was noted regarding the development of digital learning materials.
- The very good structures that are in place to ensure high-quality care for students.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

- The Board welcomes and accepts the recommendations contained within this report and are fully committed to their implementation.
- The College management team are reviewing the policy in relation to the mandatory uptake of subjects at higher level in the Junior Certificate to ensure that the high expectations held by the College for all students is appropriate to their individual needs while keeping a firm focus on the recommendations of JCT reform.
- The BOM welcomes the review of curriculum content and resources available to students and is currently working with all stakeholders to ensure that CP Setanta continues to meet the needs of its whole school community.
- The College is in the process of conducting a Digital Strategy Review in light of the recommendations to ensure the best outcomes for students going forward.
- The BOM commits to making greater use of school generated data and to review the schools strategic plan.
- The BOM have commenced a review of mandatory policies and they have adopted the ETBI schedule.
- It is noted that significant CPD is required in the areas of Guidance and SEN and the Board will ensure that staff are facilitated to upskill in these areas in order to develop capacity.
- The BOM welcomes the Whole School provision of CPD in SPHE for all tutors during Induction Week 2018/19 and the establishment of a core team of teachers to deliver the RSE modules in each year.

- The BOM welcome the development of building capacity among staff in the area of Guidance and SEN. The BOM also welcomes the establishment of Planning for Learning Working Committees to ensure capacity building among all staff and greater emphasis on CPD and distributed leadership.
- The Board will ensure that the school is compliant with Department regulations in relation to the use of resources allocated for the implementation of the Design and Communication Graphics (DCG) curriculum and that it allocates resources for the support for students with SEN as required by the Department.