An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Crescent College Comprehensive</th>
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</table>
| Seoladh na scoile / School address | Dooradoyle Road  
Dooradoyle  
Limerick  
County Limerick |
| Uimhir rolla / Roll number | 81014R |

Date of Evaluation: 09-05-2018
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.
5. The records of the last three board of management meetings record a child protection oversight report that meet the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2017.
6. The board of management has ensured that arrangements are in place to provide information to all school personnel on the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2017
7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE, Wellbeing).
8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.
WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

Dates of inspection  30 April to 9 May 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection activities undertaken</th>
<th>30 April to 9 May 2018</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with board of management</td>
<td>Meeting with parents’ representatives</td>
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<td>Meetings with principal and deputy principals</td>
<td>Analysis of parent, student and teacher questionnaires</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meetings with key staff</td>
<td>Observation of teaching and learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review of relevant documents</td>
<td>Examination of students’ work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student focus-group interview</td>
<td>Interaction with students</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Feedback to senior management team, board of management and teachers</td>
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School context

Crescent College Comprehensive (CCC) is a co-educational post-primary school in suburban Limerick, with an enrolment of 875 students. It provides for students from a range of ethnic, economic and social backgrounds and operates under the joint trusteeship of the Provincial of the Jesuit Order and of the Department of Education and Skills. The school has a strong profile for its students’ academic and sporting achievements and for the evening programme of education it provides for adults.

CCC 2025: Our Future, a multi-phase strategic development plan has been agreed to drive the refurbishment and modernisation of the school campus built in 1972. Substantial projects are at the design and approval stages with the Department. The Jesuit congregation is also providing financial support to fund construction costs of particular school facilities.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- There is a very strong sense of pride and commitment to the school’s ethos of Jesuit education, evidenced by very high levels of parent and past pupil support for student learning and school development and by teachers’ voluntary provision of an extensive range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities for students.
- While the board and senior management have been very effective in developing the school’s governance structures, the overall quality of leadership of management is good; action is now required to create and implement a strategic plan for the leadership of learning and teaching and to further improve curricular development over the coming years.
- A very high standard of teaching practice was seen in a number of lessons and the overall quality of teaching was good or very good in most lessons; subject department practices need to be further developed.
- The standard of student learning was good or very good in most of the lessons observed, including some excellent practice; there was uneven provision of formative assessment and differentiated support in some of the lessons observed.
- Very good implementation of management-related recommendations from previous evaluations has been achieved; the overall progress in implementing subject recommendations ranges from very good to satisfactory.
- A reflective and improvement-driven ethos is evident in the school; satisfactory progress in meeting school self-evaluation (SSE) requirements under Circular 40/2016 has been achieved to date.
Recommendations

- The board needs to ensure the preparation of a strategic plan for the leadership of learning and teaching for the coming years, informed by systematic review of feedback from all stakeholders and clarity of roles within the schedule of posts, and underpinned by targets, team structures and evaluation measures.

- A review of the school’s junior cycle curriculum needs to be initiated to ensure that it is informed by the options now available to meet students’ different interests and needs and by stakeholder feedback, and TY certification arrangements and subject plans need to be improved.

- Formative assessment and differentiation strategies should be consistently integrated into all teachers’ practices.

- Subject departments need to systematically plan for the incremental development of pedagogical practices and for the implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations.

- Future SSE development of teaching, learning and assessment practices within classrooms should arise from an audit of Looking at Our School: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools (LAOS) and of the school’s needs in relation to Junior Cycle Framework implementation, and should be based on an audit of in-house staff expertise to activate peer-led mentoring and improvement.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leading learning and teaching

The principal and deputy principals are a hard-working, collaborative team. For the past four years, particular aspects of school life have been prioritised for improvement by senior management and the board. Core amongst those aspects was the agreement of a multi-phase building plan with all stakeholders and the Department to address significant deficits. The board and senior management have also invested significant time and effort into seeking guidance on best practice in relation to governance procedures; have streamlined and prioritised privately-funded organisational roles; and have used the school website to provide greater transparency on the school’s financial management to parents and all stakeholders. Senior management have also initiated the leadership of learning through a number of initiatives detailed in the following sections. Questionnaire returns indicate that parents and teachers feel that the school is well run.

A very high priority is attached by senior management and all teachers to the holistic development of students, underpinned by “cura personalis,” a core characteristic of Jesuit education, and by a commitment to nurturing positive student-teacher relationships. Staff are very generous in giving of their non-teaching time in provide very varied co-curricular and extra-curricular learning experiences to students.

The school seeks to meet emerging student care needs through proactive communication among form tutors and year heads about student needs; very well-run care team meetings; and financial, social, cultural and home-school supports to target students and parents provided by the student support worker. There is a very strong commitment from school resources to provide additional guidance capacity. The counselling services provided by the chaplain and guidance department, first-
year induction support, and in-house initiatives like the “Truthful, Useful, Good” (TUG) cyber awareness project are also core elements of the care system.

A review of the code of behaviour and the piloting of new initiatives in the management of student behaviour have been initiated this year. Student management practices are being developed through approaches such as academic monitoring and follow-up action by year heads and a pilot ‘green slips’ project to track low-level student disengagement. However, consistent implementation of student management related school policies and procedures needs emphasis. Survey feedback from parents, students, and staff indicates that this is an area where work is still needed.

Support for students with special educational needs (SEN)s is delivered by a substantial core team of qualified personnel who are very well deployed, very well co-ordinated, and diligently engage in continuing professional development (CPD). An input on the implications of the new SEN resource allocation model for classroom teaching should be provided to all staff, followed by CPD and supports to ensure familiarity with differentiation approaches among all mainstream teachers.

Senior management’s leadership of the curriculum at Junior Cycle (JC), TY and Leaving Certificate (LC) involves timetabling for a substantial number of subjects and providing student-driven option lines. This task is very skillfully accomplished and deals with the challenges posed by a staggered lunch break for different year groups very well. The TY programme is highly subscribed, provides valuable subject sampling, “other learning” and student leadership opportunities. Ongoing changes have taken place in TY planning, most recently with a whole-staff TY review in 2016/17, which improved work experience timetabling and created academic and vocational-focused learning blocks in the school year.

To support further development of TY, programme planning needs to be improved. At present, almost all subjects or modules are planned separately, with little cross-curricular linkage or collective discussion of assessment practices. Programme accreditation for different levels of TY certification should be developed, based on agreed success criteria, and incorporate minimum attendance requirements. Improved work experience monitoring arrangements should be established. Finally, subject planning for TY should adopt the practice of awarding numbers of credits toward final certification under specified methods of assessment, with this information communicated to students and parents at the outset of the year.

A commendable action-orientated approach has been taken to begin embedding logistical elements of the JC Framework. However, a review of the school’s JC curriculum needs to be initiated, due to the need to incorporate 400 hours for wellbeing by 2020 and to utilise the curricular options now available to support learners of all abilities. To assist decision-making, it is recommended that a committee be established, comprising representatives of different subject groupings. Consultation with all stakeholders and a clear rationale for prioritising options will be needed. The committee should report to senior management and ultimately to the board, to support final decision-making.

At the time of the inspection, no whole-school strategic plan for the development of teaching and learning across the school had been formulated. A whole-staff exploration of the teaching and learning dimensions of LAOS had not been facilitated. A whole-staff identification of correlations between LAOS standards, school pedagogical needs in relation to Junior Cycle Framework implementation, and inspection findings and recommendations is advised. Survey returns should be gathered from students on the teaching and learning strategies they find most effective. A register of teachers’ further studies should be compiled to identify in-house expertise that can be more strategically harnessed. Staff should also be surveyed on their continuing professional development needs relating to pedagogy. The teaching and learning development plan to be developed should
identify targets for improvement in teaching and learning and assessment practices, using SSE. Creating a teaching and learning committee could help to drive this work.

Managing the organisation

The quality of governance in the school is of a very high standard, evidenced by the board’s constant engagement with the Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS) and the Jesuit network. The board has established measures to provide transparency and accountability in the management of the school’s financial resources and has participated energetically in the planning process for campus development. It receives briefings on examination results, inspection reports, Junior Cycle updates, and health and safety reports and invests significant attention in policy development work. Looking toward the future, it is advised that the board oversee three planning processes, with targets, timeframes, and evaluation measures to be agreed: campus development, teaching and learning, and JC curriculum review.

While ongoing improvements to aspects of school facilities have been achieved by school management over the years, much more work is needed, as identified in CCC 2025: Our Future. The first phase of that plan is progressing: reroofing of the school is at design stage, with Department approval for the construction of five science labs, and existing labs to be converted into classrooms with financial support from the Jesuits. The first phase also includes the upgrading of general classrooms. This will bring significant improvements to the learner and teacher experience, as the general presentation of classrooms is in need of improvement.

Senior management initiated strategic improvement of the school’s physical ICT infrastructure in recent years, enacting ACCS recommendations. A broader “Digital Learning Plan” now needs to be prepared, as per Circular 11/2018, with planning for the integration of some digital skills training for students into the taught curriculum. That plan will need to guide the way in which the “Grant Scheme for ICT Equipment” is used to improve learner outcomes for students.

Leading school development

The senior management team is deeply conscious of promoting the school’s Jesuit ethos and of building relationships with parents, past pupils, the Jesuit network of schools in Ireland, and with the wider community. The care and SEN teams, the guidance counsellors, the student-support worker, and the chaplain have forged very valuable links with outside agencies supporting students’ development. Students also develop relationships with the wider community through co-curricular initiatives such as Fast Friends and social outreach activities.

High numbers of parents are very active, supportive collaborators with the school, through the parents’ council, the parents’ social and cultural committee, and voluntary coaching. Information sessions provided by the school to parents and the principal’s inputs at all parents’ council meetings are highly valued. Most parents surveyed reported that they feel welcome in the school, that they are happy with the school overall, and that their children are doing well and that they enjoy school. MLL surveys of parents reported the need for more regular school surveys of parents on particular areas of school life to inform decision-making.

General communication of day-to-day school life information and events is good. However, action is required to further improve strategic communication with the general teaching body, with parents, and with students. Key recommendations in this regard are to move from paper-based to more digital systems for recording and analysis of student-management information and to move beyond the current induction materials to developing a teacher handbook, supporting induction and consistent implementation of school policies and procedures. Finally, the views of teachers, parents,
and students should be periodically surveyed on relevant aspects of school life and reasons for low returns from staff to school surveys should be explored and addressed.

**Developing leadership capacity**

The Assistant Principal I team support in-school leadership by providing advice to the senior management team during weekly scheduled meetings and by supporting student care and management. There is also a combination of Assistant Principal II post holders and of board-funded special duties holders. A post schedule review took place in 2017 and was re-initiated in February 2018 under Circular 3/2018 because of an allocation of additional middle management posts to the school. As part of that process, a review of senior management’s roles and responsibilities should be included.

The student council is made up of a small group of self-nominating students. They meet with a liaison teacher and the principal, speak at assemblies, and promote student wellbeing initiatives. To function as a student representative body as envisaged under the Education Act 1998, arrangements for democratic elections among all year groups will need to be made. The functions of the student council also need to be clarified in a board-ratified constitution.

Prefects constitute the key student body in the school. They are selected by teachers from TY, fifth and sixth year, and sit as a prefect council. They have a representative function to help out at key school events such as open night and contribute greatly to the running of the school.

Questionnaire findings gathered during the evaluation indicate that a substantial majority of students disagree that they have a say in how things are done in the school. It is advised that a review of supports for the development of student voice across all year groups be undertaken. Focus groups and surveys would be useful ways to gather student feedback on learning, wellbeing, curriculum and other issues.

**2. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

**Learner outcomes and experiences**

The standard of student learning was good or very good in most of the lessons observed, including some excellent practice. Positive respectful relationships and student self-motivation were noted in lessons. High-quality learner experiences, motivation, and outcomes were achieved where teachers shared learning intentions with students at the outset and set challenging, supportive tasks to lead students’ engagement with and reflection on new material.

Summative assessment modes were used in all lessons, with teachers providing written advice for improvement on in-class tests and house examination scripts. Formative assessment modes were also used in classrooms, most often through oral questioning, oral feedback to students as teachers moved among students while they were completing tasks, and through written teacher feedback on homework tasks. A small number of additional examples of formative assessment were noted where teachers provided detailed written feedback on students’ written work, using agreed success criteria and requiring student action to improve work based on this feedback. Another innovative approach to formative assessment noted was the requirement for students to use show me boards to respond to questions based on revision homework, allowing the teacher to identify concepts where extra support was needed.

To support further development of formative assessment practices, teachers need to lead students to co-construct success criteria for particular tasks. The next step is to develop students’ capacity to
self and peer assess work and to constructively identify areas for improvement using those success criteria. Guiding students to examine and reflect on features of quality when engaging in classroom-based assessments will also support them in asking questions to help them improve their own work.

In the small number of lessons where the learner experience needed to be improved, links needed to be made to students’ experience, classroom management practices needed to be revisited, more explicit expectations needed to be set for students’ management of information, and very limited formative assessment techniques were in use. Further exploration of how the learner experience can be consistently supported by teachers is needed, as indicated by student surveys.

**Teachers’ individual and collective practice**

A very high standard of teaching practice was seen in a number of lessons and the overall quality of teaching was good or very good in most lessons. Where very good, teachers were well prepared for lessons, had very good specialist knowledge, set high expectations for students, and used effective questioning and collaborative learning tasks. They balanced teacher and student activity phases, used varied differentiation strategies, including for the more able; and set very good revision expectations for students, supported by in-class oral quizzes and identification of areas for reteaching.

In a small number of lessons, improvements were needed. Teacher talk dominated those lessons, with missed opportunities to get students more actively involved; assessment for learning approaches were largely absent from those lessons; and the lesson pace was too challenging for some students or not enough work was planned to challenge more-able learners.

Based on the sample evaluated, the quality of subject department plans ranged from very good to fair. Key differences noted between included evidence of teacher reflection leading to the review of teaching plans and the quality of actions agreed and implemented over the course of subject department meetings. Subject departments need to agree organisational issues in between meetings, if possible, so that more time can be spent on sharing specific pedagogies at meetings, on giving short briefings to each other on CPD sessions attended, and on agreeing action plans for incremental subject improvement.

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

**Leadership and Management**

Very good progress has been made in relation to most of the management-related recommendations made in previous subject inspection reports and in the 2008 WSE report.

**Teaching and Learning**

It is commended that the sharing of key recommendations from subject inspections has begun to be integrated into staff meetings. Also, a recent inspection found that the Science department incorporates pedagogical discussions into its meetings. However, collective action in response to subject recommendations varies in quality from department to department. Key recurring areas from previous subject inspections which need to be embedded in teachers’ pedagogical approaches are formative assessment practices and differentiation approaches.
4. THE SCHOOL’S SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS AND CAPACITY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The School’s Self-Evaluation Process

Evidence was gathered of how SSE work led by senior management to date, including the TUG and green slips project, has positively impacted on student support and management. Moreover, an early-stage project focusing on supporting learning through the provision of formative feedback through digital communication also has the potential to positively impact on students’ learning. Individuals and groups of teachers have also engaged in projects researching particular aspects of teaching and learning but the collective impact of those projects was not evident in classrooms during the evaluation. While draft school improvement reports have been formulated, they need to be made available to all staff to inform subject and programme planning, and to be summarised for annual sharing with the parents and the school community. Enacting these steps will move the school’s satisfactory level of progress in relation to Circular 40/2016 SSE requirements to an even higher level, resulting in ever stronger support for learner experiences and outcomes.

The School’s Capacity for Improvement

A reflective and improvement-driven ethos is evident in the school. Additional middle-management appointments to be made during the summer of 2018 will further strengthen that capacity over the coming years. Looking toward the future, school improvement needs to be guided by a shared teaching and learning development plan, utilising the SSE process, to support ongoing sharing of in-house expertise and targeted improvements in teaching, learning, and assessment practices within classrooms and departments.
Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management
Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

Crescent College Comprehensive SJ welcomes the report which affirms the work of the College; the board is particularly pleased that the report identifies the following:

- All matters relating to Child Safeguarding are correct; the school is compliant in every way.
- There is a very strong sense of pride and commitment to the school’s ethos of Jesuit education
- There are very high levels of parent and past pupil support
- The Board and senior management are very effective
- There is a very high standard of teaching practice, and the overall quality of teaching is good or very good
- Student learning is very good, with some excellent practice, and high quality learner experiences
- There has been very good implementation of management related recommendations from previous evaluations
- A reflective and improvement-driven ethos is evident in the school
- Questionnaire returns indicate that parents and teachers feel that the school is well-run
- A very high priority is attached to the holistic development of students
- Staff are very generous
- Support for students with SEN very well deployed and coordinated
- The quality of governance in the school is of a very high standard
- The board has established measures to provide transparency and accountability in the management of the school's financial resources

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 welcomes the recommendations and the inspectors’ observations are noted. From a Board perspective, the merits of planning under three key areas of campus development, teaching and learning and Junior Cycle curriculum review are known and remain a priority. The Board is committed to the continuous improvement of Crescent College Comprehensive SJ and will review and act upon the issues highlighted as a matter of priority. We look forward to working with staff, students and parents to implement the recommendations into the school’s development plan.
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.

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