

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

**Whole School Evaluation**  
**Management, Leadership and Learning**

**Report**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Scoil Phobail Chuil Mhin
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Cluain Saileach Baile Atha Cliath 15
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	913150

**Date of Evaluation: 21-09-2017**



## **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

Dates of inspection	21-09-2017
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting with Board of Management</li><li>• Meetings with principal and deputy principals</li><li>• Meetings with key staff</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Student focus-group interview</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting with parents</li><li>• Analysis of parent, student and teacher questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Interaction with students</li><li>• Feedback to senior management team, board of management and teachers</li></ul>

### School context

Coolmine Community School is a large co-educational post-primary school in Dublin 15. With a current enrolment of 1078 students, the school caters for students with a wide range of academic abilities, and from a variety of socio-economic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Programmes provided include Junior Certificate and Junior Cycle, the established Leaving Certificate, an optional Transition Year (TY) and Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA).

### Summary of main findings and recommendations:

#### Findings

- The quality of leading learning and teaching is effective overall, and school management is committed to providing high quality and inclusive education.
- The senior management team effectively manages a curriculum which is broad, and generally balanced, however a few anomalies need to be addressed.
- A significant range of policies have been developed by the board in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, some of which are in need of review.
- The day-to-day running of the school is very good, and is supported by committed staff members in their significant contribution to leadership and management.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the majority of lessons observed was good or very good, with scope to further develop written formative feedback.
- Good school self-evaluation (SSE) processes are in place, and the school has very good capacity for improvement.

#### Recommendations

- The anomalies in the provision of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) and Physical Education (PE) should be addressed to ensure that students in all years receive the required instruction in these areas.
- To make the most efficient and effective use of guidance supports available to students, Guidance and Chaplaincy personnel should be timetabled for in-class provision where appropriate, and links with Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Wellbeing should be strengthened and documented.
- The current model of provision for students with special educational needs (SEN) should be reviewed, and the size of the team delivering it should be reduced to maximise the deployment of the expertise within the department.

- To ensure that all policies are up-to-date and reviewed regularly, a timetable for their systematic review should be developed by the board; the code of behaviour, and care and admissions policies, as detailed in this report, should be amended to adhere, where appropriate, to legislative requirements and to reflect the school's characteristic spirit of community and care.
- Teachers should take a consistent approach to the use of assessment data to inform future planning in all subject areas, and to address attainment issues; furthermore assessment for learning (AfL) strategies should be fully embedded in classroom practice to enhance learning outcomes.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1 QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

#### Leading learning and teaching

The quality of leading learning and teaching is effective overall. The senior management team effectively manages the planning and implementation of a broad academic curriculum. In general teachers are deployed appropriately in mainstream, and deliberate efforts are made to meet the needs of students through the very good range of subjects and programmes offered. Overall timetabling is effective, however PE is not provided in sixth year, and RSE is not provided in TY or sixth year. These anomalies need to be addressed to ensure that students in all years have access to the required instruction.

First-year students participate in an exploratory year where they sample a range of optional subjects. However, some practical and modern language subjects are chosen in advance. While the sampling approach assists students in making an informed choice for most subjects in second year, the structure of the exploratory year should be reviewed in light of the gender balance in some subjects, and time requirements for the new Junior Cycle specifications.

A good transition programme is in place for first-year students. Commendably, this is supported by a team of fifth-year students through the *Meitheal* programme. The transition needs of students with identified SEN are further facilitated by providing opportunities to visit the school in smaller groups where appropriate, during open days.

New subject specifications of the revised Junior Cycle for relevant subjects are being implemented.

TY offers a broad programme where students have a further opportunity to sample an impressive range of subjects. To ensure a greater balance between the in-school instruction, and work experience and community aspects of the programme, a review of the full day per week of work experience should be considered.

The LCA was introduced successfully in 2014. Uptake of the programme is good and has served to address attendance and retention issues for this cohort of students. The programme holds a high profile in the school and has been selected to lead such initiatives as the introduction of tablet devices in lessons.

A good range of care and support structures is in place for students, and the care team meets weekly. Students have class contact with their tutors during the *Caomhnóir* periods each week, where journals are checked, and any issues that arise are discussed, and communicated to the pastoral care team. To unify the references to care currently documented in a range of relevant policies, a distinct care policy should be developed; this should include a programme of instruction for the *Caomhnóir* period to ensure consistency of the student experience.

Some good guidance and counselling strategies are in place for the school but the model of provision is adequate overall. Guidance is provided to students mainly on an individual basis, and this is resource

intensive. Responses to student and parent questionnaires during the evaluation indicated that there is scope to provide more advice on subject choice, and the student focus group indicated a lack of clarity on procedures for accessing guidance supports. Commendably, steps have been taken this year to address this: first-year students will now have the benefit of guidance counsellors delivering their weekly tutorial. This positive intervention should increase the visibility and access for students to the available guidance supports.

The draft guidance plan includes a general outline of the guidance counsellors' roles, and a programme for provision in each year group. There is considerable scope to develop this plan. Senior management should establish a guidance planning team to further develop it with a focus on student supports and whole-school Guidance. The plan should include more detailed schemes of work for the provision of Guidance modules to each year group. Links with SPHE, TY and LCA should be strengthened and documented. In order to make the most effective use of the resources available, Guidance and Chaplaincy should be timetabled for in-class provision where appropriate in senior cycle, and delivered through SPHE and Wellbeing in junior cycle; this will further enhance the delivery of personal, educational and vocational guidance supports already available to students on an individual basis.

Commendably a core team of qualified SEN teachers is in place. However, a very large number of non-specialist teachers provide most of the support to students with SEN. This should be reviewed and those with expertise assigned accordingly. The co-ordination of support is managed diligently by the SEN co-ordinator in collaboration with the SEN team. *Altramaí* act as link teachers for SEN teams for each year group, and provide relevant information for teachers regarding the needs of students, and the planned interventions. Highly detailed and well-monitored student support files are in place for students in receipt of resource hours.

The current model for provision of support is mainly withdrawal for literacy, numeracy, social and subject-specific needs. While management offered a clear rationale for this model, subject teachers should aim to deliver support through differentiation in the mainstream classroom, with the support of the specialist SEN teacher where appropriate. To ensure the delivery of optimal support to all students with SEN, the current structures and approaches should be reviewed, in line with the NEPS Continuum of Support. The draft SEN policy should also be reviewed in this context and finalised.

### **Managing the organisation**

The board of management, which was appointed in 2015, is appropriately constituted, highly committed and provides a wealth of experience and expertise. Members' roles and responsibilities are clearly understood, and carried out effectively.

A significant range of policies, including all that are mandatory, has been developed in consultation with stakeholders. The majority of policies are reviewed regularly and prioritised on the basis of legislative requirements or the needs of the school, however some are out-of-date. To ensure that all policies are reviewed on cyclical basis the board should draw up a timetable for systematic review. The inclusive nature of the school is not fully reflected in its admissions policy and the section concerning the admission of students with SEN should be amended to ensure compliance with legislation.

An attendance and participation strategy has been developed, and some very good structures are in place to monitor and communicate attendance issues. Notably, the strategy emphasises the link between attendance and achievement, and outlines expectations of both parents and students. Good attendance is promoted through rewards and staff encouragement. To build on existing whole-school approaches, in-class teaching and learning strategies should be further developed to promote and incentivise attendance.

The code of behaviour is phrased positively overall and a clear ladder of referral is evident. However, responses to both staff and student questionnaires indicated inconsistencies in its implementation. The practice of excluding students from lessons to the bench should be stopped, and alternative methods of promoting positive student behaviour should be developed.

The school building is maintained to a high standard and is currently undergoing an extensive programme of works. Commendably, student success is celebrated through displays of student work and achievements in the corridors. The physical layout facilitates good staff collaboration. Appropriate resources, including extensive sports facilities, are provided by the school to support learning and teaching.

### **Leading school development**

Very good links exist between the senior management team and the board, and both are committed to providing high quality and inclusive education, and to promoting high expectations of students. School development planning, student attainment and behaviour are discussed at board meetings. A school improvement plan (SIP) has been developed and the board has correctly identified attainment at higher level in certificate examinations as an area for improvement. This is particularly evident in low attainment in some subjects at junior cycle, where monitoring and improvement are required. Senior management plans to implement tracking and monitoring of student outcomes, to take a more evidence based approach to addressing this.

Inspection reports are reviewed at board meetings. To further build on this, the board should establish procedures to ensure greater follow-through of recommendations from inspection reports in the classroom.

Roles within the senior management team are clearly defined, all members are highly committed and work very well as a team. They meet formally and informally on a regular basis and communication both within the senior management team and with the board is very good.

The parents' association is very active and supports the functioning of the school through a number of activities and events. Parents' input to relevant school policies is facilitated at the initial development stages and their contribution is valued. The council keeps the wider parent body informed of its work through a comprehensive parent newsletter and through the school website. Parents are strongly encouraged to participate in school life and expectations of parents are clearly set out in a number of policies.

### **Developing leadership capacity**

The senior management team and the board are receptive to innovation and teachers are encouraged to take on leadership roles. Staff are afforded and avail of opportunities to lead projects and initiatives. Continuing professional development to address areas, such as active learning strategies and healthy living, is encouraged and facilitated for staff. The good practice of sharing this learning among staff is facilitated through internal workshops delivered by teachers. To ensure that the initiatives introduced are effective in increasing student participation and attainment, the school should take an evidence-based approach to identifying strategies that will address the teaching and learning needs of students in this school.

The day-to-day running of the school is very good, and duties carried out effectively by the middle-management team contribute significantly to this. Roles are clearly defined and agreed and post-holders report annually on their work. Roles are reviewed regularly, which is good practice, and staff show a commendable willingness to modify and take on new roles to ensure that the needs of the school are met. Outside of the post structure, teachers commendably have taken on a range of significant responsibilities. Their contribution supports a broad curricular and co-curricular educational experience for students.

A very good range of opportunities is provided to facilitate student leadership roles, such as the *Meitheal* programme and Community Care. Student voice is promoted through the student council and Arts, Science

and Sports Councils. The student council contributes to policy development and their views are sought and valued. It is therefore noteworthy that data from student questionnaires, and the student focus group, indicate that some students did not feel active partners in a number of areas. The school should investigate these findings.

### **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 and that the school is compliant with the requirements of the child protection procedures for primary and post-primary schools.

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

The quality of teaching and learning in the majority of lessons was good or very good, with scope for development in a few areas.

### **Learner outcomes and experiences**

Throughout the evaluation, classroom interactions were congenial, supportive and caring. A very good rapport was noted between teachers and students overall. A highly inclusive learning environment was noted, where students' efforts were affirmed and encouraged.

Commendably, student behaviour was exemplary during the evaluation. Students generally showed good interest and enthusiasm in lessons, noted in the high quality questions they asked to deepen their own learning. This was particularly evident in lessons where teachers created a connection for students with the learning material by referencing their interests, experiences and prior knowledge.

Learning intentions were shared in all lessons, which were clear and appropriate overall. Achievement of learning was most effective where the intentions were referenced throughout the lesson, and reviewed at the end to consolidate. This good practice should be extended to all lessons, and the sharing of success criteria included to further develop this.

Overall, a good balance was achieved between student activity and teacher instruction. Students demonstrated the ability to work independently, particularly in lessons where they were active, and where the level of challenge was appropriate. The teacher-led approach noted in a few lessons was less successful in achieving student engagement.

Collaborative learning was facilitated in some lessons through group-work and pair-work. This was most effective where it was well-structured through clearly assigned tasks and roles for students, and was followed by a plenary session to reinforce and deepen learning. To enhance this approach, a review of the traditional layout in classrooms should be considered.

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

A variety of approaches to planning for learning and teaching was noted in the documentation reviewed. The majority of subject folders included long-term and short-term plans, and scheduling for the delivery of curricular content. The most effective plans included learning outcomes that were linked to teaching approaches, and took cognisance of the range of student needs and abilities. This practice should be developed and extended across all subjects.

The role of subject co-ordinator is rotated for most departments, and this good practice should be extended to all subject areas to build capacity among staff. Minutes of meetings and subject plans indicate discussion and analysis of attainment in certificate examinations, which is good practice. To build on this, teachers in collaboration with their subject departments, should take a consistent approach to the use of assessment data, including baseline data, and ongoing review of student progress to inform future planning in all subject areas.

A variety of teaching methodologies was seen during the evaluation, and in the best lessons the selected approaches aligned with learning intention and with needs of students. Teachers circulated throughout most lessons, directed their attention appropriately, and responded well to the needs of their students.

Teachers generally had high expectations of students and the level of challenge was good in most lessons. Extension tasks were provided in some lessons in line with the school's policy for exceptionally able students. In the best lessons this involved a deeper learning of, rather than an addition to, the core activity.

The use of ICT was seen in a few lessons, most frequently as a tool for teachers to present material, and for students to research project work. The more creative use of ICT to enhance learning and teaching should be further developed and embedded in classroom practice, in line with the digital strategy for schools.

The quality of assessment was good overall and included assessment of and for learning. Some good questioning approaches were used to elicit substantial student responses. These were most effective where the wait time was appropriate, where scaffolding was used to prompt memory, and where the questions were suitably challenging to develop critical thinking skills.

High quality verbal feedback from teachers was a feature of most lessons, and very good practice was noted in a few lessons where students were given the opportunity to reflect on their work and identify areas for improvement. Limited written formative feedback was noted in the copybooks reviewed, however there were a few examples of very good practice. Procedures and practices for providing consistent written formative feedback, with clear directions for improvement should be developed by all subject departments.

To build on current practice, the range and effectiveness of AfL strategies should be further developed, and fully embedded in classroom practice.

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

#### **Leadership and Management**

Very good progress has been made in the implementation of recommendations to address the varied learning needs of students, such as the introduction of LCA, and the organisation of class groupings into mixed ability settings.

Good progress has also been made by management in taking a proactive leadership role in the development of planning for teaching and learning; a planning co-ordinator has been added to the schedule of posts and collaborative planning is facilitated through the scheduling of subject department meetings.

Some recommendations are still to be fully addressed; a policy on student care is yet to be developed and the exploratory first year merits further review.



### **Teaching and Learning**

Very good progress has been made in the sharing of learning intentions, with scope to develop the review of these. Good progress was noted in recommended teaching approaches such as the range of methodologies to deepen learning and facilitate active learning. There is still scope to develop a more consistent approach to the effective use of AfL strategies.

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

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

Good school self-evaluation practices are in place. A range of data including the views of students, staff and parents is collated to inform targets for school improvement. Literacy, numeracy and the current focus on homework are on the agenda for subject planning meetings, and a few good examples of targets in these areas were noted in subject plans. However, a more consistent approach to the implementation of strategies to reach targets should be taken by subject departments. The School Improvement Plan is published on the school website.

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

The school's capacity for improvement is very good. The board and senior management team have a clear vision for the school, are self-reflective and have correctly identified areas for improvement.

## 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 Board acknowledges the recognition in the report regarding:

- The commitment of school management to providing high quality and inclusive education.
- The significant contribution of staff members to leadership and management.
- The quality of teaching and learning.
- The expertise and commitment of Board Members.
- The active and supportive role of the Parents' Association.
- The wide range of opportunities to facilitate student leadership roles within the school.
- The engagement of all partners in the SSE process and in developing a significant range of opportunities.

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

Actions that have been taken to address the recommendations in the report:

Regarding the summary recommendations all have been progressed following informal feedback and the earlier draft report.

In summary:

- RSE in Sixth Year has been implemented. TY options for this programme are being explored. The structure of the timetable for the next academic year is being reviewed.
- A guidance planning team has been established to explore the most effective and efficient use of guidance supports for students.
- The SEN team and In-school Management team are reviewing school policy and practice in the light of Circular 14/2017.
- The Board endeavours to review policies on a systemic basis, taking cognizance of legislative requirements.
- Assessment data on First Year Students was shared with all teachers to inform future planning in all subject areas and to maximise future attainment.