

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Pobalscoil Na Tríonóide
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Frogmore Youghal Co. Cork
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	91513S

Date of Evaluation: 04-12-2019



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

WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

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

How to read this report

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

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

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

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

CHILD PROTECTION

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

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.
4. The Child Safeguarding Statement meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.
5. The records of the last three board of management meetings record a child protection oversight report that 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	02-12-19, 03-12-19 & 04-12-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with board of management • Meetings with principal and deputy principals • 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

Pobalscoil na Tríonoide is a co-educational community school, under the joint trusteeship of the Loreto Order and Cork Education and Training Board (ETB). The school is the sole provider of post-primary education in the locality of Youghal, serving a diverse student cohort. 977 students are currently enrolled. The school offers the Junior Cycle programme, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), and the traditional Leaving Certificate. The school provides for the education of students through the medium of Irish, in its Anad lán-Ghaeilge and current enrolment in Gaelscoil na Tríonóide is 160 students.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- High quality leadership and management is provided for the school; a formal school plan is yet to be developed and an annual report to the school community is required.
- The quality of leadership for learning and teaching is good; changes are needed to the overall timetable and to the use of the additional teacher allocation for special educational needs (SEN).
- Student-support and management structures are well established and of very high quality; however, a forging of greater links between these teams would be beneficial.
- The school's development of leadership capacity is of a very high standard, although further exploration of the strategic role of middle leadership in leading school development is required.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and many examples of exemplary practice were observed.
- The implementation of recommendations is very good, however action is still required in some key areas of leadership and management.
- The school is engaging with the school self-evaluation (SSE) process and has very good capacity for improvement.

Recommendations

- The board, with the support of senior leadership, should prioritise the creation of a formal strategic development plan for the school, and an annual report should be communicated to all stakeholders: the strategic role of middle leadership in leading school development should be further explored.
- Senior leadership should ensure that the construction of the overall timetable is informed by: identified curriculum priorities; continuity of teaching for students; provision for LCVP

and Physical Education (PE) in senior cycle, and the entitlement of all students to 28 hours of structured teaching time per week, which therefore requires that the timetabling of study periods should cease.

- The board of management, together with senior leadership, should ensure that the full teacher allocation for SEN is used solely for its intended purpose and that a core SEN teaching and planning team is established without further delay.
- Members of the student support team should have greater links with existing student management structures, in order to make timely decisions regarding the type and level of support provided to students.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

High quality leadership and management is provided for the school, although structural changes are required in some key areas.

Leading learning and teaching

The quality of leading learning and teaching is good.

The principal and three deputy principals form a very good senior leadership team. Individually they have significant expertise and experience, and are very dedicated to their work, to the students and to the teachers. They have clearly defined individual and collective roles and responsibilities, and teachers speak very highly of the support and encouragement they receive from the team.

There is a very broad curriculum provided to students. The re-introduction of the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme is planned, which is very positive as the school is providing for a very diverse cohort of students.

The school is very proud of its capacity to provide an Irish-medium, part-immersion experience for students who opt to enrol in its Aonad Lán Ghaeilge. As a result of the school's very strong links with the local Gaelscoil, and a continuing interest by young people in the area in pursuing a post-primary Irish-medium education, enrolment in the Gaelscoil na Tríonóide continues to be steady. Every effort is made to ensure that as broad a curriculum as possible is provided. The school's commitment to maintaining high quality provision for these students is evident in all areas of the school, and especially among the teaching team who actively promote use of the language outside of the classroom.

Across the school, students are mostly organised into mixed ability groups. This approach has been led by the principal to promote inclusion and equality of experience for all students. Mixed-ability teaching practices are supported through the provision of whole-school and individual teacher continuing professional development (CPD).

All students have the opportunity to be part of an effective subject-sampling programme in first year and in TY, which allows for informed decisions regarding their subject choices. Additionally, through the use of open choice systems, the generation of option blocks is informed by students' preferences.

Provision for Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is appropriate. PE, although timetabled for every student, is not being provided in sixth year. This issue must be addressed as a matter of priority, and, will need to be addressed by September 2020 in line with the requirements of circular letter 0061/2019.

A very good optional TY programme is provided. Students' experiences and outcomes are reflected on annually by the TY team. The comprehensive programme, which provides opportunities for certification and recognition of students' achievements, is modified as appropriate based on student evaluation and feedback.

LCVP is timetabled in an option block. As LCVP is a programme for students who have the necessary subject requirements, the timetabling of LCVP should be changed to encourage a larger number of qualifying students to engage with the programme.

A co-ordinator for the implementation of the Junior Cycle curriculum has been appointed. This co-ordinator ensures that teachers are well informed about available CPD with regard to Junior Cycle and upcoming changes. The school has provided very comprehensive information evenings for students and parents with regard to the changes in the Junior Cycle programme.

A calendar to support students and teachers with Junior Cycle assessment processes has been developed. Teachers have discussed, trialled and modified their junior cycle assessment and reporting procedures and are continually refining this process in light of growing experience. It is positive that a whole-school assessment policy, linked to recent developments in assessment at both school and systems level, is under development.

Very strong links have been established with feeder primary schools, which will be further strengthened by the schools participation in the Creative Ireland cluster project. A comprehensive transition and induction programme is provided for incoming first years. Students are supported by a highly effective peer-mentoring programme.

Student-support structures are of very high quality. These are documented in a very comprehensive whole-school guidance plan. The year head and class tutor structure is central to the provision of support for all students and is further enhanced by the assignment of a member of the guidance counselling team to each year group. Class-tutor contact time is timetabled, and students and parents spoke highly about this contact with the tutor as providing a "one good adult" model of support for students.

Very valuable timetabled, weekly meetings take place comprising of different groupings of members of the senior leadership team, the year heads, members of the guidance team, the chaplain and assistant year heads. It is advised that key personnel from the student support team and senior leadership, also attend these meetings. This should enable student referrals to relevant support personnel to be made in a more timely manner, so that necessary interventions are implemented to support the identified needs of the students. These year group meetings would then inform the decisions and actions of the whole-school student support team and allow for strategic oversight of the development of the year groups.

The school strives to be inclusive of all students in the community. An additional 10.63 whole-time teacher equivalent (WTE) or 233.86 teaching hours per week are allocated to the school, to provide additional supports for students identified with SEN. A co-ordinating teacher and an assistant co-ordinating teacher are in place, and both are very committed to their work. The school has seven special needs assistants (SNAs). The board and principal have committed to providing classes for students with autism spectrum differences (ASD) once planned building works are completed. This is very positive and it is advised that the board and senior leadership identify teachers to upskill in the teaching of students with ASD and complex needs.

Support for students identified as requiring additional support is provided through withdrawal and team-teaching. Current provision is fragmented across a very large number of teachers. A significant proportion of the additional teaching resources are not used for their intended purpose, but are

used instead for mainstream subject teaching. The board of management, together with senior leadership, should ensure that the full teacher allocation for SEN is used solely for its intended purpose as per Circular 0014/2017. A core SEN teaching and planning team should be established as a matter of priority, and provision should be organised to ensure continuity of timetabled teaching supports for students.

The school regularly provides placements for student teachers. Such engagement in the initial teacher education programmes is welcome as it provides valuable professional benefits for all involved. The Droichead programme has been introduced and trained mentors are in place. A thorough induction day, with ongoing supports, is also provided for newly qualified teachers and for teachers new to the school.

Managing the organisation

Management of the organisation is good. Members of the board of management provide valuable and committed service to the school. The board is appropriately constituted and although a new board was established in November 2019, continuity for the school is ensured as it includes both newly appointed and experienced members. Meetings are held regularly, are very well attended and the decision-making process is well informed and consensual.

All of the required policies are in place. It is advised that the legislative and regulatory checklist be used to assist the board to manage stakeholder review of these policies.

A clear enrolment policy is in place. However, aspects of this policy should be reviewed to reflect actual practice and procedures. In addition, it is unclear from the policy that payment of the administration fee is voluntary. This should be addressed.

The day-to-day running of the school is very good. The senior leadership team operate an open door policy for students, staff and parents and have high visibility throughout the school. Communication across the school is very effective.

Management of school facilities is of a very high standard and the school presents as a welcoming and well-ordered environment.

Leading school development

Leadership of school development is good.

The board and principal have identified a significant development agenda for the facilities, the curriculum, and the deployment of the teaching and financial resources; this agenda is rooted in an understanding of the importance of community links. However, there is no formal strategic plan in place. The board should prioritise the creation of a formal, strategic, medium to long-term development plan, and a related annual report should be communicated to all stakeholders, as required by Section 21 and 20, respectively, of the Education Act 1998. The already very good work being undertaken in the school should inform this process.

Staff committees work in a number of areas including wellbeing, digital learning, policy review and curriculum planning. Senior leadership has been pro-active in leading these areas to advance school development. The school's digital learning plan is of a very high standard.

The most recent post of responsibility review identified student management as a key area of need in the school, resulting in the formalisation of year head roles. In the context of leading school improvement, and in the creation and implementation of the aforementioned school plan, the strategic role of middle leadership should be further developed.

A very active parents' association is in place. Regular meetings are well attended and the association contributes to the organisation of school events, the improvement of facilities for students, and to arranging speakers to support parents, students and teachers. It is suggested that the council should advance current discussions regarding the use of both the school website and social media to communicate with the wider parent body. In addition, a regular link between the students' council and the parents' association would be worthy of exploration.

Developing leadership capacity

The school's development of leadership capacity is very good.

A number of staff groups embody a distributed approach to leadership, with timetabled opportunities for assistant principals, assistant year head and class tutors to meet. Many teacher-led initiatives are undertaken and a number of these are in collaboration with students. A significant element in this area is the voluntary involvement of teachers in extra-curricular activities.

The board and senior leadership are very supportive of teachers' engagement with CPD. Teacher involvement with various support services is indicative of the opportunities to lead in this school.

A very well-organised students' council is in place. The council is elected by students from across the year groups and all members are provided with training. Meetings are very regular and are informed by agendas and by a students' council developed action plan. This is very good. A liaison teacher facilitates and co-ordinates the work and students meet with senior leadership to discuss issues and projects to undertake. The council also presents to the board and agreed reports from the student council to the board are regularly provided.

A students' council noticeboard supports communication with the wider school community, along with announcements at class tutor time. All of this is very positive but a significant majority of students' responses to the questionnaires, indicate that students in general do not think they have a say in how things are done in the school. In the context of the very good work already under way, it is advised that further arrangements to advance student voice are explored. The potential for more explicit involvement of students in the SSE process should be explored to further student awareness of their voice being heard and responded to within the classroom.

2. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good and many examples of exemplary practice were observed.

Learner outcomes and experiences

The quality of learner outcomes and experiences was very good. This was underpinned by very positive relationships between students and teachers and between students themselves. There was a culture of high expectations in terms of both learning and participation, which was achieved through clear lessons structures and routines, and building on students' prior learning.

Students were motivated to learn through being provided with scaffolded tasks, linked to success criteria, which enabled them to take ownership and be independent in their learning whilst being very effectively supported by the teacher who facilitated that learning. It is very positive that students with complex SEN were included in mainstream lessons and very effectively participated and learned with their peers.

Students collaborated and engaged very well with each other in the majority of lessons, resulting in very high quality learning outcomes. It was evident that students were used to working together, and using success criteria and self-assessment to guide the completion of the tasks undertaken and positively influence the quality of related outcomes.

Student learning was very evident in classroom interactions where students were facilitated to offer opinions, to discuss, to reason, to challenge each other, to arrive at consensus and to ultimately learn through this dialogic process. This approach to learning is excellent and has been achieved through explicit teaching of: subject-specific terminology; a focus on process and skills to complement subject content, and the skills of collaborative learning.

Students demonstrated very high levels of proficiency in the use of complex digital technologies in some lessons, and this facilitated students to work independently on different levels of task completion.

Teachers' individual and collective practice

Overall, teachers' individual practice was of a very high standard. In almost all instances purposeful student-centred lesson planning and preparation was evident. Highly effective practice ensured that planning provided opportunities for students to collaborate, participate and contribute to their learning.

Lessons were well structured, and followed a clear sequence of inputs and tasks that facilitated students' incremental development of new learning. Learning intentions were shared and explained in all lessons. In the very good lessons, these were communicated in student-friendly language that incorporated aspects of both content and skill development, which gave clarity and purpose to the lesson for students, and facilitated independence.

A variety of student activities, both independent and collaborative, was designed to achieve the intended learning. Where students were enabled to assess their own learning through comprehensively revisiting the learning intentions they demonstrated the skills of self-reflection necessary for lifelong learning. This very good practice should be shared and practiced by all.

Success criteria were used to guide student work in many lessons. In some instances, teachers and students co-constructed the success criteria through teacher questioning and prompting. In other lessons, teachers provided the students with the criteria from the outset of the task, sometimes framed as a checklist. In one instance, the teacher prepared and provided students with a written and visual step-by-step approach to task completion. This ensured that all students in this mixed-ability class were able to both complete the task and self-assess throughout. This is excellent practice.

Teacher questioning was of a very high standard. It was used to elicit student' prior knowledge, consolidate learning and to facilitate feedback and student contributions. Questioning was most effective where students were encouraged to use subject-specific language, provide justification for answers and ultimately extend answers, and improve the standard of answer to open-ended questions.

Scope for development was identified in a very small number of lessons. In these lessons, it was necessary for teachers to consider the purpose of tasks and how these are linked to the intended learning. It was also necessary that planning and preparation for teaching should ensure appropriate challenge for students and that time for learning is maximised.

Teachers' collaborative practice is very good. The subject planning process is well established. Results of certificate examinations are analysed. The trends identified, combined with those

identified from the Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) process, should inform the selection of subject-specific actions and teaching approaches.

In light of the highly effective practices observed through the evaluation, teachers are strongly encouraged to form a Learning and Teaching committee that would allow these very good practices to be shared, tested, implemented and embedded into common school practice. This work should inform the discussion and selection of whole-school strategies and individual department action plans for the purposes of formal SSE processes related to teaching and learning.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

Overall, the implementation of recommendations is very good, however action is required in some key areas in leadership and management.

Leadership and Management

While the majority of recommendations relating to leadership and management have been implemented, two remain to be addressed: an annual report has not been issued to the school community in recent years and a core SEN team is yet to be established.

Teaching and Learning

The implementation of recommendations relating to teaching and learning is very good and well documented in subject plans.

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

The school is engaging with the SSE process and has very good capacity for improvement.

The School's Self-Evaluation Process

The SSE process was re-invigorated by the appointment of an SSE co-ordinator in 2018. Currently, the focus is on supporting students' learning through the use of effective feedback. This process needs to be advanced so that selected strategies are being used at whole-school level, by all teachers and with all year groups without further delay. The aforementioned learning and teaching committee should play a key role in advancing the SSE process in the school. Previous whole-school strategies related to literacy and numeracy should be revisited, reviewed and re-embedded.

The School's Capacity for Improvement

Many strengths are evident in the structures and approaches used within the school. By enhancing and developing these structures further, coupled with the expertise of a very dedicated board, senior leadership team and staff, this school has very good capacity 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

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of Pobalscoil na Tríonóide/Gaelscoil na Tríonóide welcomes the findings of this WSE_MLL report.

Teaching & Learning:

“Very good overall... many examples of exemplary practice”

Student Support and Management:

“Of a very high quality “

Leadership and Management:

“The Principal and three deputy principals form a very good leadership team”

School Improvement.

“Implementation of recommendations is very good“

Leadership Capacity.

“The school’s development of leadership capacity is of a very high standard“

The Board embraces the report as another resource to guide us on our path to be a “Beacon School”.

Our sincere thanks to all who contributed to making the MLL_WSE such a positive experience for our school.

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

The Board of Management welcomes the recent WSE_MLL report of January 2020. We embrace the findings and recommendations of the report to further enhance school improvement opportunities and actions.

The Board of Management, with the support of school leaders, middle management and staff, and in consultation with trustees, students, parents, statutory agencies and the broader community plan to launch a strategic plan by December 2020.

The plan will cover the period 2020 to 2025, and will be communicated to all Stake-holders.

Our culture of continuous school improvement will focus on a number of themes to further prepare us for the challenges ahead; some of the themes that will be addressed by a number of focus groups will include:

- Inclusion
- Student Voice
- Curriculum audit / L.C.A./ L.C.V.P/ Timetable provision
- Review of S.E.N.
- Review of Code of Behaviour.

- Aligning student management and student support teams at year group level.
- Gaelscoil/Coiste Gaeilge
- Bio-diversity and sustainability
- The enhanced role and opportunities for middle leadership in leading school development.

The report recommendations will be followed up in the context of improved school facilities, specifically:

- i) Target completion of school extension by September 2022, including 11 specialist/general classrooms, and 2 x S.E.N. centres.
- ii) Completion of 1.2km Slí na Sláinte walk by September 2020.
- iii) Investment in Bio – diversity, energy reduction projects. (on-going basis)
- iv) Provision of a diverse range of professional development opportunities for all staff, so that we can continue on our journey to be a “Beacon School” guided by our Mission:

“Together we respect one another, value learning, nurture community and pursue excellence”

“ Léirimís meas ar a chéile, cuirimís luach ar an bhfoghlaim, tugaimís tús áite d’ár bpobal, téimís í dtreo na foireachta de shíor”