

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

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

**REPORT**

**Coláiste Éanna  
Ballyroan, Dublin 16  
Roll number: 60342R**

**Date of inspection: 11 May 2016**



**AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS  
AGUS SCILEANNA | DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION  
AND SKILLS  
INSPECTORATE**

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

A whole-school evaluation of management, leadership and learning (WSE-MLL) was undertaken in May 2016 in Coláiste Éanna. This report presents the findings of the evaluation and makes recommendations for improvement. During the evaluation, the inspection team met with the school's board of management, in-school management, and groups of teachers, parents and students. Inspectors also reviewed a range of school documentation and responses to questionnaires and examined other data in relation to the operation of the school. As part of the evaluation, a range of lessons across a number of subject areas was inspected. 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.

### ***Introduction***

Coláiste Éanna was established in 1967 by the Christian Brothers to provide Catholic education for boys in the Ballyroan and Rathfarnham areas. Coláiste Éanna is currently under the patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST). The school offers the Junior Certificate, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the established Leaving Certificate. There is a current enrolment of 617 students and the school is oversubscribed. Coláiste Éanna prides itself on being an inclusive school which welcomes boys of all intellectual abilities and from all ethnic and economic backgrounds.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT**

### ***Key Findings***

- The board is properly constituted and members, many of whom are long serving, are highly committed to the school.
- The preparation and publication of a five-year school plan with clearly identified priorities for ongoing and future development is highly commended.
- Senior management is a strong team for whom the holistic development and provision of care for every student is a key tenet of its administration and leadership.
- Pastoral care is underpinned by a good middle management structure, an effective care team and a strong anti-bullying team.
- Teaching and learning was good or very good in the majority of lessons with some examples of excellent practice noted and some scope for development in a small number of lessons; there is also some scope for development in the area of subject planning.
- School self-evaluation (SSE) has been a valuable learning process for staff and there is genuine commitment to school improvement.

### ***Recommendations for Further Development***

- Subject planning should have additional focus on the sharing of ideas around effective teaching and learning, and on analysis of student attainment.

- All lessons should involve the sharing and revisiting of learning intentions and the use of differentiation to respond to the diverse needs of the student cohort.
- Teachers should ensure that active and participative learning is a feature of all lessons.

## **1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP**

### ***1.1 School ownership and management***

The board of management is properly constituted and members have availed of all relevant training. The current board is in situ since November 2015. Nevertheless, there is very good continuity in the trustee representatives and many are long serving members. Board members are aware of their legislative and financial responsibilities and are very committed to their work. Very good links exist between the board of management and the Trustee body. ERST uses many of the school practices from Coláiste Éanna as exemplars for other schools under the Trust.

The previous board of management prepared a five-year school plan which outlines priorities for ongoing and future development. These priorities include: an information and communications technology (ICT) plan, supporting students transitioning from primary to post-primary education and a continuum of support for students with learning needs. There was significant evidence during the evaluation to show that these priorities are being actively pursued and progressed by the current board. Board members walk the school campus annually in order to familiarise themselves with areas of the school under development and to assess emerging needs. The new proposed partnership with South Dublin County Council in relation to the greenway project will bring considerable benefits for the school community and this is commended.

The board reviews subject and programme inspection reports which is very good practice. Consideration should be given to following up on the reports after a certain period to ascertain how recommendations are being implemented and to assess the impact of the inspection process on teaching and learning. While the board examines some elements of student attainment in state examinations, a more in-depth analysis would be beneficial and would help to inform school policy.

The board appoints sub-committees to develop certain areas of board responsibility such as finances and policy review. It is commendable that teachers contribute to interview boards in order to ensure subject specific expertise. Members of the student council meet with the board of management which is good practice. Consideration should be given to facilitating members of staff to present to the board on aspects of school development that they are involved with.

There is a strong and dynamic parents' association in place which has a good relationship with senior management. The parents' association meetings are well attended and the association is very supportive of the school, providing financial and practical support at school functions. The board and senior management are enthusiastic about maintaining and creating links with the local community. Coláiste Éanna is very much a school for the local community and this is reflected in partnerships with local organisations and the parish. It would be a worthwhile initiative to include parental representation on the policy review subcommittee of the board in order to further include the parental voice in school policies.

### ***1.2 Effectiveness of leadership for learning***

Senior management comprises the principal and deputy principal who form a collaborative and united team. Senior management shares a common vision for the implementation of the five elements of the current published school plan. Roles and responsibilities are clearly delineated with the principal taking on the role of the spiritual and directional leader of the school. The deputy principal plays a significantly supportive role and is involved in a range of administrative and organisational duties. The holistic development of every student and the provision of care for students in general is a key tenet of senior management's administration and leadership. This caring ethos was seen to be lived out in various aspects of school life evaluated during the inspection process and is highly commended. The ethos of ERST was seen to permeate many aspects of school life.

The principal holds a colloquium with all staff members annually which is very good practice. Teachers are facilitated to attend relevant continuing professional development (CPD) courses which is also good practice. The school has six assistant principals (AP) and nine special duties (SDT) teachers. The APs fulfil a range of year head and organisational duties. The SDTs support school management through undertaking a wide range of co-ordination and other organisational duties. While there has been little post review in recent years, both management and teachers generally agreed that the posts were meeting the needs of the school. This is commendable, however, the schedule of posts should be kept under review in case of future changes in personnel or emerging school needs.

There is a good middle management structure in place and regular meetings are held with senior management. Members of middle management reported that they are valued and consulted in relation to decisions and school planning and development. A board of studies meets regularly when curriculum review is underway and reports to senior management with observations and recommendations. The good practice of reviewing the school curriculum is acknowledged. The introduction of Music in the school in recent years has been very successful and has allowed some students who are not interested in pursuing sporting activities to follow other interests.

An effective year head and tutor system is in place which underpins the school's pastoral care and the disciplinary ladder of referral. Tutor time is timetabled four times a week and has a strong instructional element, agreed by the year heads and the tutors, which is commended. While year heads have a role in monitoring academic progress, this role could be more clearly defined and outlined for students, parents and staff in order to ensure effective tracking of student attainment and progress in line with student ability. The code of behaviour is well set out with a clear ladder of referral. Senior management is involved in the process for very serious offences. The differentiation between less serious and serious offences in the code of behaviour is commended.

Coláiste Éanna has good links with the local feeder schools and these schools are visited every year by the learning support team for the purposes of gathering information and making sure that appropriate provision will be made for all students. There is a mentoring programme for first years which is implemented by TY students. It is proposed to extend this programme into fifth year for the current TY students and this is praiseworthy.

Coláiste Éanna is committed to dealing with bullying issues promptly and effectively and seeks to create a school environment where bullying is not tolerated on any level. Former and current staff have led very effectively in this area in recent years. Their commitment and work have ensured the establishment of a dedicated anti-bullying team and the creation of a website which provides advice and direction for other schools. Coláiste Éanna is commended for its work in the area of anti-bullying.

Students have access to a broad holistic curriculum, have the opportunity to sample subjects in first year and there is mixed-ability teaching for most subjects. The practice of mixed-ability teaching is commended. However, a very small number of subject areas divide students into ordinary and higher-level classes too early in first year. This practice needs collaborative review with a view to maintaining mixed-ability settings for as long as possible in junior cycle. TY is undertaken by the majority of students and both parents and students were very affirming of the programme and its benefits. It was reported that there is regular review of the TY programme and this review impacts significantly on programme design for following years. This is very good practice. However, consideration should be given to spreading activities more evenly throughout the year.

Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) are appropriately provided for on the curriculum. Management has facilitated the establishment of small groups for RSE lessons in senior cycle which has led to more effective delivery of the programme. However, the delivery of the RSE programme in its entirety should be ensured and relevant teachers should be facilitated to avail of CPD in the use of the Talking Relationships, Understanding Sexuality Teaching (TRUST) resource.

Senior management is proud of the various initiatives in the school to promote student participation and to engender pride in the student body. These include the principle of positive attitudes in Coláiste Éanna (PACÉ) and the motto “striving for excellence” which is always to the fore in school documentation and other communications. The principal places considerable importance on the school awards ceremony which recognises a range of student achievements, including personal endeavour, academic, sporting prowess and participation in the Arts. The “spirit of Éanna” award is a valued and sought after acknowledgement of the outstanding achievement of one boy in a personal capacity.

There is a student council in place, the structure of which has been broadened to include students from all year groups. Results from the student questionnaires administered during the evaluation indicated that the student voice in general should be further developed. The student council should be facilitated as an effective conduit for the student voice.

Coláiste Éanna has a strong and proud tradition of sporting achievements. Many of the teachers are involved in the provision of a very good range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and their commitment in this area is noted. The introduction in recent years of additional activities has broadened the access of all students to extra-curricular events and this is commended.

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*.

### **1.3 Management of facilities**

The school comprises of three buildings dating from different eras. The buildings and grounds are very well maintained and the school is a bright and welcoming place. There is a very well-resourced sports hall in place.

Many of the classrooms had good print rich displays which could be exploited more during lessons. There has been good investment in ICT facilities in recent years and while some good use of these facilities was observed during lessons, the use of ICT could be further extended.

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

## ***2.1 The quality of learning and teaching***

Twenty-two lessons covering all years, programmes, and most subjects were observed. The quality of teaching and learning was good or very good in the majority of lessons with exemplary practices observed in some. There were some lessons where there was scope for development regarding the choice of teaching methodologies.

The majority of lessons were well structured and paced, with prior learning contributing appropriately to the work in hand. A range of methodologies was observed, many to good effect, while other methodologies were less successful in engaging students and progressing learning.

An appropriate balance between teacher instruction and student activity was maintained in many lessons through the use of individual and group tasks. In lessons where the pair or group work had clarity of purpose, the lesson was effective in promoting active and independent learning. However, there were some lessons where the paired activity did not create the need for students to interact. Teacher instruction dominated in a number of lessons resulting in students remaining very passive. All lessons should include opportunities to promote the student voice and active independent and collaborative learning. Greater student participation will also support oral literacy.

Subject planning is facilitated and minutes of meetings observed indicated that discussions are primarily of an organisational nature. It is recommended that meetings should also include discussion on teaching and learning, the sharing of methodologies and a more in-depth analysis of results in order to advance the school improvement agenda. The development of an agreed homework and assessment policy for each subject is also recommended.

Most teachers began by communicating the lesson plan to the students. Best practice was noted where the plan was articulated in terms of learning intentions, thereby placing greater responsibility on students for their own learning. In a minority of instances, the learning intentions were revisited at the end of the lesson to assess student progress. These good practices should be extended to all lessons.

Question and answer sessions were observed in all the lessons evaluated. They were most effective where they facilitated full student participation. This was achieved through the use of both global and targeted questioning and progressing to higher-order thinking questions. There were some lessons where the same students answered all the questions. In these instances, greater attention should be given to asking questions of all students and differentiating the questions according to their needs. Students should also be encouraged to ask questions.

ICT was effectively used to enhance student engagement and learning in a number of lessons. However, there were other lessons where learning would have been enhanced with more creative use of ICT. Teachers within the different subject departments should work together to source appropriate visuals, audio and video-clips that will support student learning and their enjoyment of the lesson.

The target language was used consistently by the teachers in some of the language lessons observed, while translation was a dominant methodology in others. The target language should be the language of instruction in all language lessons. Students should be facilitated to use the target language in every class through the use of active methodologies. More explicit attention to developing literacy and numeracy skills is also recommended in a number of lessons across subjects.

There was some variation in the quality of curricular plans. Very good schemes of work were noted in some subject areas, while in others the focus was on curriculum content rather than on learning outcomes and how they could be achieved. It is recommended that all schemes of work be articulated in terms of the learning outcomes for each topic to be studied and the proposed methodologies and assessment protocols to achieve them.

Revision which was appropriate for the time of year was the main focus of many lessons. Exemplary practice was noted where the revision lessons were adeptly segmented to include a review of prior learning followed by reflective student tasks and culminating in a plenary session discussing students' answers. This approach should be extended to all revision lessons, particularly those where revision was not an active learning experience.

An examination of student journals indicated that many students do not record homework and there was some evidence from both journals and copybooks to indicate that regular homework is not recorded in all subjects. All teachers should ensure that homework is assigned and recorded and that corrections incorporate formative feedback for the purpose of enabling students to assess and monitor their own progress.

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

#### ***3.1 Management***

There has been some good progress regarding the implementation of recommendations from previous evaluation relating to areas of management. The RSE policy has been revised and updated. There is now a core team for SPHE. The school has employed qualified physical education teachers. Some of the timetabling issues mentioned in previous reports have been resolved. Subject plans are in place and have evolved as part of collaboration between teachers. However, there is a need for further development in this area with a recommended common template to be introduced so that plans are cohesive and serve as working documents for teachers. It is further recommended that the TY programmes in some subject areas could be more explicit to reflect the student skills being developed during the year.

#### ***3.2 Learning and teaching***

Overall, there has been some progress noted in relation to the implementation of recommendations in relation to teaching and learning. Student autonomy and involvement were noted in some lessons and this is highly commended. There is further scope for development of this in some lessons however. There was some exemplary use of pair work and experiential learning in some cases. There is scope for the introduction of peer observation among staff members which would be extremely beneficial in promoting dialogue and discussion around effective methodologies for teaching and learning. The improved use of the target language in many language lessons was noted. However, students need to be facilitated more to use the target language according to their ability. There was some good use of ICT in some cases but this needs to be extended across the curriculum as the school continues to develop and progress its ICT development plan.

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

Coláiste Éanna has engaged very well with the school self-evaluation (SSE) process. A literacy and a numeracy plan and a school improvement plan are in place. There has been a

review and overview of TY in order to assess student participation and to help them evaluate whether they are reaching their own personal goals during the year. This is a worthwhile exercise and promotes responsibility among the students for their own learning and progress. Teachers and management have gathered and analysed large amounts of data for the purpose of evaluating progress and initiating improvement. SSE has been a learning process for the staff of Coláiste Éanna and there is a genuine commitment to school improvement. The school plan and its regular review, supports and underpins school improvement and the realisation of the stated goals and objectives. Capacity for further school improvement is at a high level.

*Published October 2016*



# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

## **Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board welcomes the Whole School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning report.

It is particularly pleased to note the high commendation of the Five Year School Plan 2013-2018, the acknowledgement of the high level of care for each student as embodied in the school's Anti-Bullying and Pastoral Care Programmes, the collaborative and cohesive nature of the Senior and Middle management teams, the commendable nature of the Ladder of Referral in the school's Code of Behaviour and the high quality of the teaching and learning observed. The Board is pleased that the work of our Parents Association is acknowledged. The Board is gratified by the comments on its own commitment and contribution to the school. The Board is delighted that the stated aim of the School Plan to 'Strive for Excellence' is mentioned several times in the Report as well as the school's commitment to the School Self-Evaluation process.

Furthermore, the Board is pleased to note the high commendation for the broad Extra-Curricular Activities programme offered to students and supported by the exceptional level of volunteerism by teachers.

The Board notes that the capacity for continuing school improvement is at a high level and the Board is committed to supporting such development.

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

Subject Planning meetings now incorporate continued discussion on the sharing of ideas around effective teaching and learning particularly in the area of active and participative learning.

A robust analysis of student attainment will also take place at future subject planning meetings.

All teachers are committed to sharing and revisiting stated learning outcomes and the use of differentiation in all lessons.

Other recommendations and suggestions contained in the report will be addressed over the coming school year.