

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

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

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Coláiste Pobail Bheantraí
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Seskin Bantry Co Cork
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	76090G

Date of Evaluation: 16-11-2016



WHAT IS A WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING?

Whole-School Evaluations – Management, Leadership and Learning report on the quality of teaching and learning and on the quality of management and leadership in a school. They affirm good practice and make 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 accepts the report as the final inspection report available for publication and wished to respond formally to the report. The board agrees that the response submitted will be included as an appendix to the published report. The board's response is submitted below.

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Date of inspection	16-11-2016
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with Board of Management• Meetings with principal and deputy principal• Meetings with key staff• Review of relevant documents• Student focus-group interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with parent representatives on the board of management• Analysis of parent, student and teacher questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of students' work• Interaction with students• Feedback to senior management team, board of management and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Coláiste Pobail Bheantraí is a co-educational, multi-denominational, post-primary school that was established in August 2011, following the amalgamation of Árd scoil Phobal Bheantraí and St Goban's College. The school has a current enrolment of 695 students and is managed under the co-trusteeship of the Diocese of Cork and Ross and Cork Education and Training Board (CETB). The school building and facilities are managed under a Public Private Partnership (PPP) agreement.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The board of management provides very high quality leadership and management to the school community.
- The principal and deputy principal are highly effective leaders of the school.
- The board, senior management and staff are actively engaged with the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle.
- Parents, teachers and students, through their responses to questionnaires provided as part of the evaluation, very strongly endorse the work of the school.
- Outcomes for students in certificate examinations are very positive.
- Student support, care and guidance structures are seamlessly integrated, and are of excellent quality.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment was either highly effective or effective in most lessons observed, while some areas for development were identified in a small number of lessons.
- A very significant culture of reflection and planning underpins the comprehensive educational provision offered to students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Arising from the identified highly effective teaching, learning and assessment approaches, school self-evaluation action-planning should now become the focus to further develop classroom practice.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

1.1. School ownership and management:

The board of management provides very high quality leadership and management to the school community. The board has overseen the very successful amalgamation process and the creation of a new school community guided by a mission statement that was developed by the whole staff.

It is clear that the journey towards the establishment of the school community of Coláiste Pobail Bheanntraí has engaged all stakeholders in creating a very high quality school and place of learning. This inclusive process has been led by the board and the principal and deputy principal, and has included all staff members. Parents, teachers and students, through their responses to questionnaires provided as part of this evaluation, very strongly endorse the work of the school.

The board is appropriately constituted, meets regularly, and protocols relating to its operation are established, and are very effective. Ongoing, very effective and inclusive policy development, ratification and review processes are in place and are overseen by the board. There is also an appropriate focus on actively fulfilling obligations in relation to Child Protection and anti-bullying in the context of the provision of comprehensive student support and care structures in the school.

The current board has identified a number of key development priorities including: the management of the introduction of the new Framework for Junior Cycle; preparation for the projected increases in

enrolment; the expansion of the curriculum; and the maintenance and upgrade of the school's extensive information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure.

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*.

A very active and engaged parent association is in place and is very supportive of the school. Communication with the wider parent body, and with the members of the parent association, is of very good quality and the recent activities of the parent association, in providing inputs on cyber bullying and issues relating to on-line safety, have been very positive and supportive engagements.

A representative, active, well-organised and very effective student council is also in place. The work of the council clearly reflects the school's emphasis on personal and social development, student leadership, and on the development of active and engaged citizens. The display of 'suggestion envelopes' in classrooms to gather student views and issues for the council is a very pro-active initiative. A role for the student council in co-researching, with teachers, developmental issues like subject-choice processes that are referenced in this report, could be considered as a further strategic enhancement of student voice in the school.

The very good quality school website acts as a clear window on the operation of the school, the range of activities undertaken, and the celebration of the achievements of students. This is also a very effective communication medium for the wider school community.

1.2. Effectiveness of leadership for learning

The principal and deputy principal provide very high quality leadership for the school. Both have defined yet complementary roles and work together as a highly effective leadership team. The development of an excellent school for all students, as underpinned by the mission statement, is a key principle of this leadership. The expression of this very effective leadership has involved the successful navigation of the amalgamation that has included the completion of the extensive school-building process, and the establishment of a very clear unity of purpose amongst all stakeholders of Coláiste Pobail Bheantraí. They have progressed the creation of a policy and planning framework that informs the operation of the school and have established key fundamental structures that provide for staff development and leadership of learning and teaching, student support and care, and an inclusive comprehensive curriculum.

The positive learning environment and atmosphere have been achieved through the fostering of very effective partnership and the communication of a shared vision for the school among the board, the staff and the wider school community. Detailed and very effective planning at whole-school level, in advance of the amalgamation, and since the establishment of Coláiste Pobail Bheantraí, has been central to creating the foundations for this very high quality school.

The middle-management team has a central role in the provision of the high-quality educational experience provided to students. The team is very effective and well-organised. It is very positive that this team has a consultative, organisational and leadership role in the school. The team has a weekly formal meeting at which both ongoing and developmental issues are discussed, agreed and actioned.

The creation of structures to provide an exemplary level of support for students' learning and wellbeing are a further key element of leadership at all levels in the school. The commitment of all involved in the operation of these supports points both to the excellence of the structures and to the solid foundations in place to ensure that they can be sustained.

These structures operate as three layers of support. A very effective care team is in place that provides high-level support and referrals for students with very specific needs. This team comprises the principal and deputy principal, the guidance counsellors and the chaplain. This team meets formally, on a weekly basis, with particular attention to confidentiality, referral and recordkeeping.

An equally effective student-support team provides a second layer of support. The monitoring of, and support for, the varying needs of all students, is the central focus of this team. The team comprises the principal, deputy principal, year heads, the SEN co-ordinator, the guidance counsellors and the chaplain.

A further layer of student support is provided by the teams who support students with special educational needs and for those within the special-needs unit (SNU). These include the SEN coordinator, staff assigned to the interim ASD unit, the team of special-needs assistants (SNAs) and the SNU team. These teams provide very high-quality support for students with special educational needs.

In addition, the chaplain, the school-completion programme personnel, and the altered-provision resource personnel, provide high-quality complementary support for students. The fact that all of these teams include the principal and deputy principal, the guidance counsellors and the chaplain, ensures a unity of purpose focused on the needs of the students.

Guidance provision in the school is of very high quality and is appropriately balanced between educational, vocational and personal support. It is very positive that whole-school guidance planning underpins Guidance, student support and care across the whole school.

The supports in place for students with SEN are also very effective in providing a range of supports for students' learning. Interventions include one-to-one and small-group withdrawal support, the deployment of the altered provision resource personnel, and an extensive engagement with team teaching. Currently, the team of teachers providing timetabled support is very large and, while a core team is in place, and notwithstanding the extent of the SEN support provided, senior management should over time work towards reducing the size of the team of teachers who provide support for students with special educational needs.

The supports provided by the SNU team, the levels of integration of the students engaged within this unit into mainstream curriculum, and the inclusive and supportive learning environment that has been created, all represent very good practice. The SNA team is a key element of the very high quality whole-school provision and practice in supporting students with special educational needs.

The school-completion programme provides a very well-organised and targeted series of interventions for a group of students at risk of poor attendance or poor engagement with school. The altered provision resource is also deployed very effectively to support a range of student needs. Both interventions are very effectively integrated into the wider student-support structures.

A comprehensive curriculum is provided, and is timetabled appropriately. A *sruth lán-Ghaeilge* (Irishmedium stream) is provided in junior cycle to facilitate students to progress from primary school through the medium of Irish. All junior cycle students are offered a core curriculum and a range of optional subjects. Students choose their optional subjects following enrolment. On completion of this choice process, it is clear that students are facilitated to change subjects to the greatest extent

possible, within the confines of timetabling and class size. A review of subject-choice following enrolment is recommended, however, and the provision of some level of subject sampling should be considered. A review of gender uptake in some subjects, with a particular focus on the risk of gender stereotyping, could be used as an entry point to this review. The views of students in senior cycle could also become part of this suggested review.

The implementation of the revised Framework for Junior Cycle, in relation to subject specifications, engagement with continuing professional development, and with the professional time provided, is progressing appropriately, as are the arrangements for classroom-based assessments, and student learning and assessment review meetings.

The subdivision of some class groups and concurrent timetabling to maximise access to and uptake of higher level in subjects is very positive. Similarly, the level of engagement with and the timetabling of team teaching is a further high-quality enhancement of provision to support students' learning.

On transfer to senior cycle, students are offered access to an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the established Leaving Certificate. The TY programme is very well-organised, and is of high-quality. The appropriate TY programme layers, including subject sampling and work experience are in place. A very well-organised and appropriately timetabled LCVP programme is also provided. Guidance and link modules are appropriately timetabled within this programme. It is also very positive that the provision of the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme is under regular review based on the needs of the student cohort.

A comprehensive range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities and involvements are provided and facilitated for students. These activities are clearly a very significant aspect of the student experience in the school and are celebrated within the daily life of the school, on school displays, in the prospectus, and on the school website. The voluntary commitment and involvement of staff members in this provision is particularly acknowledged in this report.

1.3. Management of facilities

The facilities provided for the whole-school community, arising from the building and completion of a new school campus on a green field site, are of very high quality. The building is bright, spacious and its design contributes significantly to the positive interactions and atmosphere evident within the school. The maintenance provided by the management company is of a very high standard, and communication and engagement between school management and the on-site PPP facilities manager are reported to be very positive.

Appropriate attention is paid to health and safety issues through the joint work of an in-school safety committee, senior management, Cork ETB and the board. Regular subject-specific and whole-school safety audits, in addition to fire-drills, are undertaken.

2. QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

2.1. The quality of learning and teaching

Thirty-one lessons, including a number of double-period lessons, were observed in the course of this evaluation. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment was either highly effective or effective in most of these lessons, while some areas for development were identified in a small number of lessons.

A very positive classroom atmosphere, where students were very well behaved, and could be active, assertive and confident in their engagement with learning, was evident. Classrooms provided a very positive visual and print-rich learning environment for students to engage with the planned learning in these lessons.

Classroom practice, that was evaluated as highly effective and effective in lessons, was grounded in coherent lesson planning and preparation that focused on a clear learning intention. This was shared and discussed with students. The lesson and the learning progressed in these lessons based on tasks set for students and through engagement with well-organised and seamless collaborative-learning strategies. The students' ease in engagement in pair work and group work, the clear linkage of these activities to the planned learning, and the quality of the feedback and outcomes of these strategies, illustrated the centrality and routine nature of such activities in these lessons.

Questioning strategies that were planned for, differentiated, and linked to learning and assessment, were used very effectively. These successfully engaged students and were very effective in both assessing and progressing learning in these lessons. The range of methods and strategies that actively engaged students in the planned learning, focused on student-centred and individualised strategies that were then tailored to the needs of the students in the particular class group and subject context. There was clear attention to the development of skills for independent and scaffolded learning and appropriate attention to the development of students' literacy and numeracy.

Assessment strategies were integrated in some lessons in the form of a review of the planned learning through teacher questioning, and through self-assessment and peer assessment, based on the learning intention. The provision of homework and study tasks was used to extend student learning and to form a link to the next lesson. It was very positive to observe some very good use of formative written commentary on students' written work, and on completed homework tasks, in some lessons.

Team teaching was observed in some lessons and was clearly planned as a lead-teacher and supportteacher strategy. The deployment of this valuable resource was clearly routine for the students in the lessons observed, and a very significant level of individual attention was provided to students by the support teacher, as the lesson progressed. The inclusive, yet targeted nature of this support, was observed to be very effective in supporting the learning of all students in these lessons.

Areas for development that were discussed with individual teachers, in a small number of lessons, centred on the need to develop, and to differentiate, the learning intentions towards the articulation of specific areas of learning to be achieved and / or skills to be practised or developed. The outline of success criteria that would facilitate both review and assessment of the levels of learning, or competence in the skills appropriate to the particular subject, should also be considered. The need to focus on questioning strategies in relation to distribution, differentiation and wait time, should be

reflected upon. The balance between teacher inputs and the responsibility placed on students to engage in lessons and learning activities is a further area for development.

Arising from the evaluation of the lessons observed, it was advised that teachers and subject departments should place renewed attention on the level of recording of homework by students in their journals, and consider policy and practice in relation to the provision of formative written feedback on students' work. The articulation of specific learning outcomes in subject planning, should also be considered.

To further build upon identified highly effective teaching, learning and assessment approaches, school self-evaluation action-planning should now become the focus to further develop classroom practice. Entry points to these processes should include: further reflection on the team-teaching models as a well-established practice in the school; further exploration of results in certificate examinations and the identification of strategies to address patterns and trends; further development of peer assessment to enhance student engagement and responsibility in lessons; and the exploration of the potential to share good classroom practices through peer observation by teachers.

It is recommended that time-bound action planning be used, over time, to engage with these and other aspects of classroom practice. The outcomes of these engagements should then be shared across subject departments and with the whole staff.

It is clear that all teachers have high expectations for their students in the very positive school and classroom learning environments observed. The whole-school emphasis on the uptake of higher-level in subjects that challenges students to achieve to the best of their abilities, is evident in classroom practice. Resultant outcomes for students in certificate examinations are very positive.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

3.1. Management

Due to the relatively short time period since the completion of the amalgamation, a limited number of subject inspections have been completed. Recommendations arising from these evaluations have been considered by the board, in conjunction with the principal and deputy principal. Recommendations for management, relating to timetabling in junior cycle geography and relating to the deployment of teachers to team teaching, have been implemented.

3.2. Learning and teaching

Recommendations relating to oral assessment in French and outcomes-based planning in Science subjects have also been implemented.

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

A very significant culture of reflection and planning underpins the comprehensive educational provision offered to students. The amalgamation process, and the building of a new school community, has clearly involved active, purposeful and very effective school self-evaluation and reflection. The engagement of all stakeholders, but particularly the staff of both schools, from the outset, is a clear strength of this fundamental school-improvement process. In parallel, mandated school-self-evaluation, involving school-improvement plans in literacy and in numeracy, has been developed and implemented. A further school-improvement plan in the areas of assessment and homework is under way.

The school community has clear and established capacity to engage in reflective and effective school self-evaluation towards ongoing improvement. The recommendations of this report, at this time in the growth and development of this highly effective school, should now be addressed using this clearly established capacity.

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 the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	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.	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	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 <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	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.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	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.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	Weak applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated wholeschool 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 of Management welcomes this report that confirms the work of school management and staff.

The process assisted greatly in the school's own self-evaluation.