

**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>	Saint Vincent's C.B.S. Glasnevin
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Glasnevin Dublin 11
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	60400F

**Date of Evaluation: 11-10-2017**



## **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 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

Date of inspection	11 October 2017
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting with board of management</li><li>• Meetings with principal and deputy principal</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

Saint Vincent's C.B.S, Glasnevin is a voluntary Catholic secondary school under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST). The school has a current enrolment of 375 boys and has an open enrolment policy. The school participates in the Delivering Equality in Schools (DEIS) initiative. The Junior Certificate, Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP), the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and Leaving Certificate programmes are provided. Transition year (TY) is an optional programme for students.

### Summary of main findings and recommendations:

#### Findings

- The overall quality of school management and leadership is very good; aspects of the school's consultation processes, and DEIS and school self-evaluation (SSE) planning need further development.
- Very effective care and learning support systems are in place; some students who have English as an additional language (EAL) were observed to require further language support.
- The holders of posts of responsibility carry out their duties effectively and there is an exceptionally high level of volunteerism amongst teachers in supporting the running of the school; however, it is timely for a review of the schedule of posts to be carried out.
- The principal and deputy principal run the school very effectively and have overseen significant improvement recently.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning was very good, but there is further scope for teachers to share good practice.
- The school demonstrates very good capacity for improvement through its reflective approach and openness to change.

#### Recommendations

- The board of management should initiate a new phase of strategic planning and this work should be informed by the views and insights of students, parents, teachers and school management.
- A review of the schedule of posts of responsibility, informed by an audit of the current and emerging needs and resources, should be carried out.
- Teachers should share good teaching practices through collaborative lesson planning and peer observation.

- Appropriate support for students with EAL should be put in place, informed by assessment of their language proficiency.
- The DEIS and SSE processes should be streamlined into one school planning and evaluation process.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

The overall quality of school management and leadership is very good; aspects of the school's consultation and planning processes need further development.

#### **Leading learning and teaching**

Highly effective leadership for learning is evident in the systematic approach taken since a previous whole-school evaluation (WSE), in 2008, to bring about improvement. Continuing professional development (CPD) is accessed from within the teaching staff and outside agencies. The widely used teaching approaches demonstrate an enthusiasm for innovation in improving students' learning. SSE and DEIS planning supports teaching and learning in a very meaningful manner.

A good range of subjects and programmes is offered. Materials Technology Wood has been introduced recently to join Art as one of the practical subjects available. Participation in the Emmanuel project provides valuable access to extra-curricular Music. The availability of an extensive range of extracurricular and co-curricular activities provides valuable learning opportunities for students and enriches the sense of belonging in the school.

There is a student-centred approach to subject choice. A short sampling programme is provided for first years, and senior-cycle students are given an open choice of subjects. However, subject choice is limited by the size of the cohort and the availability of specialist resources. Responses to student questionnaires suggest that there is scope for the provision of further advice around subject choice.

School management supports engagement with CPD strategically chosen to meet the current and upcoming needs of the school. Capacity is developed through teachers, who attend CPD, providing inputs to their colleagues. To facilitate further sharing of practice, teachers should engage formally in collaborative lesson planning and peer observation. To oversee this process, the senior management team should meet teachers once a year to discuss their personal professional learning plan.

Lessons of fifty-eight minutes' duration were introduced recently throughout the timetable. This change was widely viewed as successful in terms of teaching and learning. However, there is no specific time allocated for curricular planning currently. Senior management should oversee the appropriate use of planning time for the new junior cycle, the conducting of SLAR meetings, and co-operative teaching, for example.

Students with special educational needs (SEN) are very well supported through differentiated teaching, one-to-one and small group withdrawal, and in-class support. A wide range of interventions is in place to meet students' identified needs. There is excellent communication between the SEN team and mainstream teachers. However, better planning is required to meet the needs of a small minority of students with more complex needs. It is good that the school recognises issues with providing SEN support for students with exemptions from various subjects. The school takes a reflective approach and reviews and makes changes to this provision as required.

It was evident that support for students with EAL, particularly for those who are orally proficient but struggle with higher-order language tasks, requires attention. An appropriate programme of support, informed by assessment of students' language proficiency, should be put in place.

LCA is provided as a valuable alternative for a specific cohort of students. However, there is scope to review the programme in light of the longer lessons and the extended curricular choices available. An internal evaluation of the LCA programme should be carried out in preparation for planning for next year's provision.

There is an over-emphasis on LCA students' completing work experience with family members who work for themselves or run small businesses; this practice does not optimise the learning value of work experience. It is recognised that TY and LCA work experience have been suggested for review under the progression strand of DEIS planning; this is a worthwhile development which should be pursued.

The quality of care provided for students is very good. The relationships between students and their teachers were observed to be warm and affirming. The care team meets weekly to assess students' care needs. An efficient system is in place to inform teachers of students' needs as they arise and of supporting appropriate responses. A comprehensive transfer programme helps first-year students settle in. The school maintains very good links with feeder primary schools and parents. The guidance department provides very good support for students.

DEIS supports for students are very good. The School Completion Programme provides an attendance officer, lunch, and a breakfast club. Evening study is also provided and there is a homework club with teacher assistance available. While any student can avail of these services, particular attention is given to students who have been identified as requiring specific support.

The home-school-community-liaison co-ordinator provides essential support to those students who are at most risk of non-attendance and leaving school early. Teachers provide additional support to students preparing for examinations.

### **Managing the organisation**

The members of the board of management bring a wealth of experience and expertise to their work and are highly committed to the school. Communication between the board and its nominating bodies is very good with an agreed report issued at the end of each board meeting.

The principal and deputy principal are very effective in managing the day-to-day running of the school. They demonstrated a very good working relationship during the evaluation. Through strong leadership, student experience and learning have seen significant improvement over the last number of years. To ensure that the school continues to develop, the current culture of innovation and reflection should be encouraged through further collaboration and consultation.

Leadership is distributed effectively through consultation committees in a wide range of development areas. Students contribute to decision making through the student council, although there is scope for an expansion of its role. There was evidence that further consultation would enhance the leadership profile of some staff members. Additionally, opportunities for parents to engage in the school's consultation processes is limited currently by the absence of a parents' association. The next strategic plan should explore the full leadership potential of staff and students in order to facilitate further distribution of leadership. The possibility of re-instating a parents' association should also be explored.

A behaviour-for-learning teacher provides high-quality support for students. In keeping with good practice, the principal and deputy principal are highly visible on the corridors supporting good behaviour. However, the teachers and students in their focus group meetings and questionnaire

responses highlighted a need to ensure that the code of behaviour is implemented in a fair, consistent and transparent manner. Students also emphasised a need for a more positive approach. The school is reviewing the code of behaviour currently; this is a welcome development.

A form-teacher system provides very good support for students' care and good behaviour. Dedicated time is used effectively to deliver important aspect of the school's wellbeing programme. While there is no year-head system in place, form teachers have appropriate autonomy for their leadership role in managing students.

### **Leading school development**

The board of management has engaged very effectively with the strategic planning process. Their work is improvement focused and is exemplified by the recently expanded curriculum and the management of a new extension. It is opportune now to begin work on a new phase of strategic planning. This work should be underpinned by the five elements of the ERST charter and informed by the views and insights of students, parents, teachers and school management.

The last strategic plan focused on infrastructural change and recommendations made in previous evaluations and resulted in significant improvement. The implementation of the plan required flexibility, and the taking on of additional duties and leadership roles in a voluntary capacity. It is recommended that the next phase of school planning include a focus on maintaining innovation in teaching and learning, optimising the learning potential of the physical environment, and continuing to provide a positive student experience.

### **Developing leadership capacity**

There is one assistant principal, one programme coordinator, and two special duties teachers post-holders currently. Their work supports the school well. There is also an exceptionally high level of volunteerism amongst teachers in supporting the effective running of the school.

The schedule of posts has not been reviewed recently. Therefore, a post review, informed by an audit of the current and emerging needs and resources, should be carried out. This review should be mindful of the strengths and talents of staff members as well as the contribution that individuals have made and can make to the running of the school. Additionally, some of the posts are not sufficiently substantial; the review should ensure that this issue is addressed. The decisions regarding the assignment of leadership roles should be transparent.

Students are given very good leadership opportunities through the student council and their roles as mentors for first-year students. They also develop leadership through their participation in sport. Additionally, student representatives address the board of management. However, there is scope to further the leadership potential of students through consulting them on a wider range of issues.

Confirmation was provided that the board of management has formally adopted the *child protection procedures for primary and post-primary schools* without modification. However, the school is not compliant with the requirements of the *child protection procedures for primary and post-primary schools*. A review of the minutes of board meetings shows that child protection is mentioned only when there is an issue to discuss. A child protection report should be a standard agenda item.

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

The quality of teaching and learning observed was very good overall. There was a wide range of stimulating activities to capture students' interest and engagement. Some lessons, although they had very good aspects, would have benefited from better planning for the longer lesson periods.

## **Learner outcomes and experiences**

Learner experience was of a very high quality overall, with some exemplary levels of engagement noted. Students listened attentively to their teachers and each other, worked in groups and independently, and were given plenty of opportunities to be active. In a majority of lessons, students engaged purposefully in a combination of the following: problem solving, thinking, explaining reasoning, investigating and discovering. A significant minority of students' participation waned towards the end of some lessons and a greater variety of tasks was needed to keep them active for the lesson's duration. Strategies to optimise students' active participation should be planned for all lessons.

Learning was well monitored through questioning or observation as students completed tasks. Students' contributions indicated very good understanding and achievement of the intended learning outcomes. In most lessons, new and prior learning were linked well and this practice was enhanced by very good initial questioning strategies. In some lessons, learning was not consolidated sufficiently. It is recommended that clear teacher instruction around the key learning intentions be delivered at appropriate times during lessons, to consolidate all learning.

In some lessons, students engaged in discussion and debate and teachers allowed plenty of time for this process. Additionally, students' observations and ideas, as they worked through activities, were used to deepen learning. In other lessons, the pace was too fast to enable all students to reach a deep level of understanding before moving on. There was a need in these lessons for students to articulate their learning and for teachers to assess the quality of learning more comprehensively. It is recommended that students be given sufficient time to explore ideas in greater depth in all lessons.

This year saw significant improvement in the school's physical infrastructure. A new extension was completed and many aspects of the existing facilities were upgraded. The majority of teachers have been pro-active in creating stimulating learning environments in their classrooms. It would be worth examining the impact of the physical environment and how it can be used to support positive learner experience.

Student outcomes in the certificate examinations are monitored by subject departments and senior management and show good levels of achievement. DEIS targets in the area of attainment focus on encouraging students to reach their potential. In keeping with good practice, the mixed-ability arrangement in the junior cycle allows students to develop as learners before decisions about subject levels are made.

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

There was a very good balance in most lessons between clear and concise teacher instruction, group or practical activities, and opportunities for student discussion. In some lessons, there was an over-reliance on high-quality teacher instruction and a better balance was required. A good variety of learning activities should be facilitated in all lessons.

In most lessons, learning was well differentiated to suit all ability levels through the use of methodologies that allowed students to work at their own pace. Assistance was also given to students experiencing difficulties. Appropriate levels of challenge were provided for higher-achieving students. Teachers demonstrated a very good awareness of the needs of SEN students and used a range of valuable strategies for meeting those needs. These very good practices should be extended to all lessons.

The quality of individual teacher planning and preparation was very good in most lessons and, at times, teachers were very creative in their approach. However, in some instances, there was an over-emphasis on examination preparation as a rationale for learning. All teaching should focus on

facilitating meaningful engagement with the key learning, on understanding concepts and developing skills.

In most lessons, a variety of literacy strategies was used effectively to help students understand subject-specific terminology. There was scope in some lessons for keywords to be highlighted and their meaning used more effectively to explain concepts. In language lessons, there was excellent use of the target language by students and teachers.

Information and communication technology (ICT), in the form of videos clips, electronic presentations, and individual student work in the computer room was used very effectively to support learning. ICT is the current focus of the school's SSE process and the ICT infrastructure has been upgraded recently. This improvement, and the CPD provided, has contributed positively to the quality of ICT used in lessons.

The quality of subject planning and programme planning is good overall. Some subject plans are maintained in hard copy and others are available in electronic form. It is recommended that a common electronic system be adopted in order to facilitate sharing of resources and methodologies.

The TY plan provides a good outline of the programme. The content of some subject plans is overly focused on syllabus material and the learning value of some of the outside activities needs to be clarified. The TY plan should be reviewed to ensure that all classroom and outside activities focus on the development of key skills. The evaluation and reflection section of the plan needs to be strengthened also so that future TY programmes benefit fully from the views of students and parents.

Aspects of the LCA programme need better planning. LCA students demonstrated difficulty in maintaining good learning for the full duration of the 58-minute periods, despite teachers providing a very good variety of relevant activities. Planning specifically for this group should focus on effective strategies to address this issue.

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

#### **Leadership and Management**

School management has made very good progress in implementing previous recommendations. The WSE in 2008 recommended that CPD be provided more widely to teachers. This has been achieved. However, there is additional scope for CPD to make further use of the excellent level of expertise that exists in the school by further facilitating teacher-driven collaborative planning practices.

The school has engaged very effectively in strategic planning. Wider consultation and reporting to stakeholders were recommended in the past. The board now communicates effectively through issuing an agreed report. Improvements in the level of consultation with staff include extensive participation of teachers on various planning groups and committees.

#### **Teaching and Learning**

Previous evaluations recommended a stronger focus on literacy and the use of the target language in language lessons. These recommendations have been implemented.

Most previous inspections highlighted the need to share the learning intentions with students at the start of lessons and to assess their achievement. This practice was evident in all lessons observed in this evaluation.

An over-reliance on teacher-led activities was identified as an issue in previous reports. All eighteen lessons observed in this inspection comprised a variety of activities, some of which were very creative and stimulating for students. Teaching was enthusiastic, and it was evident that teachers had put significant effort into planning their lessons. The student-centred approaches, that were a feature of most lessons, also served to differentiate learning well.

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

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

The SSE and DEIS planning processes support improvement very effectively. However, the DEIS and SSE teams carry out very similar functions separately. Over time both teams should streamline their work into one school-improvement process.

The DEIS plan outlines a range of interventions to improve outcomes in the various DEIS themes: for all students, those requiring some intervention, and those with more acute needs. The SSE process lays out similar plans for literacy, numeracy, and e-learning. However, in the case of both DEIS and SSE, the strategies or interventions are listed in an uncategorised way making it difficult to communicate levels of need and teacher responsibility. A format should be adopted which places interventions into clear categories relative to need and outlines teacher responsibility accordingly.

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

The school demonstrates very good capacity for improvement through its reflective approach and openness to change. The established strategic planning processes, the school's commitment to SSE and DEIS, and a continuing focus on optimising the quality of learner experiences for students contribute to the school's capacity to adapt and continue to meet evolving students' needs.

## **Appendix**

School response to the report

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

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

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**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 acknowledges the positive nature of the report and looks forward to the implementation of the constructive recommendations contained within it.

## 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;