

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	St Conleth's College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	28 Clyde Road Ballsbridge Dublin 4
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	60590N

Date of Evaluation: 07-02-2019



**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 management team meetings, attended by the unitary manager and the principal, record a child protection oversight report that meet the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2017.
6. The unitary manager 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 did not meet the requirements in relation to 7 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken.

WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

Dates of inspection	07-02-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with unitary manager and with two members of board of directors• 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 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, teachers and unitary manager with two members of board of directors

School context

St Conleth's College, Dublin, is a co-educational, fee-charging Catholic school which became co-educational for junior cycle in addition to senior cycle co-education in 2016. There is a current enrolment of 280 male and female students. The school is a charitable education trust with a board of directors and has a unitary management structure in place rather than a board of management as espoused in the Education Act (1998). In addition to the Junior Cycle programme, the school offers the established Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and a compulsory Transition Year (TY) programme.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of leadership and management is good; the unitary manager and the principal promote an inclusive, caring school community and a culture of continuous improvement for staff and students.
- Some areas for significant development were noted; establishing collective teacher voice, delegation of responsibilities, sharing of expertise and strategic planning.
- The quality of care for students is very good overall. Dedicated teachers demonstrate very high levels of commitment to the care and wellbeing of students.
- Curriculum provision is good overall. Senior management ensures that curriculum provision is generally broad and balanced, endeavours to meet student needs and provides a variety of learning opportunities.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was very good with some instances of exemplary practice; active teaching methodologies and improved assessment practices are areas for development.
- The effective implementation of some recommendations made in previous inspection reports is good; there has been limited progress with other recommendations. The level of engagement by the school in the SSE process is good overall. The school's capacity for improvement is good.

Recommendations

- In light of the school's atypical management structures and in the principle of partnership as espoused in the Education Act (1998), a formal means of establishing and considering the collective teacher voice on school matters should be developed.

- In the context of supporting leadership of teaching and learning, further key responsibilities for middle leadership within the school should be clearly defined and assigned and the senior management team's shared and delegated responsibilities should be clearly outlined in the school plan.
- School management should provide further opportunities for teachers to share expertise and to further promote teacher collaborative practices at whole school level which will benefit the whole school community.
- A strategic plan should be developed outlining school priorities identified by the whole school community. Areas for attention include development of leadership capacity among staff and students, systematic policy development and review, and development of leadership of learning as part of the Junior Cycle Framework and school self-evaluation (SSE).
- Teachers should plan for active student learning methodologies in the classroom that enable students to reflect on their progress and to have an increased awareness of how to improve their work through enhanced assessment practices.
- In order to be fully compliant with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017, the school should make full provision for Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) and fully document this provision.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leading learning and teaching

The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The unitary manager and senior management team promote an inclusive and caring school community and a culture of continuous improvement for staff and students. Teachers collaborate and share their expertise. Purposeful teacher continuing professional development (CPD) is supported by school management and availed of by teachers. In the context of internal and external changes which include the restructuring of middle leadership and the implementation of the Junior Cycle Framework, further opportunities should be provided for teachers to share expertise. Further promotion of teacher collaborative practices at whole school level will benefit the whole school community.

Curriculum provision is good overall, is generally broad and balanced, endeavours to meet students' needs and provides a variety of learning opportunities. Student uptake of higher level and attainment in certificate examinations is very good overall. Some aspects of timetabling and curriculum planning and provision require review. Improved timetabling arrangements and provision for Physical Education at senior cycle should be prioritised. RSE provision in accordance with Circulars 27/2008, 23/2010, 37/2010 should be available to all students. The TY programme provides varied educational opportunities for students. The LCVP programme has a low uptake.

The quality of care for students is very good overall. Dedicated teachers show very high levels of commitment to student care and wellbeing. There is very good timetabled provision for a Wellbeing programme at Junior Cycle. Well planned and implemented wellbeing lessons in first and second year support students. The code of behaviour promotes a culture of positive discipline.

Student support structures are very well planned, organised and implemented. The student support team meets weekly to identify appropriate interventions required for particular students. The form teacher structure which allows for daily contact with class groups is working very successfully for

students and teachers. Students' holistic education is developed through a range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and students' achievements and endeavours are acknowledged and celebrated.

Guidance is provided at junior and senior cycle, but is only timetabled for sixth year students. The whole-school guidance plan takes account of recent curricular changes and outlines guidance provision to each year group. School management should consider enhanced guidance provision in consultation with teachers and the guidance department. Information is provided to students and parents on subject choices, but the responses from the questionnaires indicate some concerns on this matter. Counselling is utilised to support students who may be vulnerable.

The school aims to meet the varied needs of students of all abilities. The National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) Continuum of Support is used to guide and support students at all levels. Mainstream teachers have good access to information on the needs of particular students. The special education needs (SEN) co-ordinator chairs the weekly student support team meeting. SEN provision is organised by withdrawal from mainstream lessons in small groups and individual withdrawal. Co-operative teaching to provide support for students should be explored to enhance inclusive practice. The learning support team works effectively with the student support team, form teachers, subject teachers, parents and school management to support students with identified learning needs.

The senior management team actively supports school improvement by promoting a learning culture, including implementing effective systems for sharing information. In the context of supporting leadership of teaching and learning, further key responsibilities for middle leadership within the school should be clearly defined and assigned and the senior management team's shared and delegated responsibilities should be clearly outlined in the school plan.

Ongoing planning for integrating digital technology into teaching and learning is very good. The full implementation of the e-learning plan should be prioritised and provision of a shared digital platform would further support collaborative practice.

Managing the organisation

The school is a charitable education trust with a board of directors and has a unitary management structure in place rather than a board of management. The board of directors oversees and plans for the school's infrastructural and monetary requirements. The board of directors is regularly updated on school matters by the unitary manager and principal and some teaching staff are invited to update the board on prioritised educational developments including SSE. The unitary manager and senior management team create and maintain a climate of security, wellbeing and inclusivity for students. The unitary manager has a consistent presence in the school and has ongoing contact with staff and students. The unitary manager is kept well informed on school business through the principal's report at the weekly senior management meetings. The unitary manager is very supportive of actions taken by senior management which are in the best interests of all students.

The principal and deputy principal manage the school's human resources well overall. To strengthen collaborative review within the school, the principal should meet teachers annually to discuss their work and delegated responsibilities. Considerable time is allocated at staff meetings to discuss management of students. In light of the school's atypical management structures and in keeping with the principle of partnership, as espoused in the Education Act (1998), a formal means of establishing and considering the collective teacher voice on school matters should be developed. Posts of responsibilities generally meet school needs. School management and teachers should

further review the leadership roles of all posts so that they promote leadership of learning in line with Circular 3/2018 and 'Looking at Our School, 2016'.

The principal is aware of the school's changing and emerging needs, for example the integration of girls into all year groups and the implementation of the Junior Cycle Framework. The principal enables staff to take key responsibilities and successfully delegates some responsibilities. Key middle leadership roles include SSE, communication, pastoral care, special educational needs and awards. The deputy principal effectively supports the principal on an ongoing basis, carries out many important duties and liaises with teachers, form teachers, co-ordinators and parents. School management maintains the school buildings and grounds to a very good standard.

Classrooms and specialist rooms are very well maintained and generally provide good physical learning environments, although circulation space is a problem in some rooms. Classroom layout and seating should be discussed in the context of optimising the learning environment.

Leading school development

The trustees, unitary manager, board of directors and principal are proactive in maintaining the long-established mission for the school, based on providing a sense of care, respect and responsibility in an environment where teaching and learning can take place in a spirit of co-operation.

The school plan covers management structures, curricular provision, student supports, some current policies and a school improvement section. Improvements in the permanent and developmental sections of the plan are advised in the interests of improved strategic planning and policy development. School management has identified some areas for school improvement and development including post review, support for CPD and new curricular programmes, improvement of facilities, managing the integration of girls into the school, raising the school profile and development of the school data sharing system.

A strategic plan should be developed outlining school priorities identified by the whole school community. Areas for attention include development of leadership capacity among staff and students, policy development and review including dates for ratification and review and development of leadership of learning as part of the Junior Cycle Framework and SSE.

TY subject plans are well developed and use a common template, but the overall TY strategic plan requires development and improvement. A small core team to aid the co-ordinator in focusing this development is recommended.

School leaders use the SSE process with increasing effectiveness as a means of managing change and supporting curricular programmes, including the Junior Cycle Framework. Those leading SSE are working to ensure increased awareness by management and staff of SSE priorities and that improvement plans are put into action on a whole-school basis. The current school improvement plan (SIP) focuses on numeracy, literacy, assessment for learning and the key student skill of managing myself. Resulting from school surveys, feedback from parents, teachers and students is reported to indicate improvement in key areas of literacy and numeracy. It is recommended that the SIP should place added focus on classroom practice and SSE targets should be prominently integrated into subject plans.

The unitary manager and principal value and support good relationships and communication with parents as a means of supporting student learning and wellbeing. The parents' association is actively involved in supporting the school. While parents feel happy with the school overall, questionnaire

responses indicate some concerns regarding the school regularly seeking their views and being informed of the details of the school's RSE policy. School management and other leaders in the school should work towards investigating these concerns and establishing better communication where necessary. The principal and other school leaders are building good relationships with other schools and the wider community.

Developing leadership capacity

Those in middle leadership and other teachers have availed of professional development and training. Senior management should also avail of relevant upskilling on an ongoing basis. Completed and planned professional development should form part of the school plan.

New members of staff are very well supported in settling into the school and are made aware of school policies and procedures by teachers and school management. The school facilitates Professional Masters of Education student placements and these students are supported in development of their teaching by co-operating teachers. Newly qualified teachers are also well supported in this regard.

Form teachers communicate with parents as necessary and effectively oversee the welfare and progress of students. They are very well supported at whole-school level by school management, the guidance department, the SEN department and programme co-ordinators.

Opportunities are provided for students to embrace leadership roles such as through the student council and mentoring programmes. Senior students are involved in the buddy system programme and act as mentors to first-year students. School management and teachers value students' views and support students' involvement in the operation of the school. Student questionnaires and interactions with students recognise that they are proud to be in this school, are getting on well with their school work and teaching is good in the school, but also point to need for greater say in how things are done in the school and knowledge of RSE. These areas merit further attention.

2. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Twenty lessons, including three double lessons, were observed, covering core, optional, practical and non-examination subjects, and all years except TY. Teaching was consistently effective and competent and the quality of learning was very good overall.

Learner outcomes and experiences

The quality of learning was very good overall. Students were engaged, attentive, and responsive in lessons.

Students worked productively in all lessons, both individually and in pairs or groups. Students showed a willingness and ability to work co-operatively, and to do so productively and purposefully. This is worth using to the full, as it supports the development of key skills.

Highly effective practice in the lessons observed was characterised by the involvement of students in purposeful inquiry-based and discovery learning. Students' eagerness to investigate the how and the why underlying the particular topic was very clear in these instances. This type of learner experience was not confined to the obvious practical subjects but was noted in a wide range of curriculum areas.

Students were also willing to take the opportunities offered to make presentations that displayed their knowledge and understanding, including competence in languages and in the application of practical skills.

Students showed responsibility for their own learning in many instances, for example through asking good questions, making their own notes, and maintaining written work carefully.

As well as developing and extending the kind of opportunities for rich student learning described above, some other areas outlined below merit further reflection and development in order to build on the strengths observed in the student cohort.

Student voice, especially in the context of the school's commitment to enhancing students' wellbeing, is an area worthy of specific focus when considering learner outcomes and experiences. In the lessons observed, students were generally articulate and confident, and made some very perceptive and well-informed contributions. However, some students tended to be very vocal, while others were quite silent. Since all students need opportunities to develop their oral communication skills, it is worth considering how best to provide these opportunities, and how to engage students in them, in the inclusive classroom.

Students for the most part were highly motivated and focused on achieving well. This is a very valuable asset, which should be optimised. In this context, it is worth further developing students' capacity to extend and evaluate their own learning, through building their awareness of success criteria and of meaningful self-assessment and peer assessment. Developing a deeper understanding of the concept and application of success criteria is especially worthy of focus, as it will provide students with a solid base for the cumulative development of knowledge and skills from first to sixth year.

Teachers' individual and collective practice

Teaching was consistently effective and competent. Highly effective practice was observed in many lessons, and exemplary practice in some. Where possible improvements in practice were identified, teachers were very open to adopting them. Teachers consistently demonstrated knowledge of their subjects and their students.

Lessons were very well prepared, and the intended learning was clear, although not always explicitly stated. In many lessons, the purpose and direction of the intended learning was made clear in the way that activities were sequenced and explained. In a few instances, a clearer roadmap of the lesson would have been of benefit to students. It is always worth ensuring that the purpose and product of any learning activity is clearly understood, not least because this increases students' sense of ownership and involvement.

In the context of the new Junior Cycle programme, teachers should clearly distinguish between learning outcomes, which are stated in each specification as the long-term learning goals, and the learning intentions, which are devised by the teacher and which identify the learning to be achieved in a lesson or series of lessons. Teachers can provide these learning intentions to students, using their own professional judgement regarding level of detail and explicitness required.

Highly effective and at times exemplary practice was noted where teachers provided very well-structured opportunities for students to lead their own learning, through activities such as predicting, explaining, and proposing solutions. Similarly, high-quality practice involved well-planned activities enabling students to make observations and draw conclusions for themselves, with the teacher avoiding, or delaying, direct instruction. A third student-centred approach involved the teacher requiring or inviting students to articulate their learning in a way that helped them to process and embed it.

To build on and extend the good practices observed, teachers should focus on approaches that require students to practise and improve their skills – both key skills and subject-related skills. In this regard, some very straightforward principles can be applied across the board, for example, the principle that students should automatically make their own notes to capture teacher demonstration or points arising from class discussion. It is always useful to provide students with the rationale for taking such approaches, so as to optimise student engagement.

Classrooms overall reflected positive aspects of agreed practice. They were generally print-rich and stimulating, with displays of useful materials and resources, including displays of ‘samples of quality work’, a very worthwhile learning resource.

The physical space in some classrooms is limited or may not be conducive to student interaction or movement. Given these restraints, it is worth considering how best to use the space available.

Subject department planning is generally adequate and would benefit from a more strategic and qualitative approach. Some very clear statements of ‘aims and objectives’ and some very worthwhile reflective practice was noted in a minority of plans. However, development is required in strategic planning for subjects as a continuum of knowledge and skills. This is crucial not only in Junior Cycle but also into TY and the Leaving Certificate.

Best practice was noted where subject departments have adapted JCT resource materials in planning for their subject as part of the new Junior Cycle Framework, and have taken account of whole-school context factors, for example SSE priorities.

To extend the reflective practice noted in a minority of subject plans, teachers should engage in contextual reflection on examination results as part of subject planning.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

Leadership and Management

Some recommendations have been effectively implemented and there was limited progress with others. There are positive changes in student application procedures and recruitment of qualified staff. TY subject planning has improved with less focus on material from the Leaving Certificate course. The LCVP team has been expanded to include additional expertise.

Teaching and Learning

Very good teaching and learning practice was observed in many lessons. However, there should be increased student skills’ development and embedding of junior cycle approaches to teaching and learning. While the quality and organisation of students’ written work has somewhat improved, the provision of developmental formative written feedback to students on their work has yet to be achieved at whole-school level. Subject department collaboration regarding planning and development of schemes of work requires further improvement.

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

The School's Self-Evaluation Process

Recent SSE focus has been on literacy, numeracy, assessment for learning and the key skill of minding myself. In the current year, first year students will undertake project work to improve the quality of their classroom based assessments (CBAs) in second year. Wellbeing provision at junior cycle supports the current focus on the key skill of managing myself. However, there should be a higher level of visibility of these actions throughout classroom practice. Engagement by school management and teachers in SSE is good. There is commitment to the SSE process; however, its links to the implementation of the new Junior Cycle curriculum requires further development. Literacy, numeracy and assessment for learning actions at whole-school level have been ongoing. Further integration of *Looking at Our School 2016* into SSE planning is recommended.

The School's Capacity for Improvement

The school's capacity for improvement is good. Staff involvement in CPD is of a high standard. There is good awareness of the school's changing needs and a strong commitment by school management and teachers to respond to these changes. Capacity building among teachers is good.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

- The Manager and Senior Management of St Conleth's acknowledges the final inspection report and is pleased that the report affirms that we promote an inclusive and caring community and a culture of continuous improvement as well as creating and maintaining a climate of security, wellbeing and inclusivity for students.
- We are also pleased that the report confirms that the pupils in St Conleth's are proud of their school and for the most part are highly motivated and focused on achieving well.
- Their holistic education is developed through a range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and students achievements and endeavours are acknowledged and celebrated.
- Teaching was consistently effective and competent and highly effective practice was observed in many lessons and exemplary practice in some.

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

- Four teachers have attended RSE seminars for Junior and Senior Cycle run by PDST. RSE has been timetabled in all classes for September 2019. The RSE policy has been revised and will be circulated to all parents in September 2019 as well as details of the programme for their child. A seminar on Consent took place for students of TY, 5th and 6th and their parents in April
- PE has been timetabled as a stand-alone subject for 5th Year
- A weekly guidance class has been introduced in TY
- Teachers have been surveyed in April re understanding of management structure of school and ways to improve communication and to have their voice heard. Teachers have been surveyed again at end of year as part of the school's SSE and SIP. The Manager will provide regular feedback on her work, work of Board of Directors, work of Senior Management Team weekly meetings and decisions taken.
- The process of developing a shared digital platform has begun
- A lot of time was spent reviewing how to communicate subject choices to incoming first and fifth years. Many drafts of fifth year subject choices were made in order to ensure a majority of students were accommodated
- Different style movable furniture has been trialled in one classroom for final term. This has been judged more suitable and consequently will be introduced to more classrooms for September.
- Greater emphasis will be placed on the role of middle leadership to promote leadership of learning and their responsibility clearly outlined for September. The Principal has ensured reviews have been completed and discussed individually
- Senior Management's shared and delegated responsibilities will be clearly outlined for September
- Formative written feedback to students on their work and subject department collaboration regarding planning and development of schemes of work will be prioritised from September
- The school will continue to prioritise the development of strategic planning and policy development throughout the school building on existing good practice.

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;