

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

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

REPORT

School name	Old Bawn Community School
School address	Old Bawn Tallaght Dublin 24
Roll number	91336W

Date of Evaluation: 10-05-2017



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 of the school was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	10-05-2017
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 parents• Analysis of parent, student and teacher questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of students' work• Interaction with students• Feedback to senior management team, board of management and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Old Bawn Community School is a co-educational post-primary school operating under the trusteeship of the Dominican Fathers, the Dominican Sisters and Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board. The current enrolment is 921 students. The school offers the Junior Cycle (Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)), Transition Year (TY) (optional), Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the established Leaving Certificate.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of school governance is satisfactory.
- The senior management team (SMT) is effective in the management of the school and provides good leadership for learning, teaching and assessment for teachers and students.
- The student care team is very effective and interactions between students and teachers were characterised by mutual respect in almost all instances.
- The quality of learning ranged from very good to fair, being good in most lessons, and the quality of teaching was good in the majority of lessons.
- While indications of progress were noted in some subject areas, a review of uptake and attainment at higher level in certificate examinations revealed that, overall, there is considerable scope for improvement.
- Overall, progress on recommendations from previous evaluations was satisfactory, with good progress made in some area; but there are areas that still need to be more comprehensively addressed to effect improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school plan should include time-bound action plans for agreed priority areas for development, policy documentation should be consistent in the inclusion of relevant dates; and the school's admission policy and associated documentation should be reviewed to ensure that only the current version is in circulation and that it is compliant with the spirit of inclusion of equality legislation.
- A school improvement team should be established and the school improvement plan for mixed ability revisited to ensure that it is based on mixed-ability groupings, and that actions support raised student expectations and the effective differentiation of learning.

- The special educational needs (SEN) team should be re-established and the allocated SEN resources, including those for students with English as an additional language (EAL), deployed for their intended purposes.
- Timetabling anomalies need to be addressed and tutor periods removed from senior cycle student and teacher timetables.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

1.1. School ownership and management:

The quality of school governance is satisfactory.

The board of management is appropriately constituted and is in the final year of its term. Board members have accessed relevant training. The board meets regularly and agreed reports are shared with staff and parents. The board is aware of its role in governing the school and minutes of meetings indicate good attention to child protection, financial management, and administrative matters. Policy development and review feature regularly on meeting agendas. To support the board in developing its role in leading teaching and learning and to ensure a deeper understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in the context of self-evaluation, it is recommended that these matters are a regular focus at board meetings.

The developmental section of the school plan for 2016-17 sets out a good balance of relevant areas for improvement, such as the use of information and communications technology (ICT) and students' academic outcomes and experience of teaching and learning. It is most welcome that the priorities include the development of a five-year strategic plan, the development of which has already been commenced by the board. To support the monitoring and progression of agreed priorities, it is recommended that time-bound and outcomes-focused action plans be developed.

A schedule of policy review is in place and the documentation of some policies reflects the good practice of including dates, supporting a clear cycle of monitoring and review. Most mandatory policies are in place. While the good practice of separate admissions and enrolment policy arrangements exists for first year, TY and LCA, different versions of documents are in circulation. An urgent review of the admission and enrolment policy documentation is recommended. This review should take account of wording in the current documentation that is open to misinterpretation or could be construed as obstructing admission and supporting non-inclusive practices. There are also references to costs such as re-enrolment, and house examination fees in the case of TY which do not reflect school practice.

The parents' association (PA) is active and there are very good links with the board and the SMT. The PA is very supportive of the school and plays an important role in the operation of the school library and in the staging of the school's annual musical. The PA's involvement in policy review tends to be at the end of the process. It is recommended that the PA's voice is included at an earlier stage.

1.2. Effectiveness of leadership for learning

The quality of in-school leadership for learning is good.

The principal and deputy principal are well established as a SMT and their clearly defined roles reflect their complementary skills and competences. They strive to promote school improvement and are agreed on the aim of creating a positive learning environment based on mutual trust between teachers and students. The SMT is effective in managing the smooth day-to-day running of the school and is supported by a number of key in-school management structures: the pastoral care team, the year heads and the SEN team. The imminent appointment of two additional deputy principals should provide the school with an opportunity to focus on key areas for development such as teaching, learning and assessment, curriculum planning and school development. In this context, the recently

reviewed schedule of posts of responsibility should be revisited and refocused, taking account of the established good practice of post holders' annual self-reflection on the functioning of their posts.

The deployment of teachers is good. In the case of a small number of subjects, a few class groups are shared between teachers: this practice should be discontinued. The SMT actively encourages staff participation in initiatives that promote innovation and leadership in teaching, learning and assessment. A very good level of opportunities is provided, including the role of student development officer (SDO), non-post holders in programme co-ordination roles, and participation in third-level-led initiatives. This is corroborated in teacher questionnaire responses. To improve student outcomes, the practice of student goal setting, and the role of the SDOs and year heads in monitoring progress, is highly commended and there is some evidence of very effective implementation of this practice, for example the tracking of progress on target setting in in-house examinations. The consistent implementation of this very good practice across the school has the potential to enhance and improve student experiences and outcomes across the curriculum. In this context, there is a need to review of the role and duties of the class tutor.

Communication amongst staff as evidenced in the school and in teacher responses to questionnaires is very good. It is positive that plans are being progressed to develop an induction programme for teachers new to the school.

The school curriculum comprises a very good range of programmes and subjects. Students are offered open option bands on entering first year and senior cycle. Parents and students spoke positively about the transfer programme into first year. The Pilot Initiative Programme (PIE) and the Mentoring for Achievement Programme (MAP) which focus in particular on supporting students with SEN and those at risk of early school leaving, are particularly commendable elements of the transfer programme. Subject and programme information is provided at open nights. Parent and student questionnaire responses to items on the helpfulness of advice provided suggest a need to consider the type and timing of the information provided. Consideration should also be given to how the scope to formalise linkages between Guidance and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in junior cycle could be utilised to enhance advice.

The TY, LCVP and LCA programmes are generally of good quality. A comprehensive review of TY was recently undertaken. It is recommended that the subject-sampling layer be revisited with a view to broadening students' experience of senior cycle optional subjects.

There are a number of timetabling issues that need to be addressed. Time provision for LCVP link modules is a short one class period. Guidance, while on the timetable in senior cycle, appears not to be a fixed element and is timetabled against non-examination Religious Education (RE) and Physical Education (PE). Timetabling arrangements are such that not all senior cycle students have access to non-examination RE, not in keeping with the deeds of trust, or to PE. All students should have access to a double period of PE. The time allocated as "Irish" in a minority of cases is used for support in a number of areas other than Irish. Discrete provision should be made for students with SEN and EAL needs. In addition, one period per week is allocated to tutor time on the timetable of all senior cycle students and relevant teachers. This practice should be discontinued.

Management acknowledges that the uptake of TY in particular, and of LCVP, is low. A whole-school approach to the promotion of these programmes should be considered and the guidance department should have a central role.

School staff demonstrated great commitment to the school and students. Students are facilitated in engaging in a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities including a school musical, debating competitions and sports.

The pastoral care of students is of high quality. The care team is very effective and there is a positive approach to engaging the students in the school community. Links have been established with a very broad range of agencies and services to support student engagement and wellbeing. Examples of the very good use of students' journals to acknowledge positive student behaviour and effort were observed. Year heads are supported by class tutors and SDOs. Student achievement, both academic and in extra-curricular and co-curricular events, is recognised at assemblies and in school publications.

Responses to teacher, student and parent questionnaire items related to the code of behaviour revealed divergent views on fairness in its implementation. These findings should be further explored in the development of the new learning code. Appropriate strategies are in place to encourage student attendance and punctuality.

The school has a significant allocation to support students with special educational needs. A SEN co-ordinator and a significant number of teachers are involved in the delivery of support. It is recommended that a small core team be established, under the guidance of a SEN co-ordinator, to support the development and deepening of understandings of the students' diverse learning needs and make best use of expertise in providing targeted support. Group and individual withdrawal are the main models of support. The models of support need to be extended and include those that best support inclusion. Strategic planning for the reintroduction and effective implementation of team teaching is recommended. The collaboration already initiated between SEN and Guidance is an important development and provides an opportunity to share experience and expertise in the areas of testing and assessment.

Students are provided with a very good range of opportunities to develop leadership skills. The tiered leadership approach, and the elected representative student council, facilitate students in making significant contributions to the experiences of their peers. Meetings between the board and the student council take place: this is very good practice.

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

School accommodation and facilities are maintained to a good standard and their use optimised in the delivery of the curriculum and to facilitate engagement with the school community.

There were some good displays, in classrooms and in public spaces, of celebrations of student achievements, examples of students' work and evidence of whole-school approaches to improvement in literacy and numeracy. Best practice with regard to these displays was observed where they were used to support learning during lessons.

General classroom layouts were mainly traditional. A whole-school approach to classroom layout that supports active and collaborative learning is encouraged.

Access to ICT infrastructure and facilities is good. A few effective examples of the use of ICT to support learning were observed. These examples should be built on and the potential for the creative use of ICT to support learning, including approaches such as the flipped classroom, exploited across the curriculum.

Environmental awareness is to the fore in the day-to-day operation of the school as evidenced by the number of Green Flags achieved and ongoing work in this area.

2. QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

2.1. The quality of learning and teaching

The quality of teaching ranged from very good to fair: the quality was good in the majority of lessons.

Individual lessons were generally well prepared. In the best cases this included well-designed or well-chosen resources and planning for rich tasks that supported co-operative learning.

Classroom management in almost all instances was excellent with students on task and respectful in their interactions with peers and teachers.

In almost all instances, learning intentions were shared with the students at the outset. Best practice was observed where the intentions were more explicitly focused on the learning process and on development rather than content.

In most lessons, a range of teaching approaches was observed. Many lessons were, however, teacher led. Where an appropriate range of teaching approaches was used, there was a very good balance between teacher input and students' active engagement. Opportunities were created for students to engage in co-operative learning in many lessons. These activities were most effective where the tasks were rich, instructions were clear, and the tasks appropriately timed and positioned within the lesson sequence. The practice of peer collaborative review, already initiated in the school, and learning from participation in school-supported initiatives related to pedagogy, should be utilised to share existing best practice.

A variety of questioning strategies was used. Best practice was noted where questioning moved from lower order to higher order and where students were scaffolded and challenged to develop their thinking and dispositions.

The quality of learning ranged from very good to fair. In most lessons, the quality was good and very good in a significant minority of lessons. Students were on task in almost all lessons, and engaged in their learning in many lessons. Some very good examples were observed where students asked good content-related questions. These instances provided ample opportunity for further investigation and active learning and could have been exploited for these purposes to a greater extent.

Effective differentiation was primarily facilitated through questioning strategies, individual support, and through co-operative learning tasks and homework. Based on these very good practices, the school should develop a whole-school approach to support differentiated learning and improved outcomes for all.

A review of students' written work revealed that, in a number of instances, effective written formative feedback, that guided students towards improvement, was being provided. This practice should be extended. Student journals indicated considerable scope, in line with school policy, to expand the range of homework tasks and, in a number of instances, the frequency with which they are assigned.

While indications of progress were noted in some subject areas, a review of uptake and attainment at higher level in certificate examinations revealed that, overall, there is considerable scope for improvement.

A few examples were noted of target setting in subject planning documentation. In line with school policy, this practice should be consistently implemented with an explicit focus on teaching and learning approaches that support mixed ability.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

3.1. Management

Overall, progress on the implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations, including a WSE-MLL (2010) and subsequent Follow Through (2012), was satisfactory.

Good progress has been made in some areas including noted improvements in the generally very good attendance at board meetings in the case of almost all nominees, the review undertaken of the schedule of posts of responsibility, strategies to improve student attendance and punctuality and the comprehensive review of the TY programme.

There is scope for improvement regarding consistency in the dating of policies, the school plan and ensuring that all partners are clear on the policy document guiding the functioning of the school.

There is a need to act on the recommendation to develop a whole-school plan for Guidance.

There remains a lack of clarity around the deployment of allocated resource and learning support hours. Management acknowledged that a significant number of SEN and EAL hours are used to support the mainstream timetable. It is recommended that the provisions of Circular 14/2017 are adhered to and that the SEN register reflects the manner in which all allocated resources are deployed. The needs of students with EAL were not assessed and no formal provision was made for these students. Assessment of their needs and the provision of appropriate programmes to support their learning across the curriculum is recommended.

Some progress has been made in the use of ICT as a learning tool. The *Bring Your Own Device* initiative in TY is a positive development and learning from students' and teachers' experiences could benefit the development of school policy in this area.

3.2 Learning and teaching

Arising from previous evaluations, lesson observations focused in particular on co-operative learning opportunities, questioning techniques to support student engagement, and the regular assignment of differentiated homework and the provision of written formative feedback on students' written work. Progress in these areas ranged from good to partial.

Good progress has been made concerning the creation of co-operative learning opportunities, with examples of pair work or group work a feature of many lessons. Lower-order questioning predominated but there were some good examples of learning being scaffolded through questioning and of verbal formative feedback. Overall, satisfactory progress has been made in this area. Progress as regards homework has been partial. Homework was assigned in almost all lessons, with one excellent example of differentiated homework. There were a number of examples of good quality formative feedback on written work. It is recommended that the school builds on the good practice identified and adopts a whole-school approach to improvement in these areas.

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

School engagement with self-evaluation demonstrates some very good practices indicating that there is good capacity for school improvement.

School improvement plans (SIPs) for literacy, numeracy and mixed ability are in their second cycle and the use of ICT has been identified as the fourth theme. The processes and the plans demonstrate good practice in some areas, such as the use of baseline data, SMART targets, monitoring and review processes and cross-curricular approaches.

The improvement plan for literacy is of very good quality and its development process robust. Examples of agreed actions were evident in many lessons.

The development process engaged in for the improvement plan for numeracy was also robust and the plan is of good quality. Actions were evident in a significant minority of lessons.

The improvement plan for mixed ability (2015-2018) is of weak quality. It is not linked to teaching and learning, lacks measurable targets and is not based on genuine mixed-ability groupings.

It is recommended that a school improvement development team be established. As a matter of priority, the improvement plans for numeracy and mixed ability should be revised.

In the case of all three school improvement themes, there is a need to share the improvement plans with the wider school community in line with Circular 0040/2016.

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	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 very good 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 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;