

**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>	Carrigaline Community School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Waterpark Carrigaline Co Cork
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	91388S

**Date of Evaluation: 05-04-2017**



## **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 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

### INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	03-04 to 05-04-2017
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting with board of management</li><li>• Meetings with principal and deputy principals</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

Carrigaline Community School operates under the joint trusteeship of Cork Education and Training Board (ETB) and the Diocese of Cork and Ross. It is a co-educational school with a current enrolment of 1146. The school has an open enrolment policy, catering for the needs of all students in Carrigaline and the surrounding areas. A broad and wide-ranging post-primary curriculum is offered, including the Junior Certificate, an optional Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and the established Leaving Certificate. The school has a unit which caters for students with autistic spectrum disorders. A significant adult education programme, which is based on the needs and interests of the community, is also provided.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The board provides effective leadership of the school.
- The senior management team presents as energetic, committed to excellence and promotes a culture of improvement and innovation in relation to teaching, learning and assessment.
- The school has engaged in the school planning and self-evaluation process; however, some aspects of planning could be further developed.
- A culture of distributed leadership pertains in the school; staff are empowered to undertake leadership roles and lead learning, both within and outside of the post of responsibility structure.
- The school provides a comprehensive curriculum, which includes subject sampling, to nurture the talents of all students academically, in sport and through other extracurricular activities; however, a small minority of issues, namely relating to the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle (2015), should be addressed.
- Supports for students are of very high standard in the inclusive school environment.
- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning ranged from very good to good; students would benefit from the continued development of team-teaching and co-operative learning approaches.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- A whole-school plan should be collated to include permanent and developmental sections relating to school context, curriculum, policy development and school self-evaluation (SSE) and the annual policy checklist completed by the board should also be included in this plan.
- A limited number of SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time-bound) targets arising from relevant baseline data should be identified for each area of SSE and a summary of the

resulting SSE report and improvement plan should be shared with the wider school community each year.

- A number of compliance issues and areas for improvement should be addressed in relation to the new junior cycle programme.
- Team-teaching to support a variety of students' needs and structured co-operative learning strategies should be used to a greater extent.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

#### **1.1. School ownership and management:**

The board of management provides effective leadership for the school. It is properly constituted and affords appropriate provision for the governance of the school, although some possibilities for improvement exist. The continued commitment from a number of long-serving members of the board is commended. It is good to note that the board has taken steps to listen to students' views through presentations from the student council. While child protection procedures are reported on at meetings, the board should also receive a report on the overall number of bullying cases reported to senior management each term, along with confirmation that these have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with relevant Departmental procedures and school policy. Board members' interest and commitment to the school is illustrated by their willingness to participate in school events such as judging the SciFest competition.

The board has placed considerable emphasis and effort on enhancing the school's infrastructure. Very significant improvements have been made to the learning environment and thus the learning experiences of students. The board has identified additional priorities for development in teaching and learning, guidance and care. A wide range of policies have been ratified by the board. To assist in the ongoing work in this area, it is recommended that the board devise and implement a schedule for the review and updating of current policies and the development of other relevant policies. It should be noted that an annual review is required for child protection, health and safety and anti-bullying policies. In addition, all policies should contain ratification and proposed review dates.

A number of board members have accessed training with regard to their role and some are awaiting training. This is positive. The board should consider availing of further opportunities for upskilling, particularly in areas such as the new junior cycle curriculum and SSE.

A comprehensive principal's report is presented at each board meeting. To support and extend current arrangements, an agreed report should be recorded in the minutes and communicated to stakeholders following each board meeting. In line with good practice, the board produces an annual report on the work of the school and relevant issues are thus communicated to the stakeholders. The school has actively engaged in the SSE process and SSE reports have been generated and communicated to the board of management. The board should ensure that a summary of the SSE report and school improvement plan (SIP) is shared with the wider school community.

Parent representatives that were met during the evaluation are committed to, and very positive about, the school. The parents' association takes an active role in organising and supporting initiatives.

To further enhance the role of the parents' association, it is recommended that it have a role in policy review as relevant. A comprehensive parents' association section on the school's website provides very good information in relation to its activities. However, the results from the parents' questionnaires conducted as part of the evaluation suggest that more work could be done in relation to enhancing communication with the general parent body. In addition to the school's website, the association could consider using social media and the school's new texting service. Ways to garner the views of parents on school matters should be exploited to a greater extent.

A new senior management team is in place. This team presents as energetic, committed to excellence and quality improvement. Individual and team roles are well-defined and integrated to ensure that a consistent skillset is being developed among senior management and that enhanced learning experiences are provided for students and staff. All teachers who completed the questionnaire, and almost all parents, agreed with the statement "The school is well run".

Ongoing formal and informal communication among senior management has resulted in the development of a strategic vision for the school which is focusing on further developing teaching and learning, inclusion and students' learning experiences. Communication between senior management and staff is very good and will be further enhanced by the new information and communications technology (ICT) data-management system. It is positive that the school's website facilitates the dissemination of a significant amount of information to the wider community.

The school community is engaged in ongoing planning using the SSE process. Cross-curricular teams have been put in place to lead the areas of literacy, numeracy and technology enhanced learning. Staff engage in a consultative, collaborative process and very effective strategies have been implemented at whole-school level, particularly in relation to literacy and numeracy. This is excellent. Parental involvement in the SSE of literacy is noteworthy. Commendably, a culture of review underpins the SSE process. To further enhance this work, a limited number of SMART targets arising from relevant baseline data should be identified for each area of SSE and a small number of key strategic actions, which could be implemented in the classroom, should be agreed at whole-school level and subsequently implemented. Review should focus on evaluating the impact of agreed strategies at classroom level.

A more cohesive approach to school planning is recommended through the development of a whole-school plan. The new school plan should include a permanent and developmental section; the permanent section should be made available to the wider school community, perhaps through the school's website.

## 1.2. Effectiveness of leadership for learning

A spirit of volunteerism and staff leadership is central to the school culture and has a significant impact on students' outcomes and experiences. In addition to posts of responsibility, staff are afforded other leadership opportunities in accordance with the school's identified priorities. Teachers are self-motivated and display an enthusiastic and clear commitment to the school and their students. This is illustrated by staff's significant willingness to provide a myriad of co-curricular and extracurricular activities for students.

Senior management is proactive in moving towards developing a strategic approach to continuing professional development (CPD) and participation is strongly supported. The ongoing engagement of

senior management and other staff in a CPD programme presents as a worthwhile basis for developing the school's key focus, which is teaching, learning and assessment.

Subject plans examined indicate that department planning is firmly established and well organised. Commendably, collaborative planning for teaching and assessment takes place at subject-department meetings. It is suggested that teaching and learning be a standing item on the agenda of subject department meetings, in order to further enhance the sharing of good practices.

Student leadership is facilitated primarily through the elected members of the student council, who meet regularly. The council is very effectively supported by the liaison teacher, and council members also receive training to help them in their role. Communication mechanisms with the school community are effective. Officers meet with the principal regularly and the chairperson has presented to the board of management. Students have taken leadership roles in a range of initiatives. The student council has also forged links with the greater community through charity days.

Commendably, open and inclusive student enrolment practices operate in the school. Currently, a draft admissions policy has been devised, a separate admissions policy operates for the school's resource centre, and admissions procedures for entry into LCA and TY have been developed. Prior to ratification of the draft admissions policy, the school should remove any conditional clauses linked to admission. The school should also consider including criteria for entry into the school, and maximum numbers of enrolment, as well as criteria and procedures for enrolment in the resource centre. This policy should be ratified at the earliest possible opportunity. The school's request to parents for a voluntary contribution should be separate to enrolment procedures.

The school has a clear code of behaviour which incorporates elements that support positive behaviour. This is noteworthy. Attendance is appropriately monitored. A strategy for attendance and participation should be developed. Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) are appropriately delivered. Almost all students surveyed strongly agree or agree with the statement, "I learn about relationships and sexuality in some lessons".

Overall, students perform well in certificate examinations. It is positive that results are analysed. It is recommended that subject departments set targets for improvement and identify strategies that might help achieve those targets.

Management and staff are committed to the holistic development and achievement of the full potential of each student. The school provides a comprehensive, balanced and inclusive curriculum to nurture the talents of all students academically, in sport and in other extracurricular activities. The curriculum includes the widest range of subjects offered within all available programmes. The operation of a subject-sampling system in first year and in TY is commended as it facilitates informed subject choice. Subject options selection procedures demonstrate best practice. Very good guidance and support systems assist students as they make subject choices. There is evidence of the use of continuous and project-based assessment. This is very positive. These practices will assist in embedding an increased range of assessment practices within the junior cycle curriculum.

Commendably, a comprehensive TY programme, which incorporates core, modular and calendar events, assists in furthering students' holistic development. LCVP is offered to all students who meet the relevant criteria. Other educational experiences should be offered at all times within this option band to those students who do not undertake LCVP. All elements of the LCA programme are provided, although the time allocated to Vocational Preparation and Guidance should be increased.

Classes are mixed ability in first year for all subjects. Class groups in the core subjects for the remainder of the year groups are divided into higher and ordinary levels. It is noteworthy that classes are mixed ability within the levels in both English and Mathematics. Serious consideration should be given to adopting the same practice in Irish. The school should keep the timing of choice of level under review.

In the cases of English, Science and Business the relevant specifications for junior cycle are being taught. In the case of classroom-based assessments (CBAs) in English, the oral communication task and the student's collection of texts have been completed. In a number of instances, descriptors have been awarded to students' CBAs. However, descriptors have not been awarded in some instances and subject learning and assessment review (SLAR) meetings have not taken place. The reason for this was reported to be industrial action. In order to ensure that students benefit from the full range of learning experiences as outlined in the English specification and required by Circular 0015/2017, it is recommended that teachers implement all aspects of the English specification, including the awarding of descriptors for students' CBAs. Furthermore, teachers should engage in SLAR meetings after the CBAs have been completed in order to build a common understanding of the quality of student learning and to quality assure the assessment of students' work as outlined in the Framework for Junior Cycle, 2015.

Significant care is given to provision for students with special educational needs (SEN). The co-ordinators of both SEN and the resource centre demonstrate significant commitment to their work and endeavour to ensure that the needs of their students are met, as do the core team and special needs assistants (SNAs). Early identification of students with additional learning needs is a positive feature. Commendably, good support is provided to mainstream teachers in providing for the needs of these students. The resource centre, which contains an excellent range of facilities is open to all students, thus providing opportunities for social interactions.

The core resource team is led by qualified personnel. This is positive. Varied models of support, including one-to-one and creation of small groups withdrawn for support, help meet the needs of identified students. It was reported that in a number of instances team-teaching is employed. The school should investigate the expansion and continued exploration of team-teaching as an approach to support a variety of students. Overall, the core teaching team is involved in the delivery of a significant amount of the support. This is good practice. However, some students receive support from a number of teachers across the week. This should be avoided, particularly in junior cycle. To assist in further developing the cohesive support structure, it is recommended that planning for the delivery of support informs the school timetable as it is constructed.

Responses from questionnaires completed during the evaluation indicate that Carrigaline Community School is a caring, friendly place, in which its core values are being implemented well in the day-to-day life of the school. A wide range of care structures and interventions support student welfare. These include the very effective student support team which leads this valuable provision. Co-ordination is facilitated through weekly care-team meetings. Year heads, assistant year heads and class teachers play key support roles and the twice-daily assemblies help to maintain contact with the students. The majority of students surveyed said they feel safe and cared for in the school.

A comprehensive guidance programme has been devised, with an appropriate balance between guidance and counselling. A whole-school approach to student support is evident and a whole-school guidance plan, which includes existing care policies and provides evidence of links between SPHE, RSE and Guidance, has been documented. This is very good.

Excellent support is provided for students and parents during transitions. This includes a strong induction process, and a student mentoring system. The school should consider accessing training for the student mentors. The school understands the diversity of its population and promotes positive mental health through its Amber Flag activities.

Confirmation was provided that the board of management has formally adopted the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* without modification and that the school is compliant with the requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

### 1.3. Management of facilities

The school is very well maintained and its up-to-date facilities, which includes a significant extension, provide a very positive learning environment for students. The continued focus on providing such facilities is evidenced by management's current plan to upgrade construction and engineering rooms. TV displays are a very effective means of maintaining an up-to-date flow of information. The school canteen provides a very good service. ICT facilities are good. Planned improvements to the ICT infrastructure are worthwhile and will facilitate continued integration of ICT into teaching and learning.

## 2. QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

### 2.1. The quality of learning and teaching

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning ranged from very good to good. In those instances where improvements were advised, these focused on the appropriate accessing of students' prior learning, lesson structure and a more student-centred approach.

Lessons were well-prepared in almost all cases. The vast majority of lessons were clearly and effectively structured and there was effective sequencing of learning between lessons for students. Time management was very good. In those instances where learning intentions were used most effectively, they were referenced during the course of the lesson, including for recapitulation of learning; provided clarity and structure with regard to learning; and highlighted a clear focus on skill development. Such an approach should be used in lessons as a means of ensuring clarity regarding learning.

The effective use of questioning as a feature of teachers' teaching and assessment was a core strategy in lessons. This included an appropriate mix of higher-order questioning, as well as questions focused on student recall. In addition, students displayed a willingness to ask questions and risk mistakes to develop their learning. All lessons were conducted in a classroom environment which was focused on the care of students and very good relationships were evident between teachers and students. This sense of community and care was also evident between students on corridors between lessons. Student behaviour was very good.

ICT was frequently used by teachers in lessons observed. This was very effective, with a wide range of approaches being used to support differentiation, student engagement and motivation. These incorporated visual and audio resources, and the use of internet links to support the extension of student learning outside the classroom. Teachers have also begun to use virtual learning environments to support student learning. The area of student use of ICT presents rich possibilities for the school to

continue to develop student ownership of learning. The recent formation of a technology-enhanced learning committee, which has begun to develop the school's e-learning plan, will help in this regard.

Lesson observation provided examples of well-structured, co-operative learning activities. These worked well in providing opportunities for extended talk by students, supporting the development of student oracy and the justification of reasoning. When planning lessons, further consideration of the role and structuring of group work to support student-centred learning and student talk would be worthwhile. In addition, the use of co-operative learning activities to provide additional wait time for students, while ensuring 'safety' and accountability within groups, should be a focus of such consideration.

Teachers' expertise and awareness of the certificate examinations was evident in lessons. Very good provision of formative, oral feedback was often observed in teachers' practice, where the strategies employed supported such an approach. In addition, examples of written formative commentary on students' written work were observed. Very worthwhile practice was observed, on occasion, in lessons where students were expected to comment and reflect on their own and their peers' work. Examples of the effective use of a visualiser to provide assessment feedback and instruction were also observed. The wider use of the visualiser as a support for the explicit teaching of assessment skills is advised.

The school corridors present as a powerful reinforcement of the school's identity as a united community of learners. Corridors feature artwork and displays which are current, attractive and provide a strong sense of community identity. Most classroom environments were rich with displays of student work, subject-specific displays and motivational posters.

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

Overall, the school has made good progress in relation to recommendations made in previous inspections. The post structure has been reviewed and literacy and numeracy strategies are implemented in lessons. Building on this good practice, management should look at how the feedback from inspection reports in relation to generic teaching and learning could be disseminated to staff. In addition, the board should put a formal mechanism in place for oversight of the implementation of recommendations from subject inspections. A recommendation related to access to Physical Education for all students has not been fully implemented. The school reports that this will be addressed.

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

It is evident that the school has considerable capacity to implement and drive change. The school proposes to restart the teaching, learning and assessment committee. This is positive, because this group could function as a pedagogic community of practice, with a strategic focus on improving teaching, learning and assessment through School Self Evaluation (SSE). A culture of self-review is embedded in the work of the school. For example, strategies in relation to literacy and numeracy, have been implemented and their impact reviewed annually. This is very 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 the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;

# **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 of Carrigaline Community School, on behalf of all the stakeholders, wishes to acknowledge receipt of this very positive WSE-MLL report. The report affirms many of the excellent practices in existence in the school and the teaching staff and management were encouraged by many of the findings including the following:

- The Board provides effective leadership of the school
- The Senior Management Team presents as energetic, committed to excellence and promotes a culture of improvement and innovation in relation to teaching, learning and assessment
- A culture of distributed leadership pertains in the school; staff are empowered to undertake leadership roles and lead learning
- The school provides a comprehensive curriculum, which includes subject sampling, to nurture the talents of all students academically, in sport and through extra-curricular activities
- Supports for students are of a very high standard in the inclusive school environment

## **Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.**

Since the initial feedback phase of the WSE-MLL process, the school has already taken some steps to address a number of the recommendations:

- A School Self Evaluation advisory meeting has been held with the DES Inspectorate.
- Compliance issues in relation to the new Junior Cycle Programme are being addressed with all relevant in-service opportunities being availed of.
- Policies are being reviewed and updated and will be ratified at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Access to Physical Education and Wellbeing classes have been enhanced in line with recent recommendations.
- A Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee is being established with a strong focus on improving teaching, learning and assessment.
- A presentation to the Board of Management has been made on the new Junior Cycle Programme.