

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Whole School Evaluation
Management, Leadership and Learning

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	St. Brogan's College, Bandon
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Kilbrogan Bandon Co Cork
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	70910L

Date of Evaluation: 27-09-2018



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agus Scileanna
Department of
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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 board of management meetings record a child protection oversight report that meet the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2017.
6. The board of management 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 met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

Dates of inspection	25, 26 and 27 September 2018
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

St Brogan's College, Bandon is a co-educational, multi-denominational school and a constituent college of Cork Education and Training Board (ETB). The school has experienced significant growth in the last number of years, with a current student population of 550. Kinsale College of Further Education is affiliated with St Brogan's College, although its work does not form part of this whole school evaluation.

There is a wide-ranging curriculum, with all programmes provided. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of school leadership and management is very good, with a highly effective senior leadership team.
- There is a very effective board of management which has overseen the development of a comprehensive school plan, although some elements of the admissions policy should be reviewed.
- There is a highly effective and well-organised approach to supporting students with special educational needs, although some elements of current practice should be reviewed.
- The quality of learning and teaching is very good, with consistent evidence of students' enjoyment of and engagement with their learning, while opportunities exist for further development in the area of co-operative learning.
- There is good implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations with a good follow-through process in place.
- The school has a very good self-evaluation process and capacity for improvement, with data-informed actions related to learning and care that are innovative and impactful.

Recommendations

- Sections of the admissions policy dealing with admission to the autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) classes should be reviewed and adjusted to more fully reflect the inclusive character of the school.
- In the context of very good practice in support of students with special educational needs, current arrangements with regard to instruction time provided for students with moderate general learning disabilities (MGLD) should be reviewed and appropriate action should be taken, while senior leadership should also ensure, in accordance with Circular 14/2017, that

all additional resources for the area of special educational needs are ring-fenced for the purpose for which they are intended.

- Good practice in the area of group work identified during the evaluation should be built on through the investigation and deployment of co-operative learning strategies which will further support student ownership of learning and structured opportunities for classroom talk.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of school leadership and management is very good.

Leading learning and teaching

The quality of leadership for learning and teaching is very good.

There is a highly effective senior leadership team. There is very good communication within the team, along with a clear sense of dedication towards the students and staff in its care. This is exemplified through modelled behaviour, supporting staff and students in the maintenance of a warm, caring, and supportive environment. This view of senior leadership is very strongly reflected in questionnaires distributed to students, parents, and teachers as part of this evaluation.

The school offers a wide and varied curriculum. In addition, the continuing, proactive development of the curriculum is evident in the recent introduction of new subjects, alongside significant curricular innovation. This includes planning for the area of Wellbeing, new short courses, and Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs).

Very good work was evident in the organisation of the different programmes on offer. All students participate in the Transition Year (TY) programme. In the case of the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), a very high number of students participate, consistent with their subject groupings. The Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme also forms a vibrant part of the school, with the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) supporting target students through a variety of initiatives and interventions. It was evident that these programmes were providing very worthwhile opportunities for student learning and new experiences, including well organised experiences of the world of work in the case of the TY, LCVP, and LCA programmes.

A key expression of the school's commitment to care for its students and to ensuring they achieve their full potential is its adoption of a data-informed approach to managing students and helping them to manage their own learning. This begins with comprehensive arrangements for transferring data from their primary schools and a number of screening tests. Subsequently, students are facilitated in setting appropriate learning targets for themselves, while the data collected, along with teacher observations, is used to inform very comprehensive tracking arrangements with regard to student achievement and wellbeing. This innovative approach places questions regarding student learning at the centre of the school culture.

Students are afforded the opportunity to experience all subjects during first year. An open subject choice system is in place for students at the end of first year. An open choice system also operates with regard to student subjects for senior cycle.

Classes are generally of mixed ability in first year, although a small class group may be formed for core subjects to support students with significant difficulties in literacy development. Classes in

English and Mathematics are set in second year and in third year. The school is encouraged to keep these arrangements under review. Mixed ability groupings are generally used in TY, while setting is adopted in core subjects in fifth year and in sixth year, alongside mixed ability groups in optional subject areas.

Very good work is underway in developing the school's approach to the new Junior Cycle curriculum. It is suggested that, as further elements in support of the new curriculum, students in Junior Cycle could be provided with an overarching presentation regarding the new programme. Alongside this, the school's very good analysis of students' performance in the certificate examinations could now be further added to through an analysis of students' performance in classroom-based assessments.

Very good care structures are in place. A student support team meets on a weekly basis to discuss students in particular need of support. Regular activities, along with specific interventions for particular students, form part of the school's work in this area. Daily tutorials are a further important element, where class tutors support, monitor and guide students in developing important skills for school and life beyond school. Questionnaires distributed to students and parents during the evaluation indicated exceptionally high levels of satisfaction with the school's work in this area.

A comprehensive whole school guidance plan has been developed. This covers the vocational, personal, and educational areas of student support. It includes clear role descriptions across the school community, as well as detailing specific activities with regard to effective support for each year group in the school.

An exceptionally well-organised approach to supporting students with special educational needs is in place. A very high level of co-ordination is evident, with well-thought out approaches to the appointment of key personnel, along with provision for continuity of support. The core special educational needs team has also displayed very considerable commitment in its approach to professional development.

A further feature of the co-ordination of the provision of support for students with special educational needs is the appointment of year mentors for these students. Regular meetings of key personnel linked to the area of special educational needs take place. Beyond this, the school has approached the incorporation of assistive technology (AT) in classrooms in a strategic manner.

In the context of the very good arrangements in place for care for students and to support students with special educational needs, it is advised that a school provision plan should be developed. This would draw together many of the strands of support that are being provided for students.

It is clear that St Brogan's strives to be an inclusive school. Two classes for students with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) are in place, along with a class for students with moderate general learning disabilities (MGLD). It is in the context of this very good practice that it is recommended that current arrangements with regard to the instruction time provided for students in the MGLD class should be reviewed. The school has indicated that it is aware of the need for adjustment in this area and this is planned. In addition, from the examination of timetables, some of the allocated teaching resources provided to support students with special educational needs were not identifiable. The recent expansion in student numbers has created significant challenges for the school. However, notwithstanding this, it is recommended that senior leadership should ensure, in accordance with Circular 14/2017, that all additional resources for the area of special educational needs should be ring-fenced in the future.

Managing the organisation

The board of management is very effective. It is appropriately constituted and board members have accessed training at different points. An agreed report is communicated to staff and the parent body following each board meeting and this is included in comprehensive minutes for each board meeting.

A comprehensive school plan has been developed, which incorporates all required policies. A policy development process is in place which involves all partners in the school community, as appropriate.

An anti-bullying policy has been developed and adopted by the board. Regular reports are made at each board meeting with regard to incidents of bullying, as is required. In addition, a very clear code of behaviour has been developed which is framed positively and uses clear language with regard to its expectations of students.

An admissions policy is in place. It is recommended that some aspects of the current admissions policy should be reviewed and adjusted. In particular, some of the requirements regarding entry to the ASD class groups should be revised to more fully reflect current policy and conditions with regard to admission to these classes. These adjustments include requirements regarding the level of integration necessary to allow admission to the ASD class groups, along with a requirement that the level of general learning disability fall within the mild range.

Policies for Social, Personal, and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) are in place. A very small number of students in Junior Cycle are provided with learning support during SPHE lessons. The RSE policy indicates that it will be provided for through a variety of curricular areas in senior cycle. It is important that the school ensure all students receive a programme of instruction in the areas of SPHE and RSE, as set out in the relevant circular letters and guidelines.

Management of school facilities is very good. The school faces particular challenges with regard to accessing additional space for the growing student population. The board has been proactive in this area, with additional rooms expected in the near future.

Teachers are timetabled appropriately and effectively. In this context, it is important to ensure that all teachers are timetabled to the required amount of hours. In a small number of instances, study lessons are scheduled opposite PE lessons. The school has taken a strategic approach to student non-participation in PE through significant revisions in the curriculum and plans to eliminate these study lessons in the near future, as is appropriate.

A Health and Safety statement has been developed. A Safety committee has been formed and this meets a number of times each year. Health and safety audits of specialist rooms have been conducted and these are maintained in subject department folders.

Leading school development

Leadership of school development is very good. The board has identified key priorities for development in the future.

DEIS action planning is effectively embedded. In some areas, further consideration with regard to the identification of specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, time-bound (SMART) targets would be worthwhile. There is a core DEIS team which includes key personnel involved in delivering the action plan. Beyond this, the plan has been developed through a well-organised distributed leadership approach among the staff, ensuring ownership of the plan throughout the school community.

A digital learning plan has been developed. The plan appropriately sets out strategic actions with regard to improvements in ICT infrastructure, alongside plans for teacher CPD. The school is planning effectively for further increasing the use of ICT and the incorporation of digital learning for both teachers and students in the medium term.

A parents' association is in place. The association meets on a regular basis. The association has been involved in the policy-making process in the school, as relevant, and has also been active in fundraising for the school.

Developing leadership capacity

There are very effective structures to support and develop leadership capacity. Regular middle management meetings are timetabled, including meetings of the year heads (junior and senior), assistant principals, the student support team and the special educational needs teams. Consultation on policy development is a regular feature of these meetings. Various teams have also been formed to advance other key school priorities. The senior leadership team has been proactive in seeking to enhance teachers' professional experiences and opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD).

The net effect of these structures is a sense of proactive management for students' benefit, ensuring a calm, caring atmosphere is maintained across the school community. In addition, numerous examples of teachers' dedication are evident, not least through the wide range of extracurricular activities available to students.

A review of the post structure has recently been completed. This included a consultative process with the teaching staff. It is expected that further reviews of the post structure will be conducted as necessary, in the context of circular 03/2018.

There is an active student council. The council has been involved in policy development and a number of school initiatives in the recent past. The council has also attended a board of management meeting to provide inputs regarding a number of areas. The board intends to expand the number of meetings with council representatives in the future. This is positive.

A particularly worthwhile aspect of parent-teacher meetings is the attendance of students at these meetings. This ensures clear messages are conveyed with regard to teaching and learning. Students were positive with regard to their voice in the school in questionnaires distributed during the evaluation.

2. QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment was very good.

Learner outcomes and experiences

Lessons observed were generally very good or good in almost all instances. A particular feature of almost all lessons was high expectations of students on the part of teachers and students rose to these expectations in all lessons observed.

Improvement was identified as being needed in a small number of lessons. This should focus on the development of student talk and vocabulary, as well as planning for higher expectations with regard to lesson content and time management.

Laughter and good humour were a clear part of the classroom culture, alongside a positive work ethic. Notwithstanding the physical constraints imposed by the current student population and space within the school building, there was a palpable sense of respect between students and their peers on the school corridors.

Group and pair work were frequent elements in lessons observed. Where this worked well, opportunities for wait time were exploited, as well as a sense of enthusiasm among students. However, in other instances, groups and pairs were less successful and more structured approaches to the development of student talk would have been beneficial. Overall, this area presents, as has been recognized by the school in its SSE process, as offering opportunities for further development. In considering actions here, student ownership of the process should be encouraged.

A very strong feature of lessons observed was the deployment of structures to ensure clarity of learning among students. Learning intentions were used in all lessons. These were most effective where clear consideration had been given to the skills being explored. Beyond this, very good practice was observed where carefully crafted learning intentions were used to recapitulate the learning achieved in the lesson for students. These practices should be employed more widely.

Teachers' individual and collective practice

The quality of teachers' individual and collective practice is very good.

Currently, the school operates a system where students and teachers, for the most part, move to different classrooms when lessons change. Despite this, classroom learning environments were generally very well-developed, incorporating educational resources, a focus on subject-specific vocabulary, student work and, in some cases, exemplification of approaches to support students' independent learning.

Very good examples of formative assessment were frequently observed. These took place, variously, where teachers consistently 'checked in' on student learning, intervening where necessary. Of particular note, in a number of instances, was the explicit modelling of skills and the explicit modelling of assessment by teachers. The very effective use of the visualizer to support these approaches was noted in a small number of lessons. It is recommended that the school should expand the availability of the visualizer in classrooms, where practicable and within the limits of available resources. This should be viewed as a powerful tool to support modelling of skills, but also to explicitly teach assessment skills to students.

The use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support learning was very frequently observed during lessons. In all instances, ICT was used effectively as a tool to improve learning in lessons.

Subject plans and programme planning are well-established in the school. A selection of plans was reviewed as part of the inspection in either electronic or written formats. The school is in the process of transferring current paper subject plans to the selected ICT shared platform. This is positive and will take some time. In a number of instances, it was clear that hardcopies of subject plans were working documents. A key element in the move to plans as digitally-based resources should be the incorporation of this approach.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

There is good implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations.

Leadership and Management

A good process is in place to ensure recommendations arising from subject and programme evaluations are acted upon. It is suggested that, as a means of completing this review process, the board should respond to inspection reports prior to publication, through the school response process. This will serve as a formal setting out of actions arising from the evaluation process.

Definite actions have been taken to address relevant elements of recent reports in the area of leadership and management.

Teaching and Learning

There has been very good progress in implementing recommendations in the area of teaching and learning. A number of recommendations have been addressed, while work continues on others. The school's planned teaching and learning group will further support this area in the future.

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

The school's self-evaluation process is very good and there is very good capacity for improvement throughout the school.

The School's Self-Evaluation Process

A strong culture of data-informed evaluation is evident. Currently, the school is working on developing a teaching and learning group to support the further advancement of the good practice already present in the school. In addition, a focus on developing teachers' use of co-operative learning strategies has been identified. This area should be incorporated as an additional SSE strand in the overall DEIS plan. Beyond this, it is recommended that a summary report of this SSE element of the DEIS plan should be reported to the school community.

At this point in the development of teaching and learning through the SSE process, it is advised that a strategic, staged approach to the integration of new teaching strategies should be adopted. This would allow for the gradual and effective embedding of new teaching and learning approaches.

The School's Capacity for Improvement

A culture of continuing improvement is a clear feature of the school community. This is most evident in recent years in the embedding of very significant care, management, and communication structures. It is clear that there is a very good capacity for improvement throughout the school.

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;

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management welcomes this extremely positive WSE MLL report. The Board is especially pleased that the report acknowledges and affirms the highly effective practices in the school such as;

- The quality of school leadership and management is very good, with a highly effective senior leadership team.
- There is a very effective board of management which has overseen the development of a comprehensive school plan.
- The school offers a wide and varied curriculum.
- Very good care structures are in place.
- An exceptionally well-organised approach to supporting students with special educational needs is in place.
- There are very effective structures to support and develop leadership capacity. The net effect of these structures is a sense of proactive management for students' benefit, ensuring a calm, caring atmosphere is maintained across the school community. In addition, numerous examples of teachers' dedication are evident, not least through the wide range of extracurricular activities available to students.
- The quality of learning and teaching is very good, with consistent evidence of students' enjoyment of and engagement with their learning. A particular feature of almost all lessons was high expectations of students on the part of teachers and that students rose to these expectations in all lessons observed.
- The school's self-evaluation process is very good and there is very good capacity for improvement throughout the school.

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

The Board of Management is committed to addressing the recommendations contained in the report as follows:

- The section of the admissions policy dealing with admission to the autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) classes will be reviewed and adjusted for the academic year 2019/20.
- The instruction time provided for students with moderate general learning disabilities (MGLD) has already been reviewed and extended.
- The school continues to develop good practice in all areas of teaching and learning.

The Board of Management commits to continuing to implement the recommendations from this inspection report.