

**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>	St. Angela's College
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	St. Patrick's Hill Cork
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	62640M

**Date of Evaluation: 04-04-2019**



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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 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	2 April 2019 to 4 April 2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting with board of management</li><li>• Meetings with principal and deputy principal</li><li>• Meetings with key staff</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Student focus-group interview</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting with parents</li><li>• Analysis of parent, student and teacher questionnaires</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Interaction with students</li><li>• Feedback to senior management team, board of management and teachers</li></ul>

### School context

Saint Angela's College is a voluntary secondary school in Cork city centre. Founded by the Ursuline order in 1887, it is now under the trusteeship of Le Chéile. It has a current enrolment of 562 girls. The school offers the Junior Cycle programme, an optional Transition Year (TY) and the Leaving Certificate. The redeveloped campus comprises protected Victorian and contemporary buildings.

### Summary of main findings and recommendations:

#### Findings

- The senior leadership team, is highly effective in leading teaching and learning and school climate is very positive; both are driven by high expectations and fuelled by high levels of commitment.
- A broad curriculum supports the realisation of the school's vision of cherishing the uniqueness of each student and developing her full potential.
- The constant focus on refining the school's support and guidance structures and processes has resulted in highly effective systems that are supporting students to flourish; aspects of provision for students with special educational needs (SEN) could be further developed.
- Senior leadership works to distribute roles, build capacity, and empower staff and students; related development work is of a very high quality.
- The quality of teaching and learning in observed lessons was very good overall; there is scope to further embed formative assessment into classroom practice.
- A culture of collaboration is promoted by senior leadership, school self-evaluation is supporting school improvement, and there is very good progress evident with regard to the implementation of recommendations provided in previous evaluations.

#### Recommendations

- Senior leadership should ensure that students with SEN receive twenty-eight hours instruction time, and this should include prioritising provision of support during a time when a student is exempted from a subject; simultaneously, relevant teachers should ensure that support provided is both focused and targeted, and designed to meet students' priority and identified needs.
- Teachers' use of formative assessment should be further developed; consideration ought to be given to how school self-evaluation (SSE) could support this work.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

The senior leadership team, with the support and assistance of the board of management and the teaching staff, is highly effective in its work in leading teaching and learning and in managing the school.

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

The principal and deputy principal are highly effective in their leadership of teaching and learning. Related work is well informed by Ursuline ethos and the school's mission statement - nurturing uniqueness and potential, whilst promoting respect and responsibility.

The 'lead-by-example' approach of senior leadership supports the creation of a positive climate that is driven by high expectations for all and fuelled by high levels of commitment and enthusiasm amongst all. The principal and deputy principal's constant focus on refining structures and systems is supporting teachers to provide very good quality teaching, learning, guidance and care, and students to flourish. Teachers' suggestions are welcomed and related work is acknowledged; this promotes high levels of dedication.

Teachers are encouraged to develop their practice. High levels of engagement in continuing professional development (CPD) is evident and there is an openness to sharing learning with colleagues, including an emerging willingness to learn from one another within the classroom. The latter is especially commended.

A broad and balanced curriculum is offered, and its continued relevance is supported by review and the work of a curriculum advisory committee. There is very high quality co-ordination of a vibrant TY programme, and high uptake levels are testament to students being provided with engaging learning opportunities. Current provision for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle, the additional timetabling of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in senior cycle, and provision for several relevant learning opportunities as part of TY, demonstrates that teaching and learning about Wellbeing is valued. Collaborative planning for delivery of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme is of an exceptionally high quality. Much good work is underway with regard to implementation of the Junior Cycle Framework, including a recent change of emphasis in school reports through provision for 'teacher reflections on student learning'.

The principal puts considerable thought into the timetable, and it demonstrates sound planning principles. Equality of opportunity is promoted through student-centred subject choice, subject sampling in TY, largely mixed-ability class organisation, and the concurrent timetabling of core subjects. Students have access to a range of extracurricular activities including individual and team sports, and cultural and community activities. An extensive co-curricular programme is also provided. High levels of staff volunteerism is central to this provision. The school's mission is realised through this formal and informal curriculum.

Learning monitors in each year group play an important role in tracking students' progress and in leading learning. Particular consideration is given by the fifth-year learning monitor to comparing students' current academic progress with outcomes in former cognitive ability tests. This valuable approach is further encouraged. 'Class clinics', organised in advance of parent-teacher meetings, promote discussion about students, as well as teacher reflection on how each individual student's participation and learning might be further supported.

The support and care provided to students is of a very high quality. The bedrock of the school's highly effective care structure is its unique approach to the organisation of the care team. The organisation of monthly meetings of all key personnel, which facilitates teamwork, discussion, decision-making, and action-planning, is key to its effectiveness. Additional supporting elements include a well-designed referral form and weekly assemblies.

Students' involvement in the development of a charter for positive behaviour as part of the recent review of the code of behaviour, serves as a fine example of the school working to foster personal and social responsibility amongst students. A 'Respect for All' team, and the relevant teachers' work to communicate and implement a 'no blame' policy, is proving effective in terms of supporting students' sense of security and belonging.

Provision for Guidance is prioritised. All related planning and review processes, organisational structures, and communication systems, are of an exceptionally high quality. The guidance programme is grounded in a set of objectives that promote student awareness and empowerment. Comprehensive programme planning by a highly committed guidance team is balanced in terms of providing personal, educational and vocational guidance. Incoming, first-year students are very well supported during the phases of admissions, transition and induction and related processes are inclusive.

Provision for students identified with SEN is ably led by a highly committed co-ordinator. Positive practices identified include effective sharing of information with all teachers, all-teacher involvement in the development of student learning plans, and very good 'support for all' within both whole-school structures and mainstream lessons. Moving forwards, senior leadership should look at reducing the number of teachers involved in the provision of additional support, whilst working towards ensuring that specifically trained teachers provide the majority of support. Serious consideration should also be given to the development of team teaching.

Senior leadership should ensure that students with SEN receive twenty-eight hours instruction time, and this should include prioritising provision of support during a time when a student is exempted from a subject. Simultaneously, relevant teachers should ensure that support provided is both focused and targeted, and designed to meet students' priority and identified needs.

The school regularly provides placements for student teachers, and the appropriate timetabling of cooperating teachers promotes learning for the student and established teacher alike. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcomed and included among the standards in the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for teachers as it can provide valuable professional benefits for teachers, student teachers, students and the teacher education institution.

### **Managing the organisation**

The senior leadership team, with the support and assistance of the board of management, is highly effective in its work in managing the school.

The current board is appropriately constituted and functions very effectively. Meetings are regular and well-organised. Members are clear on their role and responsibilities and responsive to statutory obligations. Their collectively diverse knowledge, experiences and qualifications informs discussion and positively influences consensual decision-making, as does the members' deep appreciation for the school's founding traditions and vision. Comprehensive minutes indicate that discussions are

wide ranging but most inclusive of teaching and learning. The principal's detailed report keeps members highly informed in relation to school matters.

The individual leadership and management styles of the senior leadership team are highly complementary. They form a cohesive team, have a highly productive, working relationship and demonstrate mutual respect and support for one another. Key decision-making is collaborative. The principal and deputy principal engage purposefully with relevant local and national bodies. Their individual role profiles are informed by a set of agreed tasks and responsibilities that draws on personal qualities and strengths. Their commitment to the school, and their related hard work, is palpable.

With the support and assistance of an equally dedicated staff, they successfully manage the smooth, day-to-day running of the school. More recently, assistant principals II are being facilitated to play a more active and influential role in development planning through weekly meetings with senior leadership. Responsibility for the monitoring and management of students' levels of adherence to expectations relating to attendance, punctuality and uniform is effectively shared between an assistant principal and all class teachers.

Highly successful communication systems have been implemented by senior leadership to support an inclusive sharing of information, the receipt of feedback and the making of well-informed decisions. Teachers are consulted and they feel that their opinions are valued.

The new school campus is sympathetic to the school's history whilst providing for the contemporary educational needs of the girls. The facilities are state-of-the-art, and the principal's attention to detail is evident in the noticeably high quality fittings and furnishings throughout. Provision for information communication technology (ICT) is exceptionally good, and well utilised for both communication and pedagogical purposes; its use as a tool to support student participation and learning in lessons should be further explored. The board's plan to undertake risk assessments for inclusion in the health and safety statement is fully encouraged.

The outcomes of the student, parent and teacher questionnaires demonstrate positive and often very high levels of satisfaction with school leadership and management.

### **Leading school development**

The leadership of school development and related work is of a very good quality, and is responsive to both external requirements and internally, identified priorities.

The senior leadership team, supported by high levels of cooperation from teachers, dealt very effectively with the challenges faced during the recent redevelopment of the school. The principal's deliberate inclusion of all stakeholders at key points helped to maintain a sense of ownership and belonging.

The approach adopted to the recent review of the post structure, and the resulting organisational changes, serves as a fine example of strategic planning by senior leadership.

The permanent section of the school plan is very well developed; it includes an extensive suite of policies. Well-informed by a related schedule, the board plays an active role in the development and review process, and consultation with teachers, parents and, as relevant, students is accommodated.

Developmental priorities, which have been compiled through consultation, have been identified; the preparation of corresponding action plans should be considered. It is recommended that the board

prepare and circulate an annual report to parents, which details progress made in relation to identified priorities.

Subject department planning is well supported; provision of a subject plan template, including a programme planning tool, is fostering consistency in approach. Subject department plans offer much detail in relation to provision and planning for teaching, learning and assessment and regular planning meetings are evident. As relevant, programmes of work, including units of learning, should identify learning outcomes and learning intentions, together with details of specific resources and assessment strategies. Action planning linked to review and evaluation activities is also encouraged. Plans contain teacher self-evaluation templates; *Looking At Our Schools* could further inform template design.

The parents' association is committed, enthusiastic and proactive. The principal keeps members informed and consults members regularly. The school website could be better utilised to communicate relevant business to the wider parent body.

Work to build and maintain constructive relationships with parents is apparent, and communication with parents is well facilitated, using both traditional and contemporary mechanisms. A series of productive and often mutually beneficial relationships has been forged with businesses, organisations and agencies.

### **Developing leadership capacity**

Senior leadership is very effective in building the leadership capacity of all stakeholders, through distributing roles and responsibilities and empowering staff, students and parents to help to build a relevant school into the future.

All interested teachers are encouraged and facilitated to take on leadership roles; relevant staff feel trusted. Teachers' response is very positive; they demonstrate high levels of commitment, alongside a very efficient and effective fulfilment of devolved responsibilities.

The principal recognises teamwork as central to the effective organisation and management of school life, and promotes and resources it accordingly. The revised post structure and the organisation of related responsibilities, for example, is such that two or more assistant principals are enabled to work collaboratively in pursuit of similar goals.

The school has an active senior students' council and is in the process of establishing a junior students' council. Students' views are valued and their insights are regularly requested as part of review processes. Opportunities for students to lead initiatives are many and varied.

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

The quality of teaching and learning was very good overall.

### **Learner outcomes and experiences**

In almost all lessons, the experience for learners was very positive and outcomes were very good.

A supportive atmosphere prevailed in classrooms, and this is supporting students to flourish, both academically and personally. Teacher and student interactions were characterised by mutual respect, pleasantness and good humour. Influenced by how teachers' worked and communicated, student-to-student interactions were equally positive. Teachers had appropriately realistic and high-

expectations of students' behaviour, participation and achievement. Classroom management was supported by very effective classroom routines and students were responsive to teachers' requests.

Many students were comfortable in asking questions, offering opinions, and risking incorrect responses. Teachers were appropriately generous in their encouragement, acknowledgement and affirmation of students. In almost all instances, students were engaged and focused, demonstrated an enjoyment of learning, and showed an understanding of what they were required to do.

Student motivation was most evident in lessons where teachers used a variety of strategies. Starter activities which activated prior learning or spiked students' interest were used very effectively in some lessons as motivational tools. At times, teachers' enthusiasm for their subject had a motivating effect on students.

In almost all instances, students were provided with opportunities to be active participants in their learning. In a small number of lessons, in order to provide for a better balance between teacher voice and input, and student voice and input, it was suggested that teachers get students doing, thinking and speaking more.

Learning, which was of a very good quality in almost all lessons, was demonstrated through task completion and through responses to questions. Incorporation of self-assessment and peer-assessment in some lessons supported students in reflecting on learning and identifying areas for improvement.

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

The quality of teaching was very good overall. Teachers' individual practice ranged from satisfactory to excellent.

Planning and preparation for lessons was generally of a very high quality. This was reflected in teachers' use of: well-designed presentations, a range of carefully prepared or selected resources, well-executed demonstrations and pre-sourced exemplars. Lessons were well-structured and, for the most part, well-paced.

In most lessons, learning intentions provided students with a clear pathway for their learning. Best practice was when these emphasised students' learning and activity rather than content. Teacher knowledge, expertise and confidence was very apparent. It was advised at times that, as appropriate, teachers adopt an 'ask versus tell' approach. By and large, highly student-centred and inclusive approaches to lesson delivery were observed. This was best when requirements were kept varied and challenging. In the majority of lessons, co-operative learning was facilitated, with the strategic grouping of students noted on occasion. Related activities were well organised. At times, an explicit sharing of the criteria for success, task-specific handouts, close monitoring, and periodic prompting were used to scaffold students' participation and achievement. This very good practice is further encouraged.

Teaching and learning was excellent when teachers provided tasks that promoted discovery and enquiry-based learning, experiential learning and creative engagement, and where high-quality processing of the activities supported whole-class agreement of key learning. Best practice in language lessons was when the target language was used throughout, by both teachers and students.



Questioning was noted as a key inclusion strategy and much good practice was observed; wait time was especially well utilised. In general, students' responses demonstrated good or higher levels of understanding, and particularly good practice was observed when students were asked to develop or justify their answers. While there was much evidence of teacher incorporation of formative assessment strategies, it is identified as an aspect for further development. A highly co-ordinated, phased and whole-school approach to this work is recommended.

In most lessons, homework designed to consolidate in-class learning was assigned; best practice was when teachers unpacked what a good answer or piece of work might look like. Correction of homework was also regularly facilitated. Provision for a little re-teaching at this point in a lesson was noted as very positive, as it provided students with a chance to check their answer before offering a response. This supported student self-assessment, built confidence levels and supported deeper understanding. In general, it was observed that teacher's use of written formative feedback when reviewing students' written work could be strengthened.

Across subjects, there was an appropriate focus on the development of examination techniques. High quality preparation of students for classroom-based assessments (CBAs) was noted.

Classrooms, which are teacher-based for the most part, incorporated displays of subject-specific vocabulary, educational posters and resources, and students' work. Learning centres, which supported students in collaborating during lessons, are in use in many classrooms. This is further encouraged.

ICT was integrated seamlessly into lessons. Although used primarily as a presentation technology, it was often very well used to provide high quality visuals to support learning. Active listening activities were recommended at times, where videos or other types of recordings were used. Interactive white boards are available in every classroom and when used, they were observed to be a very effective teaching tool. In some lessons, students were provided with opportunities to use ICT, and this should be further developed.

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

The school has made very good progress in implementing recommendations from previous evaluations.

#### **Leadership and Management**

Senior leadership has worked to address all of the key recommendations pertaining to leadership and management provided in the previous WSE-MLL report and very good progress is evident; further work is required in relation to the timetabling of Physical Education (PE) in senior cycle.

#### **Teaching and Learning**

Progress reports provided by relevant subject departments show that much work has been undertaken by teachers to develop aspects of planning, teaching, and learning. While best practice in relation to use of target language was observed in some language lessons, in other instances the use of the target language should be strengthened.

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

The school has engaged in good quality work relating to SSE and has a very high capacity for further development and improvement.

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

The school has been engaging with SSE since 2012. Good quality work is apparent, especially in the area of literacy, which includes an embedding of valuable strategies into teachers' classroom practice. Documentation arising from the school's SSE work indicates that the six-step process is well understood; some work has been informed by the collection of school-specific data as well as action plans.

Recent work being explored within SSE needs to be anchored more fully within the six-step process. The value in looking at one specific aspect at a time, until that aspect is at implementation stage, is also worth consideration. In line with identified school priorities, and the teaching and learning section of this report, it is suggested that a formative assessment focused SSE initiative would be very valuable at this point in time.

Management is advised of the need to produce and circulate an SSE report, a school improvement plan (SIP), and a related summary report for parents, on an annual basis.

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

The principal and deputy principal foster a culture of collaboration for reflection, innovation and improvement. Review and evaluation, both individual and collaborative, are well-embedded practices and related activities are ongoing. This is recognised by all as essential to the development of the school. The board, senior leadership and teaching staff are committed to doing the very best for students and, therefore, school improvement.

## 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 of St Angela's College welcome the advice and suggestions made in the report. They are very worthwhile and action will be taken, as part of the SSE process, to implement these immediately.

The Board is very pleased that the report recognises the holistic care given to our students, and in particular, the exceptionally high quality work being done in the area of pastoral care. Likewise, the Board is happy to note that the spirit of 'volunteerism' in the school was recognised during the evaluation, and all concerned will try to ensure that this cooperation and collaboration between teachers continues to be encouraged, expanded, and supported.

**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 agrees with the two recommendations provided in the report and will take steps to implement these in the coming academic school year.