

**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>	Causeway Comprehensive School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Causeway Tralee Co Kerry
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	70540E

**Date of Evaluation: 16-11-2016**



## **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>	14, 15 and 16 November 2016
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <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

Causeway Comprehensive School was founded in 1973, following an amalgamation between firstly St Patrick's Vocational School and Causeway Vocational School, and later between this school and Presentation Secondary School, Lixnaw. The school operates under the joint patronage of Kerry Education and Training Board (ETB) and the Presentation Order. It is a co-educational school of 523 students. It provides all available programmes as part of its curriculum: Junior Certificate, Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), an optional Transition Year (TY), Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and the established Leaving Certificate. 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

- Board members are clear on their roles and responsibilities and are committed to the delivery of a high-quality, holistic education.
- The quality of school leadership is very good, with working groups created to lead developments in key areas of learning.
- The commitment of teachers participating on the teaching and learning committee, upskilling themselves, identifying, and then sharing good practice is commended.
- The school has proactively engaged with the implementation of the Junior Cycle Student Award (JCSA).
- A whole-school approach to enhancing student wellbeing is being developed incrementally.
- A very strong and cohesive student support structure exists.
- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to very good, with scope for development identified in the areas of collaborative learning, differentiation and formative assessment in some lessons.
- A key strength was the respectful rapport between teachers and students and among students themselves.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teaching, learning and assessment should be a standing item on the agenda of subject department meetings.

- All hours allocated for special educational needs (SEN) should be allocated in line with Circular Letter 0070/2014.
- School management should review the effectiveness of the different programmes provided in the school and address areas for development that were identified during the inspection.
- Differentiated instruction and formative assessment strategies should be used to a greater extent in lessons.
- Purposeful, collaborative learning opportunities should be incorporated more into lessons, to further develop students' communication and teamwork skills.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. QUALITY OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

#### 1.1. School ownership and management:

The quality of school management is very good. The board of management is properly and democratically constituted, and clear on its role, responsibilities and statutory obligations. The board is committed to the school's ongoing development as a centre of learning. A very good level of experience exists among board members. Commendably, members have undertaken training provided by Kerry ETB.

The board functions very effectively in all aspects of school leadership and management. In partnership with the school community, the board has identified a range of developmental priorities, which includes school refurbishment.

Communication between the board and stakeholders is good. An agreed report of board meetings is conveyed to the relevant partners. The principal issues an annual report to the board on the operation and performance of the school, which includes progress in relation to school self-evaluation (SSE).

Good communication mechanisms exist between the board and its stakeholders, between the principal and staff, and between the parents' council and the general parent body. The results of the parent and teacher surveys conducted as part of the evaluation suggest that these mechanisms could improve. The school should investigate ways, including via the new website, in which communication mechanisms could be enhanced.

The representatives of the parents' council, interviewed as part of the evaluation, were enthusiastic about the school, communicate well with, and are committed to supporting, the school. The parents' council is well informed in relation to school matters and, commendably, has been involved in policy development. However, it is suggested that the parents' council develop a protocol outlining its roles and responsibilities. The council could also identify and agree areas where it could undertake leadership roles.

Almost all parents surveyed agreed that it is a welcoming school and the vast majority of students surveyed agreed with the statement "there is a good atmosphere in the school".

#### 1.2. Effectiveness of leadership for learning

The leadership of the senior management team is very good. Almost all parents surveyed agreed with the statement "the school is well run". The new senior management team has developed a very good working relationship, with defined roles and responsibilities. The principal and deputy principal are forward looking, and question their practice through personal and collaborative reflection.

Senior management works very effectively to promote a culture of reflecting on and developing teaching practice. While senior management and Kerry ETB encourage teachers to develop their teaching, learning and assessment practices, and appreciate the richness of experience that teachers bring back to inform future learning experiences for students, the school should devise strategies to monitor the impact of continuing professional development (CPD) in the classroom. Management also encourages teachers to share practices that have proven successful at improving students' learning.

The recently established teaching and learning committee will have a key role in identifying and sharing good practice. The commitment of teachers involved in this committee is commended.

The principal creates and motivates staff working groups to lead developments in key areas of learning, thus building leadership capacity. Particularly noteworthy is the provision of opportunities to teachers who do not hold posts of responsibility to undertake leadership roles. These teachers are very enthusiastic about their opportunities for leadership in developing whole-school improvement.

Post-holders also have a role in whole-school management and planning. Management and teachers have identified and prioritised duties to meet the emerging needs of the school. In this context, it is important that the review of the posts of responsibility is ongoing in order that: key school needs continue to be met; there is balance and equity in the roles; and change in responsibilities is facilitated so that teachers gain the widest experience possible. It also recommended that the post-holders and others in leadership roles meet a member of senior management at least once a year to review progress.

A professional and caring teaching staff supports and fosters students' holistic development. A spirit of volunteerism is evident in many ways. An extensive range of extra-curricular activities includes sport, participation in the BT Young Scientist Competition and the school musical. It was reported that in a number of subject areas, extra support is offered to students outside class times. These activities and supports have a very positive impact on students.

Teachers are allocated to the school by Kerry ETB. Senior management deploys available teachers as appropriately as possible to meet students' curricular needs. Senior management reported that there is a shortfall in teacher allocation in a very small minority of subject areas. Kerry ETB, in consultation with management, should ensure that the teaching resources allocated fully meet the needs of the school.

Senior management actively promotes innovative and purposeful planning. This is evidenced by, for example, the highly effective delivery of the wellbeing programme in the school.

Commendably, a range of policies has been developed in consultation with partners, with a timeframe for review and updating of policies also devised.

Subject plans examined indicate that subject department planning is established, but requires further development. The level of detail is uneven across the sample of subject plans examined. A common template should be agreed at whole-school level. As observed in some subject department plans, headings should prompt discussion and thought in areas such as learning outcomes, methodologies, assessment including formative assessment, literacy and numeracy and resources to be used.

It is positive that topics to be taught and modes of assessment are agreed at subject department meetings. Building on this good practice, it is recommended that teaching, learning and assessment be a standing item on the agenda of subject department meetings. Subject departments should discuss, agree, implement and evaluate the success of agreed teaching and learning strategies.

Leadership within the student body is very effective. Articulate and enthusiastic student council members were very positive about their roles within the school, and the support of the liaison teacher. The school is currently considering shorter terms of office for council members. This would facilitate increased involvement in the student council by a greater number of students.

Students' abilities to undertake leadership roles are supported by relevant training provided by Kerry ETB. The student council has led the school's acquisition of its first green flag. It has also provided input into the development of policies and of the canteen.

Commendably, the school operates open and inclusive enrolment practices. The board has agreed to amend the admissions policy and remove conditional clauses so that the policy reflects the school's inclusive practices. It was suggested that maximum enrolment numbers be included in the policy. Appropriate monitoring of attendance takes place, and this is important in ensuring that the focused interventions progress to achieve the targets outlined in the DEIS plan.

Overall, effective curriculum-related planning and implementation tries to meet the needs of the students. A good subject range is offered in both junior cycle and senior cycle. The recent introduction of LCA and Spanish illustrate management's commitment to providing a student-centred curriculum. Time allocation for subjects is appropriate in almost all instances. It is recommended that the low class-contact time in Science be rectified for next year's third-year cohort.

School planning has involved considerable engagement with, and discussion around, the teaching, learning and implementation of the JCSA. A coordinator oversees its implementation. This proactive approach to facilitating its implementation is commended.

Currently, the JCSP is delivered in conjunction with the SEN programme. It is recommended that the coordination of the JCSP be separated from SEN. The policy and practice for admission to the JCSP should be revised so that it is inclusive of all students who are at risk of early school leaving. There is no evidence of the use of JCSP statements at classroom level. The explicit planning for, and use of, JCSP strategies and profile statements across all subjects is recommended, as these provide negotiated pathways to learning.

Student uptake of TY is low, although it has increased slightly this year. A school-based review has resulted in slight adjustments to the programme following input from students. Gathering the views of the current third-year cohort and their parents, and formal input from teachers, might assist in providing a programme which would interest a greater number of students.

LCVP is mandatory for all students in fifth year. The school should continue to monitor the effectiveness of this approach. To ensure beneficial learning opportunities for students who will only undertake the LCVP programme for one year, the school should ensure that the fifth-year programme includes links between the world of work and Guidance, and student involvement in an enterprise activity.

The development of a core planning team is recommended to ensure the successful implementation of LCA. To ensure all aspects of the programme are implemented, a two-year plan should be devised.

It is very good practice that subject blocks are based on open choice in senior cycle and students receive good support when choosing subjects. As recommended in the previous whole-school evaluation, the school should review its policy of asking students to choose subjects in advance of entry into first year and consider the introduction of subject sampling. This would allow students make informed choices.

Commendably, an academic council has been set up to monitor student progress. It is positive that Kerry ETB undertakes analysis of student performance in certificate examinations. Students' uptake at higher level, and performance across subjects varies in certificate examinations. It is recommended that subject departments analyse and interpret certificate examination data with a view to identifying trends and setting targets for improvement. These targets should be documented in subject plans

together with agreed teaching and learning strategies for their attainment. Departments should agree and implement teaching and learning strategies in an effort to meet these targets.

The SEN co-ordinator is very committed to the delivery of support for students. It is very positive that five teachers have undertaken postgraduate training in SEN. It is also good practice that a team of teachers with expertise in the area of SEN supports the co-ordinator and delivers much of the supports for students. Weekly meetings between the co-ordinator and two of these teachers, to discuss any issues arising, assist in devising a coordinated approach.

It is recommended that a core SEN planning team be established, and timetabled to meet formally at least once a week. The experience and expertise of this team should help the work of the co-ordinator and provide management with the information needed to timetable appropriate supports that would meet the identified needs of the students. The special needs assistants are very clear on their roles and provide good support for the students in their care.

The school operates a number of models of support. Support was delivered in the main through withdrawal from classes. In some instances, the organisation of the groups of students being withdrawn was observed to be too diverse to meet students' individual and identified needs. In line with best practice, the needs of the students should be prioritised when organising the groups of students, and students' needs should be matched to the skills of the teachers who will provide the additional supports.

Team teaching was also employed as a model of support. However, in some instances, the needs of teachers, timetabling and allocation of teachers, rather than the needs of students were being met. In order for the students to receive quality provision; the needs of the students should inform where team teaching is employed; and the model should be continued in each of the lessons across the week and not fragmented. The teaching teams should plan to have clear roles within the lessons. Where this was seen to be most effective, the teachers were well prepared and had clearly identified roles.

A significant number of teaching hours have been allocated to support the needs of students with SEN. These are not being used in their entirety for their intended purpose. As a matter of priority, all hours should be allocated to meet the needs of students with SEN as per Circular Letter 0070/2014. The additional hours allocated for SEN should be planned for and included in the timetable at the time of its construction, to ensure continuity and quality provision.

Commendably, a whole-school draft guidance plan provides a framework for the integration of the range of structures which support student welfare in the school. The following should also be incorporated into the plan: the roles of the year head, chaplain and other personnel who have specific care roles; the roles of Wellbeing, Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in relation to student support; and the critical incident policy. The board should then proceed to ratify the plan.

A student support team effectively leads the valuable provision of student care. Year heads have key pastoral and disciplinary roles. A cohesive approach to student care and co-ordination is very effectively facilitated through weekly student support team meetings and fortnightly year-head meetings. Student support is enhanced by the ongoing communication that the home-school-community liaison (HSCL) coordinator has with parents.

A range of other whole-school activities very successfully enhance student support. These include the Personal Safety Board, the mentoring and transition programmes for first-year students, the recently introduced merit system and the school completion programme (SCP). There is a balance between

guidance and counselling in the school. In line with best practice, the regular timetabling of Guidance in TY is recommended.

A whole-school approach to enhancing student wellbeing is being developed incrementally in advance of the formal rollout of the junior cycle curricular programme as outlined in Circular 24/16. This is very good. A formal input of guidance into this programme is planned. In addition, the school is currently auditing the programme with a view to identifying links across the curriculum, and advice is being devised to assist teachers in promoting wellbeing across all subject areas. This is very good practice. RSE is delivered in senior cycle through Religion.

Parents receive good information regarding their child's progress. All, or almost all, parents surveyed are aware of the school's code of behaviour and anti-bullying policy. Parents were very happy with classes provided for them by the school.

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

Overall, the school is well maintained. Corridors and general areas are visually stimulating. The school has recently been awarded the Green Flag. Senior management has a vision for improving the learning environment. Many classrooms were print-rich and thus were supportive of teaching and learning. Such learning environments should be in place throughout the school. Management is aware of the limitations to curricular provision of some aspects of the building. For example, programmes such as TY and LCA place a huge demand on the single computer room. The results of the teachers' survey indicate that only some teachers have good access to information and communications technology (ICT) facilities. Management has improved access to ICT as much as possible.

The TV display in the foyer is very good for maintaining a flow of information to the school community and the new website is also a good communication tool. The canteen provides a good service.

The health and safety policy and statement have been developed using external expertise. A minority of subject departments have conducted risk assessments. The school should review its policy and statement in line with the guidelines produced by the Department of Education and Skills and the Health and Safety Authority. Risk assessment documentation is required for all areas of the school.

## 2. QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

### 2.1. The quality of learning and teaching

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to very good. In almost all lessons, learning intentions were shared with students. On occasion, it was recommended that these learning intentions be more specific, written in student-accessible language and be used by students as part of reviewing their own learning.

A key strength of the school was the respectful rapport between teachers and students and among students themselves. Students engaged purposefully in learning activities when given the opportunity to do so.

Differentiated learning was most effectively facilitated where students worked at their own pace on individual or group tasks and when additional, more challenging, tasks were set for the more-able students. Questioning in some lessons also facilitated differentiation. In some lessons observed, more consideration should have been given to ensuring a balance of teacher-directed and student-led activities, and differentiating content, task, process and lesson pace.

In many lessons, students were provided with the opportunity to work either independently or collaboratively. Where collaborative work was very effective: students had a clear understanding of their roles within the group activity; the activity was purposeful and clearly linked to the learning intentions; and tasks were well-structured and scaffolded. However, student engagement in learning was reduced in lessons where collaborative learning opportunities were missed. Well-structured and purposeful collaborative learning opportunities should be incorporated into lessons as much as possible in order to further develop students' communication and teamwork skills.

Commendably, in some instances, very good structured group work provided peer tutoring opportunities, which facilitated the development of students' communication skills, their self-esteem and their learning.

Where in-class support for student learning was very good, very high quality planning and preparation of activities allowed teachers to circulate between the groups to support student learning. In lessons where team-teaching was observed to be very effective, a clear division of roles between the teachers was evident, thus enhancing students' learning experiences.

Formative assessment took place mainly through questioning, and formative commentary was observed in students' written work in a minority of instances. Formative assessment strategies should be used to a greater extent in lessons.

Student learning was highest in the lessons where students were thinking, doing, discussing, and collaborating. It should be noted that very good practice was observed, and in such lessons, student participation and learning was maximised. In a small number of lessons, there was scope for the development of teaching practice.

It is good to note that peer observation among teachers has been used in a minority of instances. Extending this across subject departments would support a greater sharing of the observed very good practice.

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

Overall, the school has made good progress in relation to this area.

#### **3.1 Management**

The school has made good progress in implementing recommendations related to the support given to subjects. In relation to teaching and learning, management should look at how the feedback from inspection reports can be disseminated to the whole staff. To enhance students' learning experiences, the school should consider incorporating subject sampling for first-year students, as was previously recommended.

#### **3.2 Learning and teaching**

Overall, some progress has been made in implementing recommendations. However, some recommendations should be implemented to a much greater extent. The efforts made by some

teachers to facilitate effective, structured group work is commended. More active learning opportunities should be provided in lessons to enhance students' participation in their own learning.

Opportunities for student oral work should be integrated into all language lessons as appropriate. In a minority of lessons, a problem-solving approach engaged students in their learning and promoted critical thinking. This approach should be used to a greater extent across subjects.

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

Commendably, a culture of change to facilitate improvement of learning experiences for students has been initiated. The enhancement of distributed leadership opportunities for non-post holders and the setting up of the personal safety board are examples of changes enriching students' learning experiences.

The approach taken to DEIS planning is very good and the quality of DEIS planning is good. An overarching DEIS team effectively delegates the leadership of different aspects of DEIS to specific teams. The SSE process is central to the development of the DEIS plans, which are developed in consultation with the teachers. A new DEIS plan has been devised, with targets based on the analysis of gathered evidence. Strategies to achieve these targets have been identified at whole-school, department and class level. Building on this good practice, it is recommended that strategies at classroom level focus more specifically on teaching approaches and learning experiences. As part of its review, the DEIS teams should now focus on implementation and subsequent evaluation of the impact of agreed strategies at classroom level.

Senior management and teachers have the capacity to implement and drive change and review the effectiveness of these changes. It is important that time is taken for these changes to embed and for their effectiveness to be monitored.

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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal, teachers and board of management at the conclusion of the evaluation. 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.

## 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 is very pleased with the findings of the whole school inspection. The Board appreciates the relevance of the recommendations and will endeavour to implement the suggested improvements in the coming year.

## **Area 2 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 will immediately begin the implementation process and believes that the majority of the recommended improvements can be achieved within the next school year. In May 2018, the Board will review progress regarding the implementation of the recommendations in the WSE report. The Board of Management along with school management and staff have already taken action in a number of key areas as the allocated hours for SEN has been addressed at the time of the timetable construction so to meet the needs of our SEN students. School management has already implemented the recommendation of subject sampling for our incoming first years in September 2017. Furthermore, the school has adopted a new Admissions policy in May 2017, which addresses the recommendations of the inspection report. In March 2017, school management has already ensured that students elected to the Student Council are elected for a shorter terms of office to enable a number of students experience the role of the Student Council. Since our inspection, senior management has ensured that a common agenda be given to all department meetings whereby, teaching, learning, and assessment are a standing item. As part of a Kerry ETB initiative, the school will commence work with the PDST in 2017/18 on a 3 year project to enhance Subject Department Planning aimed at improving standards of planning, teaching and learning and assessment. School Management in consultation with staff have separated JCSP programme from SEN. In April of 2017, a new JCSP coordinator was put in place who has already addressed the recommendations made in the inspection report. The School has already addressed the allocation of class contact in Science for 3rd years in September 2017. School Management has ensured that LCVP will not be mandatory for fifth years. Since the WSE inspection, the school has further enhanced its teaching and learning strategies from instructional strategies workshops such as from Professor Barrie Bennett as well as on-line workshops from such "Battelle for Kids" programme. The school also has set priorities for the Teaching and Learning Team in 2017/18 such as teacher observation etc. A review structure is in place where post-holders and others in leadership meet individually with Senior Management in December and again in April. The Board of Management, senior management and staff have embraced the recommendations of the WSE and are determined to implement these recommendations with two years.