



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Whole School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Presentation Secondary School
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Greenville Listowel Co Kerry
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	61380H
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	27/02/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	10/10/2025

What is a 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. Quality of support for students' wellbeing

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.

Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and tackle bullying

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:	
<i>Child Protection</i>	<i>Anti-bullying</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">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 (revised 2023).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 (revised 2023).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	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)</i> or <i>Bí Cineálta (2024)</i> and this policy is reviewed annually.2. The school's current anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils.3. The school has appropriate initiatives in place to promote a positive and inclusive school culture and environment in line with their current policy.4. All teachers visited report that they have read the school's current policy on anti-bullying and that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities in preventing and tackling bullying.

<p>and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023).</p> <p>7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE).</p> <p>8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.</p>	
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Whole-school evaluation – management, leadership and learning

Dates of inspection	25/02/2025 – 27/02/2025
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 groups	<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

Presentation Secondary School, Listowel is an all-girls, voluntary secondary school operating under the trusteeship of Catholic Education An Irish Schools Trust (CEIST). The school offered the Junior Cycle, Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LP), an optional Transition Year programme (TY), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and the Leaving Certificate (Established) (LCE). The school had an allocation of one special class to support students with autism. At the time of the evaluation, the school had an enrolment of 340 students.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was very good and included the provision of some excellent learning experiences.
- The quality of leadership and management was excellent; the senior leadership team, supported by an experienced and dedicated board of management, had been both strategic and proactive in ensuring that students' educational and holistic needs were met in a manner that espoused the ethos of the school, was forward-thinking and educationally progressive.
- The senior leadership team had a vision for the school that embraced distributed leadership and empowered staff, by inviting meaningful collaboration with staff and students; a focus on the development of the posts of responsibility structure in the last three years had facilitated many positive changes in the school.
- The needs of students were at the centre of decision-making processes and staff were committed to making the values and ethos of the school visible in all aspects of school life.
- The agency of students in the life of the school was noted as a particular strength; through a very wide range of co-curricular, cross-curricular and extra-curricular activities and initiatives, the school provided students with extensive and varied opportunities to develop holistically and to lead in areas best suited to their interests and potential.
- The quality of support for students' wellbeing was very good; teachers had access to key information about students that supported teaching for wellbeing and the integrated nature of student support and whole-school guidance further supported this provision.

Recommendations

- Very purposeful work in the area of school self-evaluation (SSE) has been carried out in the last two years; to further extend the impact of these strategies on student

experience, the senior leadership team, in collaboration with staff, should distinguish the SSE strategies related to teaching and learning, as experienced in the classroom, from the overall school improvement plan.

- There were a number of policies that would benefit from being more closely aligned in their language and aims to the students' positive lived experience of the school, most notably the code of behaviour and the assessment policies; the board, in collaboration with the school community, should review these policies to ensure they reflect the positive lived experience of students.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning was very good and included the provision of some excellent learning experiences where students were active in meaningful learning activities; teachers should now consider how whole-school strategies related to formative feedback and active methodologies can further support student experiences and outcomes.

Learner outcomes and experiences

There was a safe, respectful and inclusive atmosphere throughout lessons. Students were clearly comfortable with their teachers, and this supported student autonomy and engagement. As a result of high expectations, consistently set and communicated, students were observed to be organised and ready for learning from the outset of lessons and prepared to share prior knowledge as a means of advancing the new learning of that day's lesson.

In almost all lessons, learning intentions were clearly communicated to students and teachers set expectations with regard to outcomes. Where most effective, this structured approach facilitated students to be confident in their work and learning, and students shared opinions, questioned, supported and challenged each other appropriately on many occasions.

In the most effective lessons, an understanding of the importance and impact of teaching for wellbeing was very evident. Students were provided with opportunities to create, to connect with their own experience and that of others, to make mistakes, to assess their progress, and to enjoy learning. In the majority of lessons, experiences were student-centred and "learning by doing" was to the fore. Teachers and student peers fostered a sense of belonging through collaborative activities and open discussions. Mutual respect encouraged students to take academic risks, question, and develop confidence in their abilities. In many classes, students demonstrated curiosity and a sense of agency in advancing their learning. On a small number of occasions, students were passive in their learning or did not participate as fully as expected, and advice was shared in relation to engaging students in this space.

Students had the opportunity to use digital technologies to extend learning in a range of ways which included its use to activate prior knowledge, conduct independent research, collaborate on projects, provide feedback to peers and present work in a variety of modes. The extension of the use of digital tools to support learning and teaching could be considered for incorporation into the school's SSE plan, building on the very good practice observed.

In TY, students used a reflective journal to support their development as learners throughout the many experiences offered to them in that programme. Students spoke very highly of the use of this type of journal as a means of documenting and reflecting on their learning and experiences. It is worth considering how the use of this reflective tool could be expanded into other year groups, to support the development of life-long learning skills, especially in LCA.

Teachers' individual and collective practice

Planning and preparation for all lessons was of a very high standard. Teachers planned lessons that provided students with wide-ranging, engaging activities. Wellbeing indicators were used explicitly in some lessons, and students were responsive to the inclusion of these indicators. In

many cases, teachers established clear expectations while maintaining warmth and approachability and created spaces where students felt safe to express themselves.

High quality visuals, props and demonstrations were used in almost all lessons, and instructions for student activity were clear, focused and concise. Teachers displayed very good depth of content knowledge and were confident in their subject areas. Most lessons included the use of active methodologies and included opportunities for the development of students' critical thinking, communication and problem-solving skills. While the importance of skill development as an outcome was very clearly communicated to students in some lessons, in others this focus was less obvious and as a result students did not always get the most out of collaborative tasks. On occasion there was a need to extend the use of active methodologies within the classroom and ensure that lessons were suitably challenging for the full range of students. This would provide them with greater opportunity to develop the skills required by the curriculum independently of their teachers, and address some of the imbalance of teacher-student voice observed in a small number of lessons.

Teachers were attentive to all students, especially those with special educational needs, and/or to those with English as an additional language. They provided individual attention at key times, and either created or sourced bespoke differentiated resources to support best outcomes for the individual student.

Informal assessment was of a good standard overall. Questioning was a key strategy to harness student voice. However, in a small number of lessons the extensive use of global questioning or a lack of wait time meant some students did not have an opportunity to participate or engage with this strategy and this needs consideration. Structures for formal assessment were well articulated in school policy, and students had the opportunity to reflect on their progress at different stages across the year.

Teachers closely monitored students' participation and engagement during individual and groups tasks; in a small number of cases earlier teacher intervention during these activities would have benefited the outcomes for all students.

Digital technologies were used by some teachers to share student work and provide very effective and immediate formative feedback to students. Students spoke highly about the use of the school's digital platform for this purpose. Teachers, both across and within their subject departments should consider how this use of digital technology can support and develop students' agency and assessment literacy throughout their time in school.

The overall quality of subject planning was very good. Teachers collaborated in developing plans and were cognisant of the school's focus on establishing a positive and inclusive culture, strategies for which were documented in some of the plans.

Very purposeful and proactive work in the area of school self-evaluation (SSE) had been carried out in the last two years. To extend the impact of these strategies on student experience, it is timely now for the senior leadership team, in collaboration with staff, to distinguish the SSE strategies related to teaching and learning, that are to be more frequently experienced by students in the classroom, from those in the overall school improvement plan that are external to the classroom. Staff could explore their collective expectations in areas such as the development of formative assessment skills and use of digital technologies, or other areas identified by the school that address students' needs. This approach would make best use of the very good and excellent practices observed.

2. Quality of school leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management was excellent; the senior leadership team, supported by an experienced and dedicated board of management, had been strategic and proactive in ensuring that students' educational and holistic needs were met in a manner that espoused the ethos of the school, was forward-thinking and educationally progressive.

Leading learning and teaching

Senior leadership and the board, with the support of staff, had created a very comprehensive and strategic school improvement plan. Through regular review of this plan, the school showed how the needs of students were at the centre of decision-making processes. The clarity of the plan in relation to outcomes, targets and timelines was also evident, as was the rationale for how the areas included would meet the needs of the students. The plan, and its enactment, were very much a lived experience in the school and aligned with the *Looking at Our School* quality framework. The plan showed the breadth of experience that the school desired students to have in order to ensure they left the school as resilient, capable, empathetic and agentic citizens.

Senior leadership placed high regard on the holistic development of each student as unique individuals, while respecting their dignity, agency and cultural diversity. Through the phased introduction of restorative practice, and programmes such as *Helping Hands*, staff were supported in making the values and ethos of the school visible throughout the school's culture. The lived experience of this focus on individual development was very positively communicated to inspectors by both the student and parent focus groups.

The school self-evaluation (SSE) team played an instrumental role in supporting the development of active methodologies and collaborative approaches across the school, and linked with other teams, such as the teaching and learning team. They provided spaces in which staff could safely try out and share experiences in relation to creative and innovative approaches in their classrooms to advance learning experiences.

The school had forged many connections with external agencies within the community, and these relationships enhanced and supported students' progress and experience; it also firmly embedded the school as a part of community life in Listowel. The integrated nature of whole-school guidance across the curriculum, combined with these external links, further supported students' holistic development.

Managing the organisation

Both senior leadership and the board showed excellent proactivity and foresight in embracing and planning for educational change. Through well-planned partnership with a local boys school, the school was able to provide students with a very wide range of subjects, supporting the provision of a broad curriculum, and greater choice in the combination of subjects available. In addition, this partnership sent a very positive message to the students about their capabilities and moved students beyond subject choice based on outdated norms.

Resources were very effectively used and allocated, including those related to special educational needs (SEN). Leadership and the SEN team closely analysed the needs of students, and endeavoured to integrate students into the life of the school as best fitted those students' needs. Over the last number of years, management had made concerted efforts to both reduce the number of teachers involved in the delivery of SEN so that students would experience consistency in this provision, and to strengthen the core SEN team. This focus highlighted the importance of all students' progress in the school and was to be commended.

The physical environment of the school was very well maintained and supported a welcoming atmosphere. The board had overseen the development required for a new building which will further enhance students' experiences.

While very good planning was in place for SPHE (including RSE), students in senior cycle were unclear as to the provision of RSE in sixth year. In enacting future changes at senior cycle management should ensure that all students, regardless of subject choices, are able to access and participate in RSE.

An extensive range of policies was in place and included a cycle of regular review. Given the significant changes in structure and approach in the school in the last number of years there were a number of policies that would benefit from being more closely aligned in their language and aims to the students' lived experience of the school, most notably the code of behaviour and the assessment policies. The board, in collaboration with the school community, should

review these policies to ensure they reflect the aspirations of the board and the positive experiences of students currently in the school.

Leading school development

The guiding vision for the school and its realisation as a lived experience was very well-developed. Communication to all stakeholders about this vision had been very effective. There were multiple, interconnected teams that operated in the school and for teams such as SEN, student support, year head and SSE teams there were timetabled meetings which supported the exchange of information, decision-making processes and the sharing of ideas. In addition there were teams that took responsibility for development of other areas of school life such as creative schools, *Bí Cineálta*, ethos and inclusion. In many cases, these teams also included students, and sometimes parents.

Senior leadership and the board understood the importance of the provision of effective training and of support for staff in bringing about change. As a result, staff had participated in a very wide range of professional learning opportunities, which enhanced their capabilities in their roles as well as providing a forum for sharing their extensive experience.

Active and well-documented staff meetings provided space for teachers to share updates from their respective development teams which further supported communication and cohesion, which was key to positive school development.

Communication within and beyond the school was excellent. Weekly updates provided staff and parents with extensive information on the work and life of the school. The many successes of the school in both local and national competitions and initiatives regularly featured in local media, and, as well as acknowledging student successes, enhanced external perception of the school. Teachers noted that through these modes of communication, they felt informed about school development both in their own areas, and that of other areas of the school, which lead to a feeling of cohesion about school development. Students, parents and teachers felt consulted and gave many examples of situations where ideas or suggestions they had would be taken on board by senior management, with action swiftly following.

Developing leadership capacity

The principal and deputy principal, a relatively recently formed team, had a vision for the school that embraced distributed leadership and empowered staff, by inviting meaningful collaboration with staff and with students. The level of reflectivity and commitment shown by this team to enhance, improve, strengthen and promote leadership structures that facilitated staff to lead and have ownership in key areas and that were sustainable and responsive to the current and future needs of students, was excellent.

There had been a very positive focus on the development the of posts of responsibility structure in the last three years, which had both lead to and facilitated many changes in the school and teams over the last three years. Staff spoke very positively about these changes, as well as the support and time provided to them to lead in these areas across the school, which included opportunities provided by management for them to reflect on their work.

The agency of students in the life of the school and the opportunity for student leadership, was noted as a particular strength. Through the provision of a very wide range of co-curricular, cross-curricular and extra-curricular activities and initiatives, the school provided students with wide and varied opportunities to develop holistically and to lead in areas best suited to their interest and potential. The students particularly noted the re-introduction of the school musical in the last number of years as being a very positive development in this regard.

3. Quality of support for students' wellbeing

The quality of support for students' wellbeing was very good. A hallmark of the school was the holistic nature of student support, and the understanding of the importance of integrating whole-

school guidance into the everyday experience of students. Support structures that promoted student wellbeing were seen as essential and the school aligned its support systems with key wellbeing indicators to ensure that students receive targeted assistance based on their individual needs.

A multi-tiered support approach, which included the school guidance counsellor, class tutors, year heads, mental health resources, peer mentoring, and student support teams helped students feel connected and understood. Early intervention programmes identified students who might be struggling and provided appropriate resources before issues escalated. The school had a well-established transition programme that supported first-year students, and these students noted the positive effect of the school's *Helping Hands* programme in developing relationships and friendships when coming into first year. Provision of support at other key points of transition was also well-planned and managed.

A well-integrated guidance system benefitted all students by ensuring that personal, academic, and career development support was embedded throughout school life. Rather than treating guidance as a separate entity, the school weaved it into the curriculum and daily operations and created an holistic support network for students. Subject departments and teachers integrated guidance across subjects, co-curricular and extracurricular activities, which helped students feel continuously supported in many aspects of their lives and helped ensure they were well-prepared for both academic success and personal growth. Likewise, personal development lessons covered issues such as resilience, mental health, and social skills to equip students for future challenges.

Beyond lessons, the wider school environment promoted inclusivity, appreciation for all cultures and kindness through peer mentoring programmes, student councils, and opportunities for leadership. Awards for different aspects of students' development, opportunities for access to STEM programmes, leadership work and community involvement and work experience promoted individual interests, skills and needs. The school emphasised emotional intelligence and conflict resolution by helping students build strong interpersonal skills, by reducing incidents of bullying, and by fostering a culture of respect and empathy. Wellbeing initiatives, such as mindfulness programmes and student-led mental health campaigns, contributed to a positive school culture that prioritised self-care and resilience. Students, supported by staff, played an active role in this regard on many school committees to inform policy and progress work in these areas.

In the course of the work outlined above, the school gave extensive leadership opportunities to students outside the classroom in co-curricular and extra-curricular spaces to develop a range of skills. Teachers and subject departments should now consider how these leadership opportunities can be planned for and provided to all students within classroom settings, and further support skill development.

Informed by the experience of the many teams working on different aspects of school life, some of which are mentioned throughout the report, and by consistently assessing wellbeing indicators through student surveys, feedback sessions and staff observations, the school tailored supports for students' wellbeing to be very effective and responsive to evolving needs.

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	Examples of descriptive terms
Excellent	Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of learners. This provision provides an example for other schools and settings of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Excellent; exemplary; outstanding; exceptionally high standard; with very significant strengths
Very good	Provision that is very good is very effective in meeting the needs of learners and is of a very high standard. There is potential to build on existing strengths to achieve an excellent standard.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful
Good	Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to build on existing strengths in order to address the aspects to be developed and achieve a very good standard.	Good; of good quality; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; strengths outweigh the shortcomings; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist
Requires improvement to achieve a good standard	Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard is not sufficiently effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is good or better.	Fair; less than effective; less than sufficient; evident weaknesses that are impacting on learning; experiencing difficulty; shortcomings outweigh strengths; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard	Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard is not meeting the needs of learners. There is immediate need for significant action to address the areas of concern.	Weak; poor; ineffective; insufficient; unacceptable; experiencing significant difficulties; serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated; requiring significant change, development and improvement to be effective

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 Presentation Secondary School wishes to formally acknowledge and welcome the excellent Whole School Evaluation — Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE- MLL) report following the inspection conducted in February 2025.

We commend the senior leadership team and staff for their collaborative efforts in realising the school's vision and ethos and we are pleased with the recognition of the high standard of teaching and learning.

The Board particularly welcomes the acknowledgement of student voice and leadership as a key strength, alongside the breadth of curricular and extracurricular provision.

The Board also notes with appreciation the commendation of effective communication with all stakeholders, and the effective and appropriate use of resources to support students with Special Educational Needs. These practices ensure consistency of provision and place students at the centre of decision-making.

The Board remains committed to continuous improvement and to fostering a nurturing, inclusive, and high-achieving school environment.

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 of Presentation Secondary School warmly welcomes the affirming and constructive recommendations outlined in the WSE-MLL report. The Board is encouraged by the recognition of the school's strong foundations and is committed to further enhancing the areas identified, in keeping with the school's ethos of continuous improvement.

The positive and proactive work in School Self-Evaluation (SSE), already embedded in many aspects of school life, will be further extended to enrich the classroom experience of students.

The school will continue to build on the excellent practices noted in the report, particularly in the areas of formative assessment and the integration of digital technologies.

In line with the reports observations, the Board will oversee a review of the Code of Behaviour and Assessment Policies to ensure that the language used reflects the positive and respectful lived experience of students, as highlighted by the Inspectorate.

The Board is pleased to note the ongoing development of the core Special Educational Needs (SEN) team, which continues to be strengthened to meet the evolving needs of students and to maintain the high standards of support acknowledged in the report.

Finally, the Board welcomes the recommendation regarding Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) and will ensure that provision is clearly communicated and accessible to all students, reinforcing the inclusive and supportive culture of the school.