



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Promotion of Wellbeing in Schools Evaluation (Pilot)

Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile /School name

Clonaslee College

Seoladh na scoile /School address

Clonaslee, Co Laois

Uimhir rolla /Roll number

714700

Dáta na cigireachta /Date of evaluation

25th September 2024

What is a Promoting Wellbeing in Schools evaluation?

Promoting of Wellbeing in Schools evaluations report on the quality of a school's work to prevent and address bullying behavior, and to promote students' wellbeing. They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of wellbeing promotion in the school.

How to read this report

During this inspection, the inspectors evaluated provision for wellbeing promotion under the following headings:

1. Preventing and addressing bullying behaviour
2. Culture and Environment
3. Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)
4. Policy and Planning
5. Relationships and partnerships

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; a response was not received from the board.

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. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013) or Bí Cineálta (2024) 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 students. 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.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Promoting wellbeing in schools evaluation

Date of inspection	23 rd –25 th September 2024
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotion of wellbeing workshop with students, parents, school staff, and board members• Promotion of wellbeing walk• Surveys of students• Discussion with principal, teachers and staff members• Review of relevant documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning in eight lessons• Review of students' learning• Review of extra-curricular activities• Interaction with students• Student focus-group interview• Parent focus-group interview• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Clonaslee College is a co-educational post-primary school and has a current enrolment of 251 students. Operating under the auspices of Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board (ETB), the school offers the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programmes. The school has two special classes for students with Autism.

Findings and actions advised

1. Preventing and addressing bullying behavior

- Overall, the quality of the school's work to prevent and tackle bullying was very good.
- Attendees at the promotion of wellbeing workshop identified many initiatives that the school used to tackle and prevent bullying. Policy documents relating to anti-bullying and child protection were up-to-date, and reviews were scheduled in accordance with the published guidance.
- More recently the code of behavior was reviewed. Students described how they had an active input into its initial drafting and that their views were considered throughout the review process. The ladder of referral was clear and outlined implications for breaches.
- The student surveys indicated that they were comfortable approaching adults to support their wellbeing, or if they or their friends were experiencing bullying behaviour. This was

corroborated during the student focus group, where attendees described student-teacher relationships as mutually respectful, trusting and cooperative. Students reported that they learned about bullying in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) lessons.

- Themed weeks took place on an annual basis that promoted inclusion and positive relationships; these included an annual anti-bullying week with a focus on educating students on how to recognise and respond to bullying.
- Guest speaker visits were arranged to augment the work of the school, including visits from Jigsaw focusing on mental health awareness, and more recently the local community Garda explaining the implications of Coco's Law.
- Structures were in place for students who wished to express a concern regarding bullying behavior. At the time of the evaluation, the school was using an anonymous post box and a confidential email for students to report. Both teachers and students outlined the limitations of these methods. The school should keep all these initiatives under review to ensure that reporting is timely and effective.
- All teachers surveyed indicated that they know how to address bullying behavior, and almost all agreed that the procedures were effective when dealing with instances of bullying.
- The student care team met weekly to identify, and plan support and interventions for some students. These meetings facilitated appropriate follow-up actions and reviews.

2. Culture and environment

- The work of the school community in promoting a culture and creating an environment that supported students' wellbeing was of a very good standard.
- The school's building design layout was spacious and made good use of natural light, lending itself to openness with no corridors. A walkway path surrounding the school was recently completed. The school accessed the nearby community centre for additional classrooms and the Physical Education (PE) hall.
- An affirming and inclusive environment was evident during the evaluation, through student displays of learning, whole school announcements, *Narnia* - the school's autism breakout sensory room, and posters and signage giving recognition to student's talents and accomplishments.
- There were many established clubs and societies in the school, where the various interests and talents of the students were promoted. The extensive range of curricular and extra-curricular activities was facilitated and coordinated voluntarily by many teaching staff.
- The relationship between physical health and wellbeing was actively promoted, nurtured and fostered through a wide variety of sports such as GAA and athletics and other extra-curricular activities including the traditional Irish music group and the chess club. Lunchtime activities, namely podcasts and robotics, supported the integration of new students into the school. Students reported that this helped them develop friendships and transition to secondary school.

- The classrooms were well maintained learning environments. In most classrooms the seating arrangements were flexible allowing for independent, peer or group work to take place.
- Respectful and positive teacher-student interactions were a notable feature of all lessons. Teachers encouraged students to engage in learning and supported their understanding through discussion and purposeful interactions.
- Feedback from interactions with students, teachers and management referenced the need for a dining and social space during lunchtime.
- The school had a mentoring system in place where students in TY supported first-year students. Student focus group attendees described the effectiveness of this as a support in first year and as a leadership opportunity in TY.

Actions Advised

- It was noted that significant efforts had been made in the past two years to provide for the needs of students under international protection attending the school, most notably the introduction of EAL classes and relevant training for key staff members. It is now timely to add further supports for the successful transition of new students for a suitable duration of time until they are accustomed to school life.
- As part of the school's efforts to promote healthy eating and food choices by students, the senior management and board of management in consultation with students, should explore possibilities to accommodate students consuming meals during lunch break.
- Inspectors' observations during lunch and student interactions noted that sporting activities for girls during lunch were limited and should be reviewed.

3. Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- The school's work to implement a curriculum that promotes wellbeing, and to provide teaching and learning of and for wellbeing, was very good. Inspectors observed eight lessons during the evaluation.
- The school offered a wide range of optional subjects for students at junior and senior cycle. The selection of optional subjects by students was supported by presentations and information evenings. Students in the focus group meeting highlighted the range of subjects as a major benefit.
- Teaching approaches observed during the lessons visited varied in effectiveness. The more effective approaches included individual, and group guided tasks, opportunities to engage with feedback and time to reflect on learning with their peers. Less effective approaches such as whole class presentations and questioning were noted to a lesser extent.

- Teacher-led questioning was the dominant form of assessment for learning. In some lessons high quality oral feedback was provided to individual students. There was room for improvement in some instances where written formative feedback on students' work was absent. This should be addressed.
- Co-teaching was a strategy deployed by the school to support students based on the needs identified in educational passports, entrance assessments and diagnostic testing. Teachers in the focus group described the merits and evidence for this approach notwithstanding their desire for additional collaborative planning and review time.
- Teachers established high expectations for student learning and set learning intentions at the outset of lessons. A move to embedding success criteria should support student learning and enable them to review their learning more effectively.
- In a few classes, inspectors noted learning disturbances caused by low level student talking. This was also raised by students attending the student focus group. Classroom management measures such as assigned seating and pair work could be deployed to refocus learning.
- A very worthwhile *Reach Plus* induction programme for first-year students was designed by members of the school staff. It included guidance as part of the first-year curriculum and focused on the development of key skills such as *managing myself* and *managing my information*.
- The school also provided for the delivery of the one-to-one guidance support. The guidance counsellor offered an 'open-door' policy for student referrals. A booking system was accessible to all students and direct referral was also available.

Actions Advised

- The excellent practice observed in relation to pre-teaching key terminology in context and use of non-verbal signage for classroom instructions, as a means of supporting language acquisition and providing clarity to students, should be extended.

4. Policy and Planning

- The development of whole-school policies and planning for the promotion of wellbeing was of a good standard.
- The school had all relevant policies in place, with timely reviews which included consultations with all stakeholders. The Code of Behaviour outlined clear expectations for positive student behaviour and a graduated series of consequences for any breaches.
- Recently, a new uniform policy had been ratified. The process of review included a focus group of students and a survey of parents. Students valued their contribution to the policy, particularly their input in the PE uniform and the policy of allowing the uniform to be worn on the day of having PE.

- The school had a timetable of 400 wellbeing hours for the three junior cycle classes. The wellbeing hours include lessons in PE, SPHE and Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE). Lessons on guidance, nutrition and Information Technology skills were also provided as part of the wellbeing hours. Lessons for Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) were evident from a review of the school timetable and planning documentation.
- Issues pertaining to the uneven frequency of classroom-based assessments, classroom tests and homework were raised by attendees at the promotion of wellbeing workshop, and both focus groups. A calendar of assessments within a wider assessment policy could alleviate this.
- There was a core team of teachers providing SPHE and RSE for the class groups. SPHE teachers reported that provision for their professional learning was supported by management. This was good practice and supported the planning and review of key content.
- Participants in the promotion of wellbeing workshop selected the mobile phone policy as something that was working well in the school, highlighting the clarity it provided and the clear consequences in place for any misuse.
- At the time of the evaluation a student council was not in place, the process of conducting a democratic election was commencing. This should be prioritised at the start of each academic year.
- The school had published a school self-evaluation (SSE) plan, areas identified included literacy, numeracy, inclusion and wellbeing. Actions for the realisation of this plan were not evident through whole-school approaches in the lessons observed.
- All teachers self-selected to collaborate in working groups with their colleagues within the four SSE areas, teachers expressed views that this work had limited impact in the classroom.
- Special educational needs provision mapping was used by the school to identify, support and monitor students' progress. Training was supported by the ETB and at the time of evaluation some staff members were receiving training in paired reading.

Actions Advised

- While data regarding student attainment was gathered, the extent to which this data was employed by teachers and year heads to monitor and track student attainment varied considerably. Teachers and year heads should use this data to track all students and identify interventions where necessary.
- To support teachers' current practice and enhance the student learning experience, it is now timely for the school community to develop, implement and review an assessment and reporting policy.

5. Relationships and Partnerships

- The school's work to promote wellbeing through positive relationships and partnerships was good.
- There were strong communication links between the school and the local community, with local primary schools and external agencies. The school operates an open-door policy and members of the community are invited to many events within the school.
- The student survey responses corroborated the high regard they had for their teachers, support staff and management and their approachability.
- The school provided a comprehensive range of induction and transition arrangements to facilitate student progression from primary to post-primary school.
- Members of the school staff supported the induction of newly qualified teachers as members of the professional support team.
- Prospective students were provided with a variety of experiences to aid transitions into the school, including open days and school visits. Students with additional needs benefitted from a separate arrangement to tour the school outside of the regular school day on a case-by-case basis.
- Active parental participation was noted as an area of continued challenge for the school. Strategies to encourage greater levels of parental involvement should be developed further.

Actions Advised

- At the time of the evaluation, a parents' association was not in place. Strategies to encourage greater levels of parental involvement should be developed further.
- At the time of the evaluation, a student council was not in place. A council should be constituted as soon as possible to enhance student participation in relevant decision-making processes.

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

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