



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Whole School Evaluation: Management, Leadership and Learning REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Christian Brothers College
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Monkstown Park Dun Laoghaire Co Dublin
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	60180R
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	16/10/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	13/04/2026

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>Bí Cineálta</i>
1. The name of the DLP and the child safeguarding statement (CSS) are prominently displayed near the main door of the school / in the reception area. Following the school's adoption of the updated procedures 2025, it is also required to display a student-friendly version incorporating the name of the DLP beside the CSS. 2. The school's child safeguarding statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment. 3. All teachers visited were aware of who to go to if they had a child protection concern. 4. The school's child safeguarding statement meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2023 or the updated procedures 2025. 5. The minutes of the last three board of management meetings contain a child protection oversight report in line with the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary	1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy using Appendix A of Bí Cineálta, it is reviewed annually (or earlier if required) and includes a student/pupil friendly version that is displayed where students/pupils and the school community can see it. 2. The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, staff, parents and pupils/students. 3. The board of management minutes record that the principal provides an update to the board at each ordinary board meeting that meets the requirements of Bí Cineálta. 4. The school has appropriate initiatives in place to promote a positive and inclusive school culture and environment. 5. All staff visited report that they have read the school's Bí Cineálta policy and that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

schools 2023 or the updated procedures 2025. 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 2023 or the updated procedures 2025. 7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE) 8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location	
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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	13/10/2025, 15/10/2025 & 16/10/2025
Inspection activities undertaken • Meeting with Board of Management • Meetings with principal and deputy principal • Meeting(s) with key staff • Review of relevant documents • Student focus group	• Meeting with parents • Analysis of parent, student and teacher questionnaires • Observation of teaching and learning • Examination of students' work • Interaction with students • Feedback to the senior management team, the board of management and teachers

School context

Christian Brothers College is a fee-charging secondary school for boys under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice School's Trust (ERST) with a current enrolment of 550 students. The school provides the Junior Cycle (JC), an optional Transition Year (TY) programme and the Leaving Certificate (LC) programme. The school is celebrating seventy-five years at its current location in Monkstown.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- Respectful and productive relationships were evident between teachers and their students; in all lessons, students displayed high levels of motivation to learn and made good or very good progress in their learning.
- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment was good, however, there was scope to further enhance learner experiences in lessons; the quality of subject planning varied significantly, and there was potential for teachers' collective practice to be further developed.
- Board members had a very strong, long-standing connection with both the school and the patron body and were overseeing a significant project involving the development of sporting facilities; there was scope for the board to increase its oversight of other aspects of the school's work.
- The overall quality of leadership and management was good, and the school self-evaluation (SSE) process had been used effectively to bring about improvements in wellbeing-related targets at whole-school level.
- There was scope to further enhance school structures and strategic planning to drive school development in a number of key areas, including a focus on teaching, learning and assessment through the SSE process.
- The overall quality of support for students' wellbeing was very good; the school provided a very wide range of co- and extra-curricular activities that promoted students' sense of belonging and enriched their experience outside the classroom.

Recommendations

- Teachers should plan for and implement a greater variety of teaching approaches in lessons, with a strong emphasis on those that support students in being more active in their learning.
- Teachers should harness the subject department structure to share, discuss and implement effective teaching approaches and further develop subject planning.
- The senior management team and teachers should develop a whole-school strategic approach to professional learning, informed by a needs analysis, and incorporating

school-based priorities; formal structures to facilitate in-school sharing of expertise should be established.

- To further develop systems in place to support students with special educational needs (SEN), school management, in collaboration with teachers, should establish a core specialist team, and significantly reduce the number of teachers providing additional support; ongoing teacher professional learning for mainstream and support teachers should be provided.
- Senior management and teachers, with oversight from the board of management, should collaborate to utilise the SSE process to articulate, implement and monitor whole-school approaches that drive school improvement. This should include a focus on further enriching student learning experiences.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. The quality of teaching and learning

During the evaluation, nineteen lessons were observed, which included a range of subjects and all year groups. The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment was good.

Learner outcomes and experiences

Respectful and productive relationships were evident between teachers and students. In nearly all lessons, students made good progress, and in some instances, very good progress in their learning. Students demonstrated high levels of motivation to learn.

Highly effective practice was evident in lessons where, at an early stage, students were actively engaged in their learning through activities such as research or problem-solving. However, overall, there was scope to further enhance learner experiences. In a significant minority of lessons, teacher talk, primarily involving the sharing of information and questioning, was the main form of instruction and this limited opportunities for active student engagement. Overall, there was a need for a greater proportion of lesson time to be allocated to active student engagement, and for this to occur earlier in the lesson.

Individual, group and pair work were most effective when they were well scaffolded, when sufficient time was provided for task completion, and when teachers had planned opportunities for the resulting learning to be explored and discussed at whole-class level. Although collaborative learning opportunities were offered in more than half of the lessons observed, there was scope to extend this practice to other lessons. Additionally, teachers should plan for high levels of task structure and clarity to maximise the benefits of collaborative learning when engaging students in this type of activity.

In just over half of the observed lessons, students had opportunities for deep engagement with the lesson content. In these lessons, teachers designed tasks that required students to independently or collaboratively make sense of new learning. Teachers also effectively used higher-order questioning with adequate wait time and opportunities for peer feedback to appropriately challenge all students and develop key skills and competencies. Lessons where the level of challenge was insufficient were characterised by limited opportunities for students to engage in independent thinking or to discuss new information, and excessive teacher support in answering questions. Teachers should plan to facilitate increased challenge and deepen student engagement with lesson content. Consideration could be given to how students with exceptional ability are challenged in lessons.

Teachers individual and collective practice

In most lessons, teachers shared a plan of what students would do during the lesson. Effective practice was evident when clear learning intentions were also communicated. In a few lessons, teachers revisited these intentions during the lesson to assess and consolidate student learning. In most lessons, there was scope to return to the intended learning at the conclusion of lessons to assess students' progress and understanding. Whole-school adoption and use of learning

intentions would add further structure and clarity to lessons for students, help teachers and students recognise learning achievements, and identify areas for further development.

In most lessons, teachers competently used digital technology to share presentations with students. In a few lessons, digital or audio clips were effectively used to present new material to students using modes other than text. Where practice was less effective, images or visuals were not used, and slides were text heavy. To fully meet the needs of all learners, teachers should employ a variety of teaching approaches that allow students to learn and demonstrate their learning in different ways.

It was positive that, in a small number of lessons, teachers used digital technology creatively to foster high levels of student engagement when introducing a new topic. Overall, there was significant scope to explore how digital technologies can be used to creatively vary the student experience.

In most lessons observed, teachers effectively provided feedback orally to students. In a small number of lessons, there was evidence of regularly provided written formative feedback on students' work. Highly effective practice was observed in a few lessons in which students assessed their peers' work using agreed-upon success criteria. Students were familiar with this practice and valued the opportunity to gain diverse perspectives on the material they had learned, and to improve their own work. Teachers should develop and implement a systematic approach to providing written feedback on students' work and create structured opportunities for peer feedback.

Inspectors visited a small number of lessons for students with SEN. While teachers had a termly plan, outlining the work for each group, the additional support should be informed by students' support plans. Given the individualised nature of the support required, teachers should consider each student's strengths, interests and areas for development when planning lessons. Student progress should be monitored and reviewed to inform ongoing provision.

The quality of subject planning varied considerably, ranging from high quality to requiring significant improvement to achieve a good standard. Evident aspects of highly effective planning included references to learning experiences, hyperlinked resources, analysis of results from state certificate examinations, and evidence of teacher reflection. Plans that required further development did not specify teaching and assessment approaches aligned with key learning objectives and were overly reliant on a textbook-based chapter-by-chapter sequence. Subject departments should collaborate to share effective practice in this aspect of teacher preparation.

2. Quality of school leadership and management

Leading learning and teaching

The principal and deputy principal effectively managed curriculum-related planning, informed by students' needs and interests. Computer science was recently added to the senior cycle subjects, and senior management was planning to introduce Leaving Certificate Physical Education once development work on facilities is complete. Positively, and in line with *Languages Connect, Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education*, Spanish for junior cycle students had been added to the school's curriculum. Planning for the addition of senior cycle Spanish in 2027 was underway. In response to student need, additional English as an Additional Language (EAL) support was provided to those who required it.

The optional TY programme offered a wide range of learning experiences for students, including participation in outreach initiatives and charities, the President's Award, and various trips. Students spoke very positively about TY. It was commendable that an audit of the TY programme, based on the TY programme statement, had been conducted and that adjustments had been made accordingly. The senior management team recently reviewed off-site trips in TY and adjusted scheduling to minimise disruption and reduce teacher absence from lessons due to supervision.

The school supported teachers' professional learning (TPL) and facilitated engagement in TPL upon request. Teachers received internal TPL on report writing, which had a noticeable positive impact on the reports reviewed, with almost all teachers providing constructive feedback that parents found very useful. However, there was significant scope to develop a more structured and coordinated approach to TPL. Overall, this area required development.

It was recommended that the senior management team and teachers develop a whole-school professional learning plan based on a needs analysis to include school-based priorities, such as training for all teachers delivering Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). The plan should establish formal structures to support in-school sharing of expertise in both subject-specific methodologies and pedagogical approaches that are applicable across subjects. It should also include further SEN-related training for mainstream teachers.

In relation to digital technologies and learning, it was advised that the school, led by the digital coordinator, develop a digital learning plan to support the strategic utilisation of subject-specific and generic digital learning tools by teachers. An audit of teachers' knowledge and skills should be conducted to establish baseline data, identify priority learning needs in this area of practice, and support periodic review.

The recommendations arising from the teaching and learning section in this report should be a fundamental part of the professional learning plan, as should opportunities for teachers to reflect on and assess their own practice.

Managing the organisation

The board of management and the senior management team effectively oversaw the running of the school. Board members had a very strong, long-standing connection with the school and the patron body. A policy list that supported timely compliance with legislative and policy requirements was available, and board meetings were held regularly. The minutes indicated that discussions focused on a range of issues related to the school's betterment. The board recently established a subcommittee focused on teaching and learning, which was a positive step toward improved oversight of this essential aspect of the school's work.

The board of management supported the development of facilities and grounds, including an additional computer room, a sensory room, upgrades to Home Economics facilities, and a polytunnel. At the time of the evaluation, the board was overseeing a significant capital project to develop two floodlit pitches, tennis courts, and a running track.

Very good external communication systems were in place, including a school app, newsletter, school annual, and website. Parents and the senior management team noted ongoing progress in streamlining communications through the school app. Communication between the board of management and the parents' council was good and was facilitated by the attendance of a member of the school management team at each council meeting. Parents and teachers indicated that more regular communication about the board's work would be welcome.

The school had timetabled all of the additional hours granted to support students with an identified need, in accordance with Circular 64/2024. Provision consisted mainly of group withdrawal and a small amount of team teaching. It was good that a qualified special needs co-ordinator was working diligently in the area, and had provided whole-school training for staff. However, significant scope remained to further develop and strengthen the structures of SEN provision in the school.

Half of the teaching staff were timetabled to provide additional support to students with identified needs. To improve consistency in the skilful provision for students and ensure that the support they receive aligns with their identified needs, the number of teachers providing additional support should be reduced.

School management had appropriately identified the establishment of a core team of teachers to support special education provision as a priority. This should be advanced to strengthen the consistency of provision and to support the work of the coordinator. Once established, the core team should be supported in upskilling to ensure that teachers with the highest level of expertise are directly involved in supporting students with the greatest level of need.

Positively, the continuum of support was used to identify the level of support required for students with additional needs. The student support plan development process should be further progressed by senior management and the special education team as a collaborative process with all stakeholders. The *Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools: Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes*, associated *Indicators of Effective Practice*, and supporting documentation for student support plan templates should be used to guide the process. The development of a core team should lead to collective shared responsibility for developing student support plans, including assessment, needs identification, target-setting and monitoring, in collaboration with parents, guardians and students.

The board should prioritise updating the school's website content to align with the requirements of Circular 64/2024 and the accompanying *Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools*, and ensure the removal of any inappropriate clauses, such as admission to the school being dependent on resources. The school's SEN policy should be updated to reflect the context of the school.

Leading school development

The trustees, the board and the principal were proactive in establishing a guiding vision for the school, informed by ERST's vision and charter. Senior management outlined their vision of high expectations for all students in the school, facilitated with care and respect.

It was encouraging that a variety of initiatives related to school life and teaching and learning had been introduced or proposed in the school. Examples included the proposal and subsequent roll-out of mobile phone pouches for the student body, and the possibility of moving to hour-long lessons proposed by the school's advisory board of studies.

Overall, teachers' perceptions of their inclusion in school decision-making varied, and inconsistencies in the process for considering and developing proposed school-wide initiatives and policies were noted. Teacher surveys indicated substantial scope for greater involvement in decision-making. At the same time, teachers welcomed the significant time during staff meetings to discuss hour-long lessons, describing it as highly productive and collaborative. Similarly, the process of introducing, trialing, and reviewing the decision to include sixth-year students at parent-teacher meetings was viewed as effective.

To strengthen consultative and communication processes within the school and further foster a shared vision for its direction, the board of management should establish a clear, agreed-upon process for advancing new initiatives and policies that ensure meaningful input from all stakeholders, as appropriate. The new process should be flexible enough to be used when a policy or initiative originates from the various members of the school community.

Positively, the board of management and the subcommittee on teaching and learning had begun analysing trends and patterns in the school's certificate examination data to further enhance students' learning outcomes. It was advised that all subject departments, as part of a whole-school coordinated approach, establish systems to monitor students' progress and development.

School management and staff completed a wellbeing review in line with the most recent SSE circular, with productive initial engagement. A range of wellbeing targets were identified, and progress was made in several areas. More recently, engagement with the SSE process lost momentum across all levels of the school. There was significant scope to re-energise SSE as a structured, whole-school, ongoing process for school improvement. Senior management, in collaboration with all teachers, should use SSE to lead and manage whole-school improvement planning. The board of management should oversee the SSE process, provide input, and monitor progress.

Developing leadership capacity

The senior management team adopted a distributed leadership style and appropriately supported the development of leadership capacity through the school's formal post structure. During the evaluation, teachers noted that they were encouraged to undertake various projects and initiatives, most evident in the school's extra- and co-curricular activities. Opportunities to develop leadership capacity in other ways, such as short- to medium-term committees, could also be considered.

A comprehensive review of posts of responsibility was carried out in accordance with Circular 03/2018. Posts were aligned with the school's priority needs. The Board's teaching and learning subcommittee was advised to collaborate closely with the newly appointed post holder for teaching and learning and the SSE coordinator to support the development of classroom practices that enhance students' experiences and further improve learner outcomes.

The senior management team and teachers recognised students' leadership potential and actively encouraged its development by offering opportunities such as the prefect system and Gaisce Awards. The student council was very active within the school and had meaningful opportunities to voice their opinions on issues such as school uniforms, access to water fountains, bathrooms, and shared social spaces. It was very positive that training was provided to all student council members, prefects, and peer mentors for incoming first-year students.

3. Quality of support for students' wellbeing

The overall quality of support for students' wellbeing was very good, and the school provided a very wide range of co- and extra-curricular activities that promoted students' sense of belonging and enriched their experience outside the classroom.

The senior management team, supported by teachers and staff, created an environment where all students were encouraged to achieve academically to the best of their abilities. This was complemented by an expectation to engage in school-based activities outside the classroom. This complementary balance was reflected in the responses to student surveys carried out as part of the evaluation. A very high percentage of students indicated having the opportunity to participate in any school activities they were interested in, and that their teachers encouraged them to do their best in lessons.

The student support team met regularly and included the senior management team, the SEN coordinator, the guidance counsellor, the SPHE coordinator and invited year heads. They discussed students who needed support, operational matters and worked to pre-empt challenges. Year heads also met regularly with senior management to provide support and facilitate communication. Effective mechanisms to enable information sharing were reported. A digital referral form was used to effectively enable teachers, tutors and staff to raise concerns with the team.

Students met daily with their class tutors with the purpose of building connections and promoting student wellbeing. However, during the inspection, the tutor classes visited mainly focused on administrative duties, such as recording attendance. A newly appointed student wellbeing coordinator made some progress on a programme for use during this time, which was a positive development. As tutor time is part of the twenty-eight hours of weekly teacher contact time for tuition, it should be reviewed periodically to ensure that clear, incrementally developed learner outcomes are being achieved.

Teachers, students, and parents all indicated that behaviour in the school was very good, however, all groups noted inconsistencies in the use of the code of behaviour. Students indicated that, while they understood the school rules and expectations, their implementation varied considerably across lessons. Half of the teachers surveyed agreed that the school's code of behaviour was implemented inconsistently. Parents also noted variation in how the code was applied across year groups. As part of the policy review schedule, the board was advised to collaboratively review and redraft the school's code of behaviour to establish a clear referral ladder, communicate it to all stakeholders, and monitor its implementation periodically to ensure consistent application.

The school had several supports in place to ease students' transition to post-primary school, including induction meetings, sporting events, and a peer-mentoring programme led by sixth-year students. It was also very positive that all first-year students could access a guidance counsellor through the *education for living* module, which covered topics such as friendship skills, communication, and managing change.

Provision was made for all junior cycle students to meet the curricular wellbeing requirements outlined in Circular 28/2023. The timetabled allocation for Civic, Social and Political (CSPE), Physical Education (PE), and SPHE aligned with junior cycle requirements. The required elements of RSE were incorporated into junior cycle SPHE and through senior cycle workshops.

Overall, students indicated they would like greater depth in learning about RSE, drugs, and alcohol. As outlined in the school's RSE policy, ongoing review of the programme was advised to ensure it fully meets the learning needs of all students. Parents sought improved communication regarding the programme's timing and learning content.

The board and staff maintained the building and grounds to a very high standard. A phone-free environment and shared spaces for year groups to gather and mix, a new sensory room, and a polytunnel garden space supported and encouraged school spirit and community.

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 welcomes this whole-school inspection report and acknowledges the positive findings regarding teaching, learning, school external communications and assessment in lessons including the new Transition Year programme. We are particularly pleased with the recognition of the quality of support for students' wellbeing and the effective use of the School Self-evaluation (SSE) process to bring about improvements in whole-school wellbeing targets. We note the respectful and productive relationships between teachers and students and the high levels of motivation displayed by students in their learning.

We accept and will action the recommendations regarding teacher lesson and subject planning/methodologies and the need for an enhanced whole-school approach to professional learning and teacher collaborations. In addition, a provision to establish a core, specialist SEN team will be central to enriching student learning experiences and further strengthen the structures of SEN provision in the school. The SSE process will be further refined with whole-school approaches to further drive school improvement.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

1. The Board of Management and the school's senior management team have undertaken, through the Board's sub-committee on Teaching and Learning, to foster more enhanced and supportive structures to enable teachers to plan for and implement a greater variety of teaching approaches in lessons. In addition, through the provision of a post of responsibility dealing exclusively with Teaching and Learning, a stronger emphasis will now be placed on the provision of time for regular subject department planning, professional learning and the development of in-school structures to facilitate the sharing of expertise. To this end, a CPD needs-analysis has been devised and a feedback forum for teachers following their experience of the inspection has been established.
2. Planning has begun to develop a core specialist team to further enhance the provision of special educational needs in the school.
3. The Board of Management have agreed to increase levels of oversight by using the SSE process to articulate, implement and monitor whole-school approaches to further drive school improvement. This will include a focus, not exclusively but among other issues, on the following: enhancing collaborative learner experiences | active engagement; challenging students with exceptional ability; teachers employing a variety of teaching approaches including the creative use of digital resources; more opportunities for written and peer feedback; the development of teachers' professional development, reflective practicing and a digital learning plan; further training for teachers in SPHE and RSE; a greater involvement for staff and stakeholders in decision-making; establishing systems to monitor students' progress; a review of the use of tutor time; a review of the school's code of behavior with a strong focus on its consistent application; communication with parents about the school's RSE policy; enhanced communications to and from the Board including updating the school's website.

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