

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EVALUATION of CENTRES EDUCATION

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Youthreach
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Unit 2A Midlands Gateway Business Park Kilbeggan Co. Westmeath
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	YR0110

Date of Evaluation: 20-12-2016



WHAT IS AN EVALUATION of CENTRES EDUCATION?

Evaluations of centres for education address the quality and effectiveness of aspects of the centre's work in relation to attendance, retention, progression, attainment, literacy, numeracy, and life skills. They provide advice and support to teaching staffs, resource persons, centre coordinators and centre management were reviewed.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector(s) evaluated learning and teaching under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

1. The learners' experience
2. Centre organisation and management

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 the of 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.

EVALUATION of CENTRES EDUCATION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	12 – 14 December 2016
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with centre personnel• Review of centre documents• Learner focus-group interview• Meeting with parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of parent, learner and teacher questionnaires• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of learners' work• Interaction with learners• Feedback to centre coordinator, ETB management and teachers

CENTRE CONTEXT

Kilbeggan Youthreach opened in 2009. The centre operates under the auspices of Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board (LWETB) and caters for twenty-five learners from the surrounding area. The centre is located in a high quality premises. Learners are offered Quality and Qualification Ireland (QQI) courses in general learning at levels three and four, along with learner support, an extensive life skills programme and a summer programme which includes work experience.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The effectiveness of centre staff in identifying and addressing the range of individual needs of learners is a key strength.
- Supporting learners to develop their life skills is a fundamental aspect of the work of the centre and a whole-centre approach is very evident.
- The centre curriculum currently provides an appropriate balance between the provision required to achieve the QQI levels offered, and the personal, social and emotional supports required by learners.
- The co-ordinator of Kilbeggan Youthreach provides very high quality leadership and management, and demonstrates a deep and sustained commitment to the academic, social and personal well-being of the learners.
- Staff members demonstrate a professional and committed approach to their work.
- Parents and learners provided a very positive endorsement of the work of the centre though their responses to questionnaires and in face-to-face meetings completed as part of the evaluation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The very good practice and procedures that pertain in relation to attendance, retention and guidance should be enshrined in collaboratively devised policies, and the updated centre development plan and other key policies should also be recorded.
- Written supportive and informative feedback on the quality of learners' written work should be provided where relevant.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE LEARNERS' EXPERIENCE

1.1 Attendance/Retention

- Rates of attendance, retention and progression are good given the individual needs of learners and the personal and social context.
- Access and induction procedures are open, clear, supportive and inclusive. The effectiveness of centre staff in identifying and addressing the range of individual needs of learners is a key strength.
- There are strong supports in place to facilitate learner attendance, punctuality, retention and progression. These include the provision of a safe and respectful and familial atmosphere.
- There is positive interaction with external agencies and with learners' families to support attendance and retention.
- The centre has a system for recording and monitoring daily attendance and, in addition, attendance is monitored in individual lessons.
- The very good practices and procedures on attendance and retention which are already in place should be enshrined in collaboratively devised written policies.

1.2 Educational Progression

- The current programmes being offered are chosen to suit the needs of learners. It is recommended that the plan to introduce level five QQI awards be progressed at an early date.
- There are well-established and supportive progression pathways in place for learners in the context of the curriculum, work experience, and the individual supports provided to learners.
- Learners' progress is continually monitored, systematically recorded and widely celebrated.
- The centre has developed positive links with the community, with employers, centres of further education and training, and other agencies in relation to progression routes and appropriate work experience opportunities.
- Learners are facilitated to integrate into further education and training opportunities or employment, and procedures are in place to track their progression.
- A comprehensive guidance plan should be collaboratively prepared to reflect the very good procedures in place in relation to learner support and progression.

1.3 Teaching, Learning and Attainment

- The quality of teaching and learning observed was good overall with examples of very good practice evident in a number of instances.
- Lessons were well structured and logically sequenced and they reflected high quality planning and resource development by teachers. High quality visual stimuli helped to support understanding and promote learning.
- The content and pace of lessons were appropriate to learners' needs and good use was made of differentiated teaching methods to support learners.
- Individual plans are in place for each learner based on their personal, educational and vocational goals. This enabled learners to display a sense of enjoyment and achievement arising from their experiences.

- The learners' engagement in the learning process was enabled by the variety of learner-centred active teaching and learning strategies used by teachers and by their awareness of learners' individual needs.
- The use of effective questioning and differentiation strategies enhanced learners' engagement and learning.
- There was clear evidence of ongoing monitoring and formative feedback from tutors as the learners progressed and attained the appropriate levels. This feedback was substantially oral in nature and it is recommended that written supportive and informative feedback on the quality of learners' work should also be provided where relevant.
- The quality of learners' work in their folders was high and reflected the range of abilities within the classrooms.
- Very positive and mutually respectful relationships were evident in all classrooms. Clear and well-established routines facilitated learners to actively participate in their own learning in a positive environment of inclusion, respect and trust.
- Learners are prepared for and are successful in both internal and external assessment events.

1.3 Literacy and Numeracy

- The curriculum provided prioritises the development of learners' literacy and numeracy skills.
- A very strong focus on both literacy and numeracy was evident from planning documents and from the charts and posters on the walls of all the classrooms and other spaces in the centre.
- The focus on literacy was very evident in the classroom interactions. Numeracy interventions were less evident during the period of the inspection; however, no Mathematics classes were held during the inspection period.

1.4 Life skills

- Supporting learners to develop their life skills is a fundamental aspect of the work of the centre and a whole-centre approach is very evident.
- The staff of Kilbeggan Youthreach work very hard to promote learners' mental and physical well-being and to increase levels of self-esteem and confidence. Guidance and counselling is available to learners on a one-to-one basis.
- There is firm and sensitive management of behavioural issues at all times and learners seek, accept and undertake responsibilities within the centre.

1.6 Child protection

- Confirmation was provided that LWETB and the management team in the centre has formally adopted the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools without modification and that the school is compliant with almost all the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. It remains to inform parents of the centre's child protection policy.

2. CENTRE ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

2.1 General operation of the centre

- The centre curriculum currently provides an appropriate balance between the provision required to achieve the QQI levels offered, and the personal, social and emotional supports required by learners.
- High expectations of learners are evident at all times, in an environment that is both challenging and supportive.
- Centre facilities are fit for purpose and LWETB supports the centre in terms of appropriate resources and facilities, policy development, quality assurance procedures and staff development.
- The centre is compliant with the terms of Circular FE12/2003 in relation to the length of its working day and working year.
- Members of staff fully understand and carry out their agreed roles and responsibilities professionally and as a team.
- The training needs of the staff are identified and they receive appropriate support and training, and the staff updates their skills and knowledge in key areas relevant to the learners.
- Timetables are flexibly designed to meet the needs of learners.
- Centre management has engaged with the Quality Framework Initiative and consults regularly with learners and parents

2.2 The centre's capacity for improvement and development

- Management of the centre is very effective. The co-ordinator of Kilbeggan Youthreach provides very high quality leadership and management and demonstrates a deep and sustained commitment to the academic, social and personal well-being of the learners. Staff members demonstrate a professional and committed approach to their work.
- Parents and learners provided a very positive endorsement of the work of the centre though their responses to questionnaires and in face-to-face meetings completed as part of the evaluation.
- Work has begun on the development of an updated centre development plan. This work should be documented, and the associated key organisational and curricular policies should be further developed in a collaborative manner.
- A sustained culture of self-evaluation and review is embedded in the operation of the centre. Engagement in Internal Centre Evaluation (ICE) processes is reflective of very good ongoing practice.
- There has been substantial evidence of centre improvement over time. The staff and centre management demonstrate a clear capacity for ongoing learner-focused improvement.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

LWETB accepts the content of the inspection report. The recommendations made by the inspectors were fair, realistic and applicable to the learning environment. The process was a worthwhile experience for the centre and the inspection process was very professional. Centre staff felt that both inspectors really engaged with the learners while carrying out the inspection and that they did this to fully assess the centre.

The feedback received was exceptional and acknowledged the centre's merits. It also gave the centre's staff a morale boost. It recognised the contribution and dedication that management and staff make and it identified that there is a common goal of enriching the learning experience for those who attend the centre. It also praised the high standards within the centre, which are actively encouraged and come directly from the Chief Executive and Director of Further Education and Training.

Part B: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

- An attendance and retention policy has been developed by the centre and is due to be implemented shortly.
- A gathering of parents will take place on the 16th March 2017, whereby parents will attend the centre with their child. This will be an opportunity for parents to view their child's schedule of learning and their achievements within the centre. Parents will be encouraged to speak to centre staff and management in relation to their child's overall progress within the centre.
- The centre has started to explore the introduction of QQI Level 5 Modules. It is proposed that these will be scheduled on our programme and offered to students in September 2018. Staff are currently identifying specific modules and are compiling workbooks.
- Policy development is being examined in further detail across the four Youthreach centres Within LWETB. A facilitated session took place on the 22nd February 2017, which was attended by management from all four centres and with the aim of looking at the standardisation of specific policies. The outcome from this session was positive and it was agreed to work together and develop a comprehensive review of existing policies and update as required.
- Staff will ensure that students are given written feedback in relation to their assignments, this was discussed within the staff meeting that took place after the inspection. Staff always give verbal and written feedback, but it will now be done on a more regular basis.
- The Child Protection policy was issued to all parents. It is now included as part of the student handbook so that parents can read and obtain a better insight into this obligation.
- A guidance policy is being worked on by Management and the centre's Guidance Counsellor will attend the next staff staff meeting.
- Centre management has put in place a process whereby if a staff member is inadvertently absent the course of learning can continue with the learner.

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
Very Good	Very good 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 outstanding and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	Good applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	Satisfactory applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	Fair applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	Weak 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;