

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Programme Evaluation in LCVP

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	St Conleth's College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	28 Clyde Road Ballsbridge Dublin 4
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	60590N

Date of Evaluation: 20-02-2018



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agus Scileanna
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PROGRAMME EVALUATION

The programme evaluation model of inspection is used to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the following programmes and to provide advice and support to teachers, principals and school management in post-primary schools and centres for education:

- Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP)
- Transition Year (TY) programme
- Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme
- Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated learning and teaching in LCVP under the following headings:

1. Teaching and learning
2. Programme provision and whole-school support
3. Programme planning, co-ordination and evaluation

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.

Programme evaluation in LCVP

Dates of inspection	19-02-2018 and 20-02-2018
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meetings with principal and deputy principal• Meetings with key staff• Review of relevant documents• Student focus-group interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of students' work• Interaction with students• Feedback to deputy principal and teachers

School context

St. Conleth's College is a fee-charging secondary school for male and female students. It has a current enrolment of 269 students. The school provides Junior Cycle, JCSP, a compulsory TY programme, the established Leaving Certificate and the LCVP.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good; students were observed enjoying lessons, contributing significantly to discussions, and making good progress.
- A variety of very good assessment practices is evident including innovative use of an online sharing platform for peer-assessment.
- Overall provision and support for the programme are good, there is open access for all eligible students and both LCVP groups are currently timetabled in the computer room.
- Planning, co-ordination and evaluation of the programme are satisfactory; however, there is only a small core planning team and there is further scope to improve how the programme is evaluated annually.
- Current LCVP students are very positive about the benefits of the programme, highlighting career-focused work experience, practical computer skills, and team work, as some of the key strengths of the programme.
- While there are a small number of appropriate visits planned both in and out of school, there is scope to expand the number of experiential learning opportunities for students.

Recommendations

- To strengthen cross-curricular links and overall programme planning, the current LCVP team should be broadened to include teachers from the Vocational Subject Groupings (VSG), Modern European Languages, and the guidance department.
- The LCVP should be reviewed and evaluated annually taking into account the views of all stakeholders.
- When planning the programme, the LCVP team should expand the range of experiential learning opportunities to give students greater choice when selecting portfolio items.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good; students were observed enjoying lessons, contributing significantly to discussions, and making good progress.
- The teacher was very well prepared for both lessons with appropriate slide shows and handouts for students. The teacher effectively shared with students the success criteria and exemplars of portfolio items so they could compare these to their own work. This is very good practice.
- Both the teacher and students have been very effectively using an online sharing platform to submit portfolio items and engage in feedback. The teacher has provided students with very helpful formative feedback on submitted assignments. This is to be commended.
- Students have been developing and applying their information and communications technology (ICT) skills by preparing and storing their documents online. Good progress was evident in the quality of their portfolio items saved in the online folders.
- The teacher has given students clear deadlines for submission of portfolio items. The sixth-year group has received very good guidance and support from the teacher to ensure they fully complete the core and optional items for the portfolio by the submission deadline.
- Students were observed offering opinions and they engaged in individual, pair and group work in both lessons. As part of the fifth-year lesson, students generated ideas for a possible enterprise activity. This activity would have been more beneficial to students if they had worked together, discussing and evaluating their ideas, rather than working independently.
- It is very good practice to see the Link Modules examined as part of the in-house school examinations using the LCVP grading scale and included in school reports.
- The current LCVP students are very positive about the programme. During the focus group discussion, they highlighted the benefits of career-focused work experience, the opportunities to learn practical computer skills, and activities that develop team-work skills.
- Students agreed that participating on the programme gave them greater self-confidence while the career investigation was helpful in making career decisions.
- Students were purposefully engaged in the tasks assigned in lessons. The teacher circulated providing good quality individual assistance which was appropriately challenging and supportive.
- The learning intentions were not shared at the outset of the two lessons and there was no engagement in reflection on learning. It is recommended that LCVP teachers share the learning intentions at the outset of lessons and revisit them at the end of the lesson to aid reflection. The learning intentions should be linked directly to the LCVP specific learning outcomes, as described in the syllabus.

2. PROGRAMME PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- There is good support from school management for the LCVP. Efforts are made to provide appropriate time on the timetable, access to computers and facilitating teacher attendance at relevant LCVP continuing professional development events.
- Students have open access to the LCVP and all students who satisfy the VSG requirements are eligible to participate. This is very good practice.
- It is positive and in keeping with the LCVP guidelines that the students prepare the career investigation in advance of seeking career-focused work experience.

- Students go on work experience at various dates throughout the year. Flexibility is built into the programme to allow students to engage in career-focused placements that may not be available if work experience is scheduled for only one particular week in the year. Students reported that this arrangement has worked very well for them and this flexibility has allowed them to access high quality and varied placements.
- As a small core team manages the programme there is limited whole-school awareness of the LCVP. There is scope to explore potential cross-curricular links and activities with other VSG teachers and all subject departments.

3. PROGRAMME PLANNING, CO-ORDINATION AND REVIEW

- The LCVP co-ordinator successfully plans and organises the programme. School management has allocated an appropriate amount of time for the LCVP co-ordinator to plan and co-ordinate the programme.
- There is a small core team in place, regular meetings have taken place and minutes have been recorded. However, there is scope to improve the quality of collaborative planning. It is recommended that membership of the team be expanded to include the guidance counsellor and representatives from other VSGs and Modern European Languages departments.
- The LCVP co-ordinator is new to the role in the current year. It is positive that the LCVP plan is currently being reviewed and developed. The existing plan is adequate but would benefit from the inclusion of more information such as planned cross-curricular activities and how the programme will be promoted and evaluated.
- The range and variety of team-based and out-of-school activities is adequate but should be expanded to create more experiential learning opportunities so that students would have more options to consider when selecting their best portfolio items.
- There has been some analysis of student attainment but there is scope to compare student attainment to expected outcomes and also to investigate if students' success in accessing higher education courses is as a result of their participation on the LCVP leading to enhanced Leaving Certificate results.
- The core LCVP team has engaged in some limited evaluation of the programme which included seeking the views of sixth-year students. It is recommended that the LCVP team plans a more formal annual review and evaluation of the LCVP to include the views of all stakeholders.

4. CHILD PROTECTION

During the evaluation, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The school principal is aware that revised child protection procedures for primary and post-primary schools came into effect on 11 December 2017 and arrangements are in place to begin the process of implementing these procedures.
2. The name of the designated liaison person for child protection matters was prominently displayed near the main door of the school in the school's reception area.
3. The school has a Child Protection policy in place.
4. All teachers are aware that they are mandated persons and of their responsibilities in that regard.

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

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the deputy principal and relevant key staff 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	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	<i>Very good</i> 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 <i>outstanding</i> 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	<i>Good</i> 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	<i>Satisfactory</i> 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	<i>Fair</i> 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	<i>Weak</i> 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;