

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Programme Evaluation in TY

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Coláiste Éamann Rís
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Callan Co Kilkenny
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	61510R

Date of Evaluation: 27-01-2017



WHAT IS A 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 TY 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 of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

TY

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	26/27 -01-2017
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal and teachers• Review of relevant documents• Examination of students' work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during five class periods• Interaction with students• Feedback to principal and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Coláiste Éamonn Rís is a voluntary secondary school for boys under the patronage of Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST). The school provides the Junior Certificate, an optional Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the established Leaving Certificate. Numbers attending the school have been growing in recent years and the current enrolment is 233 students.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDINGS

- The quality of the TY programme in Coláiste Éamonn Rís is good and school management and the TY co-ordinator have plans in place to further develop the programme.
- The overall co-ordination of and planning for the programme is very good and there is considerable support from senior management for TY.
- Teaching and learning ranged from fair to very good with many examples of good practice observed and some areas for development including development of active learning and the use of information and communication technology (ICT).
- Assessment practices for TY are good with an excellent credit sheet designed for assessing the progress of this year's cohort and plans in place to develop a portfolio and interview system for next year.
- There is a good balance in the programme between core subjects, taster subjects, modules and once-off trips and speakers.
- There is no provision for Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) currently during TY.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- All teachers in TY need to be cognisant of using creative teaching methodologies that promote active engagement and help students take responsibility for their own learning.
- Teachers could make more use of ICT to put subject content into a wider context and make learning more interesting for students.
- RSE should be provided in each year of senior cycle.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from fair to very good with some examples of very good practice and some scope for development in relation to active learning and the use of ICT.
- In some practical subjects where students were encouraged to work together and where there were opportunities for active exploration and research, learning was at a very good level and students clearly enjoyed the lessons. In these cases, students were actively engaged and challenged. They understood the purpose of the learning activities they were involved in and completed lesson tasks effectively.
- In some lessons opportunities for more active learning were not availed of. TY provides teachers with opportunities to ensure that students are actively engaged in experiential learning and take responsibility for their own learning. Lessons should be planned with these principles in mind.
- In some lessons, good links were established between the lesson topic and students' own lives and experiences and this is commended. This good practice needs to be more widely embedded to ensure that students are learning from their classroom experiences and are able to make links between information gleaned in school and their everyday lives. It is important to reflect also on the authenticity of scenarios given to students to work on. These real life situations or scenarios need to be believable to fully engage students' interest. Opportunities to develop cross-curricular links should also be availed of.
- ICT was used in some instances to set information in context and to show presentations. This use of technology is commended but it needs to be more widely used to inform students and to make learning more interesting for them. Some lessons would have benefited from more extensive use of ICT, including film clips and appropriate inputs from other media.
- A range of teaching methodologies was observed in most of the lessons and this ensured good student engagement and an appropriate pace to the learning. However, in a minority of lessons teaching did not serve to promote student enthusiasm and interest in the lesson content. Teachers have been provided with a checklist of good practices in relation to teaching styles which is excellent practice. Some discussion between teachers in TY around a range of teaching methodologies and strategies would be beneficial to ensure that this checklist is referred to when lessons are being planned.
- All classes were mixed ability as is recommended in TY. In some lessons students would have benefited from some differentiated work in order to further challenge some students. It is important to ensure that all students are sufficiently challenged in lessons and differentiation needs to be planned for and implemented across all subject areas.
- Lessons in a couple of modules from outside agencies were observed during the evaluation. These lessons were effective in developing a range of skills among the students.

2. PROGRAMME PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of the TY programme is good overall and school management and the TY co-ordinator have plans in place to further develop the programme.
- The co-ordination and leadership of the programme is very good and there is considerable support from senior management for TY.

- TY is discussed at staff meetings so that all staff are informed about the programme. Consideration should be given to broadening the core team so that the co-ordinator has access to wider supports among the teacher body and to allow for more extensive discussion of the programme and ways in which to improve it.
- There is a good balance in the TY programme between the four strands: core subjects, taster subjects, modules and once off trips and events. A range of guest speakers come to the school. There is a range of trips. One of the highlights of the year is a cookery module in a local cookery school which develops a range of skills.
- Students can get involved in mini company, build a bank, Gaisce, GAA and Rugby coaching, and other sporting activities. There are some accreditation opportunities in First Aid, self-defence and the driver theory test.
- Emphasis is placed on encouraging students to reach out to the community, in line with the principles of the ERST ethos, through a week's placement in community or charity work and an immersion trip to Zambia for some. Students also have four weeks' work experience. They source work placements themselves and write a reflective diary on their experiences. The overall length of the work experience should be reviewed annually to ensure that it is fully meeting the needs of students.
- RSE is not currently provided for TY students and this should be addressed.

3. PROGRAMME PLANNING, CO-ORDINATION AND EVALUATION

- Planning for the TY programme is very good. The quality of individual subject plans varied. Subject planning should be further developed using a common template which draws on the principles of an effective TY and includes specific learning outcomes and cross curricular learning.
- An excellent assessment system has been devised which recognises students' achievement and effort in every part of the programme. There is no portfolio system at present but this is to be introduced next year and will underpin the present assessment tool.
- TY is evaluated by students and for the first time this year by teachers. Parents' observations should be included to help shape the programme into the future.
- An annual budget is provided for senior management which is very good practice. The cost of the programme is reasonable and every effort is made to keep costs as low as possible.
- A TY brochure is provided for parents. There is some scope to develop the brochure to better reflect the effective nature of the programme.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the 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 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;