

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Programme Evaluation in LCVP

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Loreto Secondary School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Granges Road Kilkenny
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	61580P

Date of Evaluation: 22-11-2018



**An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna**
Department of
Education and Skills

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)

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.

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.

CHILD PROTECTION

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

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.

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

Programme evaluation in LCVP

Dates of inspection	21 & 22-11-2018
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 in five lessons• Examination of students' work• Interaction with students• Feedback to senior management team, board of management and teachers

School context

Loreto Secondary School, Kilkenny is a voluntary secondary school for girls with a current enrolment of 982 students. The school offers the Junior Cycle programme, the Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Cert Applied (LCA).

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was very good.
- In all lessons, teachers effectively used a variety of teaching methodologies that promoted a student-centred learning environment in which students could develop the knowledge, skills and competencies that are fundamental to LCVP.
- The overall quality of programme provision and whole school support is very good although aspects of curriculum provision merit review.
- Planning for the programme is of a very good standard.
- The programme is implemented by a diligent and dedicated programme co-ordinator and core team who are very committed to ensuring that LCVP is a successful learning experience for students.

Recommendations

- Management should review procedures for students' access to the programme and the timing of work experience within the programme.
- Evaluation of the LCVP should be further developed and expanded by the core team to include the views of students, parents and work experience providers.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was very good. In all lessons, teachers used a variety of effective teaching methodologies that promoted student-centred learning in an environment in which students developed the knowledge, skills and competencies that are fundamental to LCVP.
- Students were informed about the purpose of lessons through the sharing of learning intentions. This good practice should be expanded to include time for the review of learning at the end of the lesson.
- Students were provided with attainable yet challenging learning activities. The pace of all lessons was very good and well-pitched. There was very good monitoring of students' progress, and teachers provided support for learning where required during lessons.
- In all lessons, students' literacy development was well supported through the interpretation and contextualisation of key words, outcome verbs and terminology, and in the expansion of vocabulary through the seeking of alternate words to convey meaning. Students were given very good opportunities to improve their oracy and digital literacy skills.
- Teacher use of video clips promoted student thinking and facilitated class discussion. The sharing with students of learning resources through an internet hosting site is good use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support learning. Students' timetabled access to the computer room during link module lessons provides opportunities for them to further develop ICT skills.
- In all lessons, very good links were made with previous learning. Students' experience and knowledge of local businesses and their engagement in LCVP activities were used effectively to facilitate the integration of practical LCVP activities with lesson theory. In some lessons, very good cross curricular links were made with other Leaving Certificate subjects. It is advisable to expand this where ever possible.
- Students engage in visits to enterprises and each year group organise an annual fundraiser as part of the LCVP programme. LCVP teachers should continue to enhance students' experiential learning by providing additional enterprise-related activities such as guest speakers where possible.
- Throughout all lessons observed, students were given opportunities to work together. Co-operative learning was particularly effective when the assigned task challenged students, created good dialogue and the concluding plenary session helped ensure shared learning.
- Teachers used effective assessment practices. Very good questioning strategies were used in all lessons. The mix of higher-order and lower-order questions posed to individual students helped to develop good class discussions. Homework was regularly assigned and corrected. Teachers noted formative comments on students' work. Students are responsible for improving the quality of their portfolio items in line with the guidance and formative feedback received from teachers.
- A good system is in place to ensure the timely completion of portfolio items. Students are provided with marking schemes and support materials to assist them in the production of portfolio items. Students prudently store all drafts of portfolio items in paper and electronic format.

- Students are continually assessed on their portfolio work. The only summative assessment occurs in mid sixth year. It is advisable to extend formal summative assessment in line with the school's practice throughout the two years of the programme.
- Students have achieved to a high standard in certificate examinations in the LCVP, with good levels of both merits and distinctions.

2. PROGRAMME PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The overall quality of programme provision and whole school support is very good, although aspects of curriculum provision merit review.
- Senior management's commitment to the successful implementation of the LCVP is reflected in the good access to ICT facilities and the deployment of teachers with appropriate subject specialisms of Business, Information Technology, modern language and Guidance to the programme.
- The school has a long history of provision in LCVP. Currently, participation in the programme is low. Due to a change in timetable provision LCVP is now offered to students as an optional subject. The programme was designed to be taken in addition to student's chosen Leaving Certificate subjects. The provision of LCVP as an optional subject in the school should be reviewed to ensure it does not preclude students, who do not choose it as part of an optional subject but wish to participate in LCVP.
- The LCVP notice board in the staff room serves as a good means of communication with staff about for LCVP activities. To further enhance the profile and whole staff awareness of the programme, an opportunity should be provided for the LCVP co-ordinator to brief teaching staff on the aims, objectives and cross-curricular themes of the programme at staff meeting.
- A core planning team of teachers including the guidance counsellor and some teachers of the vocational subject groupings is assigned to support the delivery of the link modules.
- Work experience is undertaken by students in fifth year during the second and third terms. The timing of work experience should be reviewed in order to have a discrete time period to facilitate post-evaluation and contact by school personnel with and from employers.
- The students interviewed during the evaluation indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the programme and the opportunities it provides to develop communication, organisational and teamwork skills, complete career focused work experience, and engage in enjoyable experiential learning activities.
- Timetable provision is currently very generous with five periods. In line with the requirements of the programme a weekly *ab-initio* French lesson is provided for LCVP students who are not already studying a modern European language.

3. PROGRAMME PLANNING, CO-ORDINATION AND REVIEW

- Planning for and implementation of the programme are of a very good standard.
- The programme is implemented by a diligent and dedicated programme co-ordinator and core planning team who are very committed to ensuring that LCVP is a successful learning experience for students. However, there is scope to provide additional enterprise activities to support students' experiential learning.

- The high level of co-operation between the link module teachers and their experience in teaching the programme are central factors in the successful implementation and delivery of LCVP. In general, core planning team meetings are informal. While minutes are maintained, it is advisable to have at least one annual formal meeting of the core team.
- Planning documentation is of a high quality. High quality detailed curriculum plans have been developed for the delivery of the programme. The aligning of course with the specific learning outcomes, activities, resources and methodologies supports link module teachers in delivering a consistently high standard of programme.
- Link module teachers reported that their guiding mission is to develop the skills of self-directed learning in students. Students are expected to meet deadlines for assignments and organise most aspects of LCVP activities. This is good practice.
- The link module teachers and students evaluate each activity undertaken and this informs the school community of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme, evaluation of the LCVP be further developed and expanded by the core team to include the views of students, their parents, teachers and the work experience providers.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of Loreto Secondary School welcomes the findings of the report. The Board commends the work of the staff and coordination team who deliver the programme to such a high standard as outlined in the report. The Board will continue its process of curriculum review and consider again the observations of the report in relation to access to the programme. This school has been intensively reviewing its timetable and curriculum for the past three years, consulting with parents, students and teachers throughout the process. The first phase of the review sought to bring our timetable in line with best practice and the requirements of the Department of Education and Skills' *Framework for Junior Cycle (2015)*. In September 2017, the Board introduced a 42-period timetable that eliminated classes of less than 40 minutes' duration. One of the consequences of this decision was that the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme could no longer be offered in addition to our students' seven Leaving Certificate subjects. The Board of Management made the decision to protect the time allocation for examination subjects as well as the allocation for the core non-examination, wellbeing element of our senior curriculum (Physical Education, Religious Education, Relationships and Sexuality Education, Guidance and Choir/I.T.) The Board recognises that this has led to a reduction in the number of students who are taking the L.C.V.P. option but also stresses the huge benefit gained by students who take the programme currently instead of one of their option subjects. The Board would welcome a relaxation of the Department's regulations which restrict the subject choices of students who opt for the programme as this would help to increase matriculation purposes. At the same time, the Board will continue to reflect on our current model of provision and would welcome any assistance or further suggestions. The Board would be very happy to work with the Department or the Inspectorate in relation to the implementation of any of these proposals.

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

(blank)

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;