

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Programme Evaluation in TY

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Sancta Maria College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Louisburgh County Mayo
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	64660F

Date of Evaluation: 11-10-2018



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 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.

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 TY

Dates of inspection	10 and 11 October 2018
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meetings with principal and deputy principal• Meeting 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 senior management team and teachers

School context

Sancta Maria College is a co-educational voluntary secondary school with a current enrolment of 454 students. The school provides the Junior Cycle (JC) programme, an optional Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of teaching overall was good, with teachers' individual practice ranging from very good to satisfactory in the lessons observed; it is now timely to explore ways in which teaching methodologies can be shared.
- In general, the quality of learning observed in lessons was good, with the learning experiences created and outcomes achieved by learners ranging from very good in more than half the lessons to fair or satisfactory in a significant minority of cases; there is scope to further develop the role of the learner in assessment processes during TY.
- Overall, the provision for the TY programme and the whole-school supports that underpin the programme's delivery are good; timetabled support for work experience is in need of review.
- The overall quality of planning and co-ordination of the TY programme was very good; there was scope to make even more effective use of the outcomes of evaluations undertaken with TY stakeholders.

Recommendations

- To further develop collaborative practices, it is recommended that teachers on the programme consider engaging in peer visits to lessons with a view to sharing methodologies and best practice in relation to TY scheme planning.
- A weekly timetabled work placement period and guidance period should be provided to support the central aspect of work experience during the TY programme.
- Strategies to support the increased use of self and peer assessment should be employed across the TY programme and the allocation of credits for student self-assessment should be added to the current programme-wide accreditation system.
- The outcomes from the evaluation of the TY programme should be drawn together, a priority list agreed on an annual basis and an action plan drawn up to advance the identified improvements to the programme.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Overall the quality of teaching was good, with teachers' individual practice ranging from very good to satisfactory in the lessons observed.
- Good preparation had been carried out for all lessons and teachers had accessed or produced additional resources to support learning. In the case of half of the lessons observed, short film clips were integrated effectively into lessons and helped to contextualise student learning.
- Short-term planning for teaching was most successful when clear learning intentions framed lessons, when teacher inputs were balanced with active learning phases for students and when opportunities were created to facilitate peer-teaching.
- In a minority of lessons, there was an over-reliance on teacher talk and adequate opportunities for students to participate meaningfully in lessons were not planned for.
- In general, during task-based activities, teachers provided good scaffolding supports for students' learning needs which enabled them to successfully complete tasks. In a minority of lessons, students did not participate with the same level of success in assigned tasks. It is recommended that time be allocated to adequately prepare students to meaningfully engage with the language of texts and to provide students with the vocabulary they need to collaborate with one another during tasks.
- Teachers utilised questioning purposefully to assess learning, to develop understanding and to determine how the teaching of the topic should be progressed. In general, global questioning was avoided.
- Good practice in relation to classroom management was observed in all lessons and very good student-teacher rapport was evident.
- The quality of learning observed in lessons was good in general; the learning experiences created and outcomes achieved by learners ranged from very good in more than half the lessons to fair or satisfactory in a significant minority of cases. Student engagement and motivation were good in the majority of lessons.
- In one lesson, very effective practice was used to elicit students' prior knowledge of material at the outset of the class and again at the end of the lesson when students were facilitated to demonstrate their learning by means of a differentiated exit strategy. In some lessons, teachers presented material in a manner that allowed students make connections across the curriculum and with students' experience of the world outside school. This ensured their interest in and enthusiasm for learning.
- In the interest of further developing collaborative practices in relation to teaching and learning during TY, it is recommended that teachers on the programme consider engaging in peer visits to lessons with a view to sharing methodologies.
- It is recommended that strategies to support the increased use of self and peer assessment be employed across the TY programme.

2. PROGRAMME PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Overall, the provision for the TY programme and the whole-school supports that underpin the programme's delivery are good. The senior management team (SMT) are committed to providing varied and valuable learning experiences for TY students.
- TY has a strong whole-school profile and almost all of the teaching staff are involved in the delivery of the programme. Teachers are well deployed to the programme according to specialist qualifications, expertise and interest.

- A core team has been established by management to build leadership capacity in relation to the planning and coordination of TY. Commendably, the core team comprises four members of staff; two co-ordinators and two teachers from the staff who change at agreed intervals. Clear roles have been agreed with all core team members and a time allocation is made available to both co-ordinators.
- Good breadth and balance are provided in the learning experiences offered in the planned TY programme, which includes core, sampling, modular and calendar layers. Activities included in the calendar layer are well distributed throughout the year. Commendably, there is a good focus in the planned programme on developing students' skills, attitudes and values for lifelong learning.
- Work experience is facilitated on a day-release basis each Friday and typically each work placement runs for an eight-week period. In keeping with the philosophy of TY, the responsibility for securing work experience is devolved to the student. A minimum of two periods of work experience and a maximum of four is required over the school year.
- The work experience dimension of the TY programme is co-ordinated by a designated member of the TY core team. Notwithstanding the very comprehensive role carried out by the work-experience co-ordinator, a weekly timetabled work placement period should be provided to support this central aspect of the TY programme.
- There is no timetabled guidance in the current TY programme. Aptitude testing that could inform work placement sampling during the TY year is not carried out. It is recommended that provision and practice be reviewed in this regard.

3. PROGRAMME PLANNING, CO-ORDINATION AND REVIEW

- The quality of planning, co-ordination and evaluation of the TY programme was very good. The comprehensive organisational details contained in the written plan were of a high standard and documented clearly how the programme is organised and delivered in the school.
- The schemes of work for the different areas of study that comprise the programme were of good quality in general, and ranged from fair to very good schemes. Evidence of very good practices included in schemes was the linking of the planned course work with the school's aims for TY, a good range of experiential methodologies, meaningful cross-curricular components and examples of teacher reflective practice guiding improvements to schemes of work.
- It is commendable that there was a balanced approach to assessment in a small number of plans, characterised by a very good blend of formative and summative modes. The weighting of marks allocated to the different modes was also included. The sharing of this very good practice in relation to planning for teaching, learning and assessment should be facilitated in order to build collective and collaborative practice among TY teachers. This initiative should also promote increased cross-curricular learning for students during the TY year, a key hallmark of the programme.
- Student progress is monitored through a range of assessment instruments which include e-portfolios, projects and presentations. It is praiseworthy that success criteria for each of these assessment instruments are being developed and once collated will be used as a guide for assessing e-portfolios, projects and presentations in all areas of study. There is scope to develop student input into TY assessment practices through the extended use of self and peer assessment across all areas of study; this should be incorporated into the programme wide end-of-year accreditation system already in use in TY.

- The TY core team leads the TY programme very effectively. Core team members formally meet with a member of senior management on a weekly basis and this planning forum is also supported by daily informal meetings.
- The quality of communication among staff in relation to TY is very good. The TY coordinators are commended for their commitment to and enthusiasm for the ongoing improvement of the TY programme. The very high uptake of the TY each year by students is testament to well-coordinated programme provided in the school.
- In line with best practice, evaluation of the programme is carried out on an ongoing basis by the core team in consultation with teachers and students. It is recommended that the outcomes of this review be drawn together, a priority list agreed on an annual basis and an action plan drawn up to advance the identified priorities.

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 welcomes this very positive report on our school's Transition Year Programme. We welcome the acknowledgement given to the quality of programme provision and whole school support, management and coordination of the programme and the commitment to provide a varied and valuable learning experience for TY students at Sancta Maria College. We appreciate the acknowledgement of the high student uptake and the strong whole-school profile of the programme.

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

At Sancta Maria College we embrace the school improvement process and are committed to improving programmes wherever possible.

The school is indeed happy to continue to expand and structure career guidance/work experience placement preparation in the TY programme.

Through the SSE process, the school has prioritised reflection, collaborative practice and assessment as areas for further development and core teams have been established to promote and develop practice.

Current ongoing programme evaluation procedures will be further developed and structured.

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;