

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

**Programme Evaluation in TY**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Scoil Na Tríonóide Naofa
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Doon Co Limerick
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	68121S

**Date of Evaluation: 09-05-2017**



## **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.

## TY

### INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

<b>Date of inspection</b>	09-05-2017
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion with principal, deputy principal, TY co-ordinator and teachers</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during 7 class periods</li><li>• Interaction with students</li><li>• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and TY co-ordinator.</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

Scoil na Tríonóide Naofa is a voluntary secondary school serving a largely rural hinterland in east County Limerick and west County Tipperary. This co-educational school has a current enrolment of 629 students who are offered Junior Certificate, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the established Leaving Certificate, and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### FINDINGS

- Very good quality learning experiences were provided in the lessons observed and learner outcomes are very positive arising from highly effective teaching and assessment practices in place within the TY programme.
- A TY programme of very high quality is offered to students.
- Overall provision for the programme is very good although the time weighting currently provided to work experience should be reviewed.
- Leadership of the programme by the co-ordinator and by the core teaching team is of very high quality.
- The quality of planning at programme, subject and individual teacher levels is excellent.
- The quality of evaluation by all the stakeholders involved in the programme is very good.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- The current provision of one day per week for work experience should be reviewed.

#### 1. DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Learner experiences were very good arising from the very high quality teaching provided to TY students in all lessons observed. These teaching and learning experiences were very positive, varied and interesting for students. Assessment practices were appropriate to TY. Peer assessment, task and project-based assessments, and the collection of items for an end-of-year portfolio assessment, empowered students to assess their own work and their achievements in a highly formative manner.
- The learning environment of the classrooms, created by teachers, was inclusive and empowering for all students. Lessons were fully student-centred and task-focused. Learner experiences included the negotiation of the assessment weighting for different elements of a reading-lamp project in Construction Studies, in advance of a peer-assessment process. Students, in a guidance lesson, analysed and evaluated a school-organised career exhibition specifically for TY students. Students of Business were engaged in calculating the profit margins from a TY-organised tuck shop enterprise. History and Mathematics students were focused on topics that developed from junior cycle and bridged to their learning in Leaving

Certificate in these subjects. Hitler's mass rallies and a deep engagement with quadratic equations were the topics studied. In Art, students engaged in clay modelling. They worked with, and were supported by, their peers and teacher in a very creative learning environment. In each of these lessons, students were provided with very good quality and TY-appropriate teaching and learning experiences.

- The teaching strategies used to achieve these very positive experiences arose from effective individual planning by the teachers. Learning, sometimes expressed in the form of learning intentions, was clear to students within a sequence of lessons or as part of an overall project. To achieve the planned learning, in all cases, collaborative and practical tasks were central to the lesson. Groups were carefully formulated in the mixed-ability settings to ensure that all students were included in tasks. There was also a complete absence of direct teacher inputs following the initial setting out of the learning intention. The task-based approach did, however, allow for significant and very effective individual attention. These approaches reflect very good practice.
- Engagement with collaborative learning activities and practical tasks created very positive and interesting classrooms. Students were articulate and confident to engage, to voice their opinions, and to challenge other opinions and views, where appropriate. It was clear that learning was very enjoyable and interesting for the students. It was equally clear that the highly skilled teachers and very well planned teaching approaches contributed to these learning experiences for students.
- The classroom experiences provided to students are situated within a philosophy for TY that is articulated by school management as wishing to provide an enriching, supportive and developmental transition for students from junior cycle to Leaving Certificate. This was clearly reflected in the programme, as observed during this evaluation.
- Outside the range of classroom-focused activities, students displayed their engagement in a range of other learning experiences including drama, work experience, rearing chickens and calves, involvement in a German language exchange, and through a range of Art projects visible throughout the school. It is very positive that these activities and experiences arise from, and are connected to, students' classroom experience and form part of the assessment of learning within the programme. This reflects highly effective practice.
- Learner outcomes are very positive. These were evident, and were expressed, by students through their engagement in, and their completion of, the range of significant tasks and projects already outlined. Completed pieces of student work were used as classroom-based assessments at key periods during the year. It is very positive that students do not experience any formal summative assessment within the programme. The range of formative assessment practices, observed in lessons, very effectively facilitates assessment of students' learning. A portfolio of learning, created by the students, is the final element of assessment. This is used to assess students' overall engagement with, and achievement in, the programme.

## **2. PROGRAMME PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- Provision and whole-school support for the TY programme is very good. This is reflected in the very well-balanced layering in the programme including core and subject sampling experiences, and the range of other TY learning experiences. Timetabling of all aspects is appropriate. This facilitates students to experience a range of subjects, and Guidance, to inform their choices for Leaving Certificate.

- The wide range of TY experiences is facilitated by school management. The work of the core team of teachers, and that of the co-ordinator, is equally supported. It is very positive that the programme will expand in future years to meet increased student demand. The challenges of expansion should also be considered by school management.
- Work experience forms a significant aspect of the TY programme. Students engage in work experience on Friday of each week for the full school year. Students, with the support of the programme co-ordinator, are expected to organise two work-experience placements for the full school year. It is clear that this aspect of the programme is well-organised and students are expected to report and to record their experiences, and their learning, during these placements. However, there is evidence that some of the students had difficulty in sourcing meaningful work experience for both periods. The weighting given to work experience as twenty percent of the time allocation to the programme, and the challenge of sustaining a meaningful work experience provision, as the cohort of students expands, also requires consideration. The provision of work experience for one day per week during the full school year should therefore be reviewed.

### **3. PROGRAMME PLANNING, CO-ORDINATION AND EVALUATION**

- The quality of planning to provide for, and to support the programme, is excellent. This is reflected in the quality of subject planning, and in the planning of individual teachers. It is very positive that planning for the programme includes addressing the challenge of increased uptake. Plans are in place to introduce an e-learning portfolio for students and the expansion of the mentoring role that links TY students with first-year students. A GAA module is also planned, as is the creation and management of a community website by TY students. These plans reflect a very positive and developmental approach to sustaining the quality of the programme as the cohort expands.
- The leadership and management of the programme, provided by the co-ordinator, is of very good quality and is highly effective. The work and support of a core-team of teachers clearly contributes to this quality. The work of all involved in the programme is supported by the commitment of school management to the value of the programme to students in the school.
- Programme evaluation processes are well established and include all stakeholders involved in the programme. These very effective processes are informing both the expansion and the sustainability of the programme.

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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and the programme co-ordinator at the conclusion of the evaluation. 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.

## 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
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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 <b>very good</b> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

**Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board of Management have reviewed the contents of the report and acknowledge its positive content and recommendations.

**Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.**

The school has and will continue to address the recommendations made within the report. It has taken steps in that it has already changed the work experience day, which will be again reviewed at the end of the academic year 17/18.