Programme Evaluation in TY

REPORT

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<tr>
<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Tyndall College</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Mortarstown Kilkenny Road Co. Carlow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
<td>70420R</td>
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Date of Evaluation: 09-04-2019
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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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

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<tr>
<th>Dates of inspection</th>
<th>09-04-2019</th>
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<tr>
<td>Inspection activities undertaken</td>
<td>• Observation of teaching and learning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Examination of students’ work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Interaction with students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Feedback to senior management team and teachers</td>
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<td>• Meetings with principal and deputy principal</td>
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<td>• Meetings with key staff</td>
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<td>• Review of relevant documents</td>
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<td>• Student focus-group interview</td>
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School context

Tyndall College is a co-educational post-primary school under the auspices of Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board. It has a current enrolment of 406 students. The school provides the Junior Cycle programme, the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme. The school participates in the DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) initiative.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

• Very good quality teaching and learning was observed in TY lessons.

• Teachers delivered a good range of student-focused and enjoyable learning activities that engaged students.

• Students were developing skills and attributes such as personal development, social awareness and communication skills in line with the overall aims of TY.

• The quality of programme provision and whole-school support for the TY programme is very good overall, although the time weighting given to work experience should be reviewed.

• The quality of programme planning and co-ordination is good overall.

Recommendations

• School management should increase timetabled Guidance for TY students and consider alternative activities for some of the time currently allocated to work experience.

• Senior management should implement a more systematic evaluation of the programme that captures the views of all relevant stakeholders and provide an opportunity for all TY teachers to meet in a formal capacity to discuss the programme.

• To further enhance curricular plans for each module and subject, TY teachers should provide details of the evaluation criteria for project-based assessments; the evaluation criteria for the end-of-year portfolio assessment should be included in TY planning documentation.
1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Very good quality teaching and learning was observed in TY lessons. In the hour long lessons, teachers provided a range of student-focused and enjoyable learning activities that engaged students.

- In lessons, the very positive learner experiences observed included walking debates and a range of individual and collaborative tasks. In most lessons, teachers placed a focus on the development of students as self-directed learners.

- Teachers planned lessons well and this led to highly effective learning experiences for students. Learning intentions were clear to students and were underpinned in many instances with anticipation exercises to prompt and guide the learning of the lesson. As most lessons concluded students were afforded opportunities to recap and reflect on learning.

- In all lessons, students had very good opportunities to learn through highly effective collaborative group work that was supported with very good visual stimulus materials and resources such as newspaper articles and video. The content of the group tasks ensured that all students participated in negotiated learning, had to critique their answers and contribute to whole-class and group discussions.

- Teachers used a range of questioning techniques very effectively. In many instances, the very good and explorative questioning encouraged students to think in a critical manner. Students felt comfortable to ask questions of each other and contribute opinions and experiences to the very good class discussions.

- Homework was regularly assigned to students. Homework assignments included a variety of tasks such as research, reflection and projects. Throughout the year, students prepare key assessment tasks, projects and presentations. Students select a range of completed work for their end-of-year portfolio assessment. To further enhance the portfolio assessment, the evaluation criteria for all project-based assessments could be shared with students to encourage self and peer-assessment.

- In lessons, students were observed to be developing skills and attributes in line with the overall aims of TY and these included personal development, social awareness and communication skills. Students reported favourably on how the programme provides them with opportunities to sample Leaving Certificate subjects and to develop their personal skill set.

- Outside of formal timetabled lessons, students participate in a range of other valuable learning experiences including social and youth work, photography workshops, the President’s award scheme, Gaisce, Junk Kouture, work experience, scientific and enterprise competitions. A variety of seminars, workshops and trips also occur during the year to enrich the student experience of TY.
2. PROGRAMME PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of programme provision and whole-school support for the TY programme is very good overall. In this current academic year, senior management and the core team have made changes to the TY curriculum with the intention of enhancing student engagement and re-establishing the programme in the school. To meet increased student demand, it is positive that the programme will expand when the student population moves to its new campus.

- All students have access to the same experiences and opportunities throughout the year. There are many interesting modules on the programme and teachers are encouraged to develop modules in their own areas of interest and expertise. However, there is currently no provision for modern foreign languages and this should be reviewed.

- The curriculum provides very good opportunities for students to extend their learning, develop a range of skills, enhance their personal and collaborative competencies, and explore complementary areas of learning. There is scope to review the content of a small number of modules to ensure that there is no overlap of similar material. To further enhance the programme’s activities, the core team could extend their use of the varied local resources and facilities at their disposal.

- Support for students with additional educational needs in TY is mainly through team teaching and some individual support. To further enhance and monitor students’ progress, it is advisable that teachers maintain records of students work in student-support files.

- Work experience forms a significant aspect of the TY programme. For the full school year, students engage in work experience every Friday. Students, with the support of the programme co-ordinator, are expected to organise two work-experience placements for the full school year. The school could consider the inclusion of a community social placement and the provision of workshops before work experience commences to reduce and diversify the significant time allocation to this aspect of the TY programme.

- Career Guidance is timetabled at discrete intervals during the year to support students in work experience placements and subject selection for Leaving Certificate. There are plans this year to introduce cognitive ability tests to further support students in their selection of subjects for Leaving Certificate. There is scope to increase timetabled Guidance for TY students to further support their educational journey in the school.

- The quality of communication with parents and guardians during TY is very good. Parents receive regular reports on their child’s progress and engagement in TY and are invited to an annual parent-teacher meeting and end of year graduation ceremony.

3. PROGRAMME PLANNING, CO-ORDINATION AND REVIEW

- The quality of programme planning and co-ordination is good overall.

- Good quality work has been carried out to date in terms of planning for TY. The written plan for the programme contained good organisation details relevant to the programme. It is advised that the evaluation criteria for the end-of-year portfolio assessment be included in planning documentation.

- Curriculum plans for modules and subjects were clear with areas of study effectively outlined. Some plans would benefit from additional detail in relation to the use of resources including information and communications technology. While all plans included assessment modes, there was variance in the quality of assessment tasks. It is recommended that details
of project-based assessments are documented with details of the evaluation criteria and quality indicators in curricular plans.

- The core planning team includes the school’s programme co-ordinator, a newly appointed TY co-ordinator, the guidance counsellor, deputy principal and principal. The team has a timetabled formal meeting once a week. There is scope to further expand the core team to provide addition commentary, support and advice on the workings of the programme.

- Staff are informed about the programme on calendar in staff room and by means of electronic mail. The entire TY teaching team has not had opportunity to meet formally. It is recommended that an opportunity be provided for TY teachers to meet formally periodically as a group to review and discuss the programme.

- The TY core team, teachers and students evaluate and review the TY programme on an ongoing basis. To enable all relevant stakeholders to contribute to the future planning for the programme, there is scope to develop a more formal systematic evaluative procedure that involves parents and work experience providers.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example of descriptive terms</th>
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<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>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 very good standard.</td>
<td>Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils’ learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;</td>
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