Programme Evaluation in Leaving Certificate Applied

REPORT

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<th>Ainm na scoile / School name</th>
<th>Moyne College</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seoladh na scoile / School address</td>
<td>Ballina County Mayo</td>
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<td>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</td>
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Date of Evaluation: 13-03-2019
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 LCA 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 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.

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 did not meet the requirements in relation to 1 above as the risk assessment was not included with the Child Safeguarding Statement that was on display at the beginning of the evaluation and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, the school was able to place the full Child Safeguarding Statement on display once notified and was compliant before the evaluation was completed.
School context

Moyne College is a co-educational post-primary school located in Ballina operating under the auspices of the Mayo, Sligo, and Leitrim Education and Training Board. It participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the Department’s action plan for educational inclusion. The school offers the LCA programme in addition to the Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). It had an overall enrolment of 184 students at the time of the evaluation. The number of students participating in the LCA programme stood at 11 for the academic year and Year One and Year Two were taught together.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The quality of teaching was very good overall.
- The preparation for lessons was very good, learning intentions were shared with students and literacy and numeracy strategies were strong features of lessons.
- The quality of learning was good overall and while all lessons had opportunities for active learning there was some scope for improvement in terms of checking on student learning throughout lessons.
- Whole-school provision for LCA is good and senior management supports the development of the programme effectively, though greater choice in relation to modules and electives offered to students would be beneficial.
- The school has established a core team of teachers for LCA and supports teachers in engaging with appropriate continuing professional development (CPD).
- The quality of planning was good and the LCA programme is well co-ordinated, though schemes of work should provide more detail in relation to teaching methodologies.

Recommendations

- Teachers should check students’ learning during lessons through increased use of distributed questioning and other assessment-for-learning (AfL) strategies.
- The school should look to provide students of LCA with module and elective choices in areas where teaching resources are available.
- Schemes of work for the subject modules should ensure that specific teaching methodologies are linked to the learning outcomes and sufficient detail should be provided for when LCA 1 and LCA 2 are covering different aspects of the programme.
DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching in the observed lessons was very good overall. Some of the lessons were exemplary in terms of teaching methodologies. The classrooms were generally well presented with suitable material for LCA students.

- Lessons were very well planned. Effective resources, including information and communications technology (ICT), were used during lessons and teachers made very good links to students’ experiences and interests when topics were introduced. Learning intentions were shared and made very clear to students at the start of lessons. Teachers should refer to these intentions more often and sufficient time should be provided to check the intended learning during lessons. Students should also be encouraged to use learning intentions to reflect on their own learning.

- A good range of effective teaching methodologies was used throughout the evaluation. These included group work, individual tasks, clear teacher instruction, the students’ use of ICT, and teacher and student demonstrations. All lessons had a good balance between the time spent on student activities and teacher instruction. Group tasks were well planned and students were provided with timeframes and roles. Feedback from students was well structured.

- The improvement of students’ literacy and numeracy skills was a strong component of the lessons observed; these key skills are underlying principles of the LCA programme. Effective strategies were used in lessons including explaining key terminology, matching key words with their meaning, placing an emphasis on units, and making strong cross-curricular links with mathematical operations.

- The quality of learning was good overall. Classroom management was very good and student-teacher interactions were very positive. Lessons were very well differentiated and students were suitably challenged to progress in their learning.

- The quality of assessment was good. Questioning was the main form of assessment used in lessons and it was generally of a good standard. There was a need to reduce the over-reliance on global questioning in some cases, where only a small number of students responded, and to distribute questions more widely across the student cohort. This approach would help to improve students’ confidence and oracy skills. There is a need to use AFL strategies more consistently to check on learning during lessons.

- The attendance of LCA students is monitored appropriately. Overall, attendance is satisfactory, with the majority of the eleven students having good attendance records. While the LCA students do not have a base classroom, many of the settings in which their lessons took place had LCA-specific material on display. Noticeboards, in prominent areas of the school and staffroom, highlight the activities for LCA. Students reported that they really enjoyed the programme and that they were very satisfied with the work experience aspect of LCA.

- Student work and key assignments are stored and reviewed by teachers appropriately. Students were provided with some very good oral and written formative feedback on how they could improve their work, though in most cases oral feedback was more evident. Greater consistency in relation to the provision of written formative feedback, which identifies areas of strength as well as areas for improvement, is required across all subject modules.
2. PROGRAMME PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of programme provision and whole-school support for LCA is good. Senior management provides effective support to the programme in terms of resources and extra-curricular activities. The programme is well established within the school and LCA students are well catered for and included in the school community.

- The teachers involved in the delivery of modules and electives are assigned appropriately. Many of the teachers have taught the programme for a considerable number of years and some of them have experience of correcting LCA examinations for the State Examinations Commission. Senior management ensures that all LCA teachers, both new and established, have access to CPD on a regular basis.

- The selection process for entry into the programme is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator, guidance department, home-school-community-liaison co-ordinator, year heads and the LCA programme co-ordinator all have key roles in providing students and parents with information on the programme. Students of LCA Year One are interviewed at the start of the academic year and sign a contract of conduct; however, this process should occur at the end of third-year. This would allow students to have their opinions heard earlier thereby encouraging a greater sense of ownership of the programme.

- Currently, students study Graphics and Construction Studies, and Engineering, as the two specialisms. Senior management should use the interview process to ascertain what modules the students have an interest in studying and provide a choice, where possible, in the specialisms prior to starting the programme. Students should also be provided with options in relation to the electives at the start of Year One and Year Two of the programme, where resources allow.

- The students undertake the four modules of work experience on a Friday. The school has good links with the wider community for work placements and the LCA programme co-ordinator monitors student engagement with the employers appropriately. In order to minimise erosion of tuition time, the school should ensure that as many activities as possible, such as induction, educational trips and extra-curricular and co-curricular events, take place on the Friday.

- The scheduling of the various modules is good. However, because the specialisms and core subjects have very significant amounts of time allocated to them, the time allocated for other modules, especially the electives, is below the recommended guidelines. This should be addressed in future planning for the programme.

3. PROGRAMME PLANNING, CO-ORDINATION AND REVIEW

- The programme is well co-ordinated. A good plan with organisational details has been created. Subject plans for the modules undertaken by students are in place and a core team meets throughout the year with minutes of formal meetings kept on file. An improvement plan was put in place recently and, commendably, this resulted in targets being set in relation to improving retention, attendance and parental engagement.

- There is a need for schemes of work to link the learning outcomes of the modules with specific teaching methodologies, and the schemes should show separate modules of work when LCA 1 and LCA 2 students are not covering the same aspects of a module.

- A formal programme evaluation seeking the views of parents, students and teachers should take place annually.
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 the positive aspects of the report and is very pleased to see that improvement of students’ literacy and numeracy skills were observed as being a strong component of lessons as the school have continuously committed to improving these skills. The Board was equally delighted to read that the quality of lessons was very good. The Board was also happy to read that the school was fully compliant at the end of the evaluation regarding the child safeguarding checks.

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

The school is fully committed to the school improvement process and will work towards improving programmes where necessary. The school will continue to assess the capacity of providing students’ with more varied options within the elective choices, if the teacher resources are available.
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.

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<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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<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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<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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<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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