

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Programme Evaluation in Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Rosmini Community School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Grace Park Road Drumcondra Dublin 9
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	91344V

Date of Evaluation: 16-11-2017



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 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 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.

Programme evaluation in LCA

Dates of inspection	16-11-2017
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meetings with principal and deputy principal• Meeting(s) with key staff• Review of relevant documents• Student focus-group interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during six class periods• Examination of students' work• Interaction with students• Feedback to senior management team and coordinator

School context

Pobalscoil Rosmini is a community school under the trusteeship of the Rosminian Order and the City of Dublin Education and Training Board. The school has a current enrolment of 148 students. The school participates in the Department of Education and Skills action plan for educational inclusion, Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS). A broad range of curricular programmes is on offer. The school occupies temporary accommodation located on the grounds of Dublin City University (DCU, All Hallows Campus).

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good, with some very good practice noted in a few lessons.
- Learner experiences in the programme are wide ranging, engaging and interesting.
- Very good teacher-student rapport was evident in all lessons.
- The quality of in-class assessment was effective overall; there is opportunity to further develop written formative feedback and to use more higher-order questioning.
- The quality of programme provision and whole-school support is very good.
- The quality of planning, coordination and evaluation of the LCA programme is good overall; there is scope to further progress subject planning within the programme.

Recommendations

- The teachers of LCA should establish strategies to provide constructive written feedback on key pieces of students' work.
- The use of higher-order questions should be extended in all lessons to facilitate students' deeper understanding of lesson content.
- The co-ordinator, in collaboration with the core team, should devise a programme planning template, which can be accessed by all subject areas, to promote a consistent approach to high-quality planning within the LCA programme.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching and learning is good in the lessons observed, with instances of very good practice noted in a few lessons.
- Preparation for all lessons observed was very good. Highly effective practice was noted in instances where additional resources, such as worksheets and writing frames, were used to scaffold learning activities and to facilitate differentiation.
- Teacher-student rapport was mutually respectful. Teachers were most affirming of students' contributions and efforts.
- In all of the lessons observed, there was an appropriate balance between teacher input and student participation. All lessons had a clear focus and deliberate efforts were made to engage students actively as individuals or in structured group work. Very good learning was noted when these activities concluded with a well-planned plenary session.
- In all lessons, there was an emphasis placed on ensuring that students understood and used key subject-specific terminology, in accordance with the school's literacy strategy. In a few instances, teachers took the time to encourage students to broaden their vocabulary; this successful practice should be extended.
- Students participating in the LCA programme are provided with a wide range of learning opportunities. Very good links have been established with the local community to ensure that the learning experiences provided are relevant to students' lives.
- In the lessons observed, teachers used students' interests as stimuli to support and engage them in the lesson content. This encouraged learner autonomy and meaningful engagement within lesson activities.
- Very good differentiated teaching was observed during all lessons. There was use of one-to-one tutoring, adapted questioning with very good wait time, repetition, selection and creation of a handout to meet the needs of students, and tailored games to support students' learning.
- Students in most lessons were afforded opportunities to use effective self-reflection as a means of taking ownership of their own learning. This was evident, for example, with the use of teacher-designed handouts to record new learning or to give peer feedback on role-plays. Wider use of these strategies is recommended.
- The quality of in-class assessment was effective overall. Whilst good questioning strategies were a feature of all lessons observed, questions tended to be of a lower-order in the majority of lessons. Students, in answering these questions, gave very brief answers. In the few instances where highly effective higher-order questions were used, students demonstrated deeper understanding and engagement with lesson content. Further use of effective higher-order questioning strategies is recommended.
- Oral feedback was a significant strength in all of the lessons observed. A review of a sample of students' copybooks, coursework, key assignments and workbooks showed that the quality of formative written feedback varied. It is recommended that teachers of LCA develop strategies for the provision of constructive written formative feedback on key pieces of students' work.

2. PROGRAMME PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of whole-school support and programme provision is very good.
- Procedures for the selection and induction of LCA students are of a very high quality. In reviewing the enrolment policy, it was noted that there is no information on admission into LCA. At the next policy-review stage, the school should include detail for parents about how admission into LCA is managed at the stage of enrolment.
- School management supports and promotes teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) in a range of areas to support high-quality teaching. Commendably, teachers are engaged in relevant CPD for LCA.
- The programme structure is broad and balanced and a high level of care and support is provided to LCA students. There is very good collaboration among relevant staff to ensure an integrated approach and set routines to address individual student needs. The development of student support files, as recommended in the most recent subject inspection of special education needs (SEN), is being progressed and should be implemented as soon as possible. This will help to ensure that students are also achieving individual identified targets whilst completing the LCA programme requirements.

3. PROGRAMME PLANNING, CO-ORDINATION AND REVIEW

- The quality of planning, coordination and evaluation of the LCA programme is good overall, with some aspects of very good practice evident.
- The programme is co-ordinated in a committed and enthusiastic manner. The coordinator and core team are dedicated and reflective in their approach to programme implementation and review.
- There was considerable variation in the quality of the programme plans reviewed ranging from appropriate to very good. In the best examples of planning in use, teachers linked appropriate teaching approaches, differentiation and assessment strategies with the lesson activity undertaken. It is recommended that the co-ordinator, in collaboration with the core team, devise a programme planning template that could be used by all subject departments. The well-developed plans already evident should inform the template design.
- Currently, the tracking of LCA student attainment is completed informally by the guidance counsellor; this good beginning to academic tracking is commended. As a next step, consideration should be given to the implementation of a more formal, robust procedure in monitoring and tracking the academic progress of students.

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 Rosmini Community School welcomes the many positive aspects of the evaluation of Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA); in particular the Board notes the findings that 'the quality of whole school support and programme provision is very good'. It also notes that the 'programme structure is broad and balanced and a high level of care and support is provided to LCA students. In particular, it welcomes the commendation that 'very good differentiated teaching was observed during all lessons'.

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 Management and the LCA Co-ordination Team will devise a Programme Planning Template which can be accessed by all subject areas.
- The LCA Co-ordination Team and teachers will devise strategies for constructive written feedback and the use of higher order questions in class.

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;