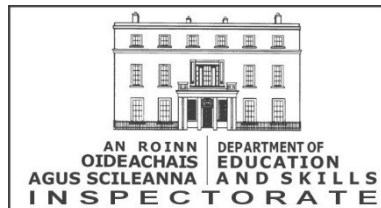


**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Programme Evaluation**  
**Transition Year (TY)**  
**REPORT**

**De La Salle College, Churchtown**  
**Upper Churchtown Road**  
**Dublin 14**  
**Roll number: 60310E**

**Date of inspection: 9 March 2016**



## REPORT ON THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN TRANSITION YEAR (TY)

---

### INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAMME EVALUATION

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	8 and 9 March 2016
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and key staff</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during eight class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### MAIN FINDINGS

- The innovative TY programme is effectively co-ordinated by a team of three co-ordinators.
- There is full support for the TY programme from senior management and this is reflected in the timetabling of the programme and in the range of instructive and varied involvements that students experience during the year.
- All elements of a successful TY programme are in place and there is appropriate emphasis on student development throughout the year.
- The TY plan is reviewed annually and students, parents, teachers and school management all have an opportunity to reflect on the successes of the programme and to make recommendations about new developments.
- Active and participative learning is a key element of TY classes and students were seen to be enthusiastic about the programme and engaged in learning.
- Students interviewed during the evaluation were very affirming about the TY programme and their experiences from the year, many spoke of what they had learned and of how that learning had benefitted them in different ways.

### MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Some of the subject plans would benefit from further development showing what the students will be doing and learning from week to week and how that learning will be of an experiential and stimulating nature.
-

## **INTRODUCTION**

De La Salle College, Churchtown, is a voluntary secondary school for boys under the patronage of the Le Chéile Schools Trust. The school has a current enrolment of 401 students and there have been positive trends in enrolment in recent years. De La Salle College offers the following programmes: the Junior Certificate, a compulsory Transition Year and the established Leaving Certificate.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- Teaching and learning was of a high standard generally during the lessons observed. Students were interested and engaged throughout the lessons observed.
- Learning intentions were shared with students at the outset of lessons. In some cases, teachers revisited these intentions at the end or during the lesson to assess learning and to check for understanding.
- Learning was experiential in nature in all lessons and students were engaged in a range of collaborative and active learning activities including pair work, group work, walking debates, class discussions and in making power point presentations. Effective inclusive strategies ensured that all students participated in activities and were encouraged to offer opinions and observations.
- In many of the personal developmental type lessons, students were challenged to explore their thoughts on a range of topics leading to very good learning experiences and exploration of stereotypical attitudes. Students offered their views and some very interesting and lively debates and discussions ensued. Class rules were highlighted in some cases and students were reminded of procedures they had helped to outline themselves. Discussions on topics of a personal and potentially difficult nature were sensitively and effectively steered by teachers while allowing students to express a range of views.
- In practical lessons, students were encouraged to work at times on their own and at other times in pairs. In one case, very good links were made with everyday life which helped student understanding of the topic. Cross-curricular links were also exploited in some lessons where appropriate and this helped to scaffold learning and illustrate the relevance of learning for students.
- In core subject lessons, students were given opportunities to experience learning in different ways including the writing of a new proclamation for the school modelled on the example of the 1916 proclamation which provided a very good opportunity for students to reflect on how life in Ireland has changed in the last 100 years.
- There was very good use of the target language during language classes by both teachers and students, including presentations in the target language by students, and this is good practice. Cross-curricular links between language learning and music were well developed in one instance observed leading to possibilities for further learning in subsequent lessons.
- Worksheets and explanatory notes were prepared in advance and were distributed during some lessons which helped to structure and focus student learning. In one lesson observed, while the material being distributed was relevant, the explanatory notes would have benefited from being updated somewhat in order to make them more accessible to students.

- There was some effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) during some lessons, including the use of film clips on relevant topics. Teachers should plan for further integration of ICT into lessons to provide visual imagery and make information relevant to students' lives.
- There was some evidence of literacy development during some lessons with students' attention being drawn to new words and phrases including words which might have another meaning in a different subject area. This is good practice and could be further developed.

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

- There is a clear vision for TY in the school and senior management and the core team are proud of the programme and the opportunities that it offers for students in terms of personal development, learning, maturation, exciting prospects, work experience and social development placements.
- TY is compulsory and the student cohort is put into three mixed-ability class groups.
- The programme encompasses the key elements of TY, core subjects, subject sampling, a range of modules and excursions and other activities including work experience and community service.
- The programme offers students a wide range of new activities, talks and courses and students interviewed during the evaluation and those spoken to during lessons were all enthusiastic and highly affirmative of the value of the year. Many students spoke very positively of what they had learned in a practical sense and also of personal development as a result of learning during the year.

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

- The innovative TY programme is effectively co-ordinated by a team of three co-ordinators. These teachers work well together and present as a highly motivated team.
- There is a very clearly set out plan for TY complete with aims and objectives and a rationale for the different elements of learning experienced during the year. A TY calendar is also in place setting out details for excursions, activities, talks, fundraising events, work experience and interviews. All TY organisational documentation presented during the evaluation was excellent. However, some of the subject TY plans would benefit from further development showing what the students will be doing and learning from week to week and how that learning will be of an experiential and stimulating nature.
- The programme is evaluated every year with input from students, parents, teachers and school management. Teachers are encouraged to present new ideas for modules and there is a keen commitment to ensuring that the programme changes from year to year reflecting feedback and a desire to ensure diversity of opportunities and experiences.
- Student progress and attainment is monitored in a variety of ways, including portfolios, interviews, some examinations in core subjects, projects and a reflection diary contained in a new TY specific school journal. The design of this journal allows students to record their work and experiences during TY and is highly commended.
- Many students are involved in Gaisce, the President's award. However, some students seemed unclear about timing and the assessment aspects of their engagement. This should be addressed.

---

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

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

### **Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The TY Inspection document is a true reflection of the work being carried out in our school and we are very happy with the report.

### **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 main recommendation was that some subject plans would benefit from further development Showing what students will be doing and learning from week to week and how that learning will be of an experiential and stimulating nature.

This was addressed at a staff meeting once we had received the report and is on the agenda of subject planning meetings for this coming academic year.

Other recommendations throughout the report:

Also I have spoken to all subject departments about keeping materials current and relevant to their students.

Again through subject planning the use of ICT is to be encouraged and reviewed.

Development of literacy strategies is continuing in the school and are reviewed regularly.

TY coordinators will ensure that students are clear about timing and assessment aspects of the Gaisce Award programme.