

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

**Programme Evaluation**  
**Leaving Certificate Applied**  
**REPORT**

**Saint David's C.B.S.**  
**Artane, Dublin 5**  
**Roll number: 60471F**

**Date of inspection: 2 February 2016**



**AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF**  
**OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION**  
**AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS**

## REPORT ON THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN LCA

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### INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAMME EVALUATION

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> February 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 six class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) co-ordinator</li></ul>

### MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning observed ranged from good to excellent.
- The LCA programme is highly supported by management.
- The programme is well co-ordinated.
- The teachers showed great commitment to and enthusiasm for the programme.
- The LCA planning documentation placed appropriate focus on learning outcomes for students with reflective practice observed in some subject plans.
- Social and personal development is encouraged through a range of activities which includes presentations made by students.

### MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- The formation of a core planning team is recommended.
  - Teachers should incorporate more opportunities for students to engage with collaborative learning in lessons.
  - A formal review of the programme should be carried out and this review should include input from parents, teachers and students.
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Saint David's C.B.S. is voluntary secondary school which caters for 523 boys. The school operates under the trusteeship of The Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST) and participates in the Department of Education's inclusion strategy (DEIS). The school benefits from the services of a home-school-community liaison (HSCL) co-ordinator and a School Completion Programme (SCP) co-ordinator. An autism unit is also located on the school campus.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from good to excellent in the lessons observed. Teachers had planned meticulously for their lessons and the taught programme reflected the learning intentions outlined in the programme-planning folder. All teachers shared the learning intentions with students at the beginning of lessons and incorporated them appropriately.
- Very good differentiated methodologies were observed, particularly in lessons where tasks were pitched at a level to make them accessible to the range of student abilities present. Explanations were clear and succinct with extension work designed to challenge the more able students. Some very good practice was observed in team-teaching settings where students received a high level of one-to-one assistance and direction where necessary. These were very good examples of differentiated practice and these should be more widespread in lessons.
- In line with the underlying principles of the programme, students were provided with opportunities to present their work to the class or give feedback from group tasks. This was most effective where students were allocated individual tasks within the groups and teachers used countdown clocks to allocate a specific amount of time to an activity. In instances where opportunities for collaborative learning were built into lessons, students were seen to discuss, analyse and research topics both in groups and pairs. One excellent example was evident where students, working in pairs, were asked to review a piece of text to find the meaning of a phrase. Teachers should incorporate more opportunities for students to engage collaboratively with their learning.
- Student interactions were respectful and the behaviour of students both in lessons and on the corridors was exemplary. A very good rapport was seen to exist between students and their teachers. The classroom atmosphere was positive and supportive of learning in all classrooms visited.
- Information communication technology (ICT) was used by teachers in every lesson. Some teachers used electronic presentations to clarify and explain lesson content while others used video clips to relate complex concepts to everyday activities.
- Students were set tasks that encouraged a high level of discussion and very good engagement with the key learning. It was evident in every lesson that teachers went to great lengths to discuss topics relevant to students work placements and everyday activities. Some very good questioning strategies were observed where students were challenged to think for themselves and to draw conclusions based on previously learned material as well as information from the current lesson.

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

- The programme co-ordinator is committed to providing quality teaching and learning in LCA. She meets all teachers at the beginning of the school year to plan for the programme, links teachers new to LCA to more experienced mentors, and encourages attendance of teachers at continuing professional development events. The co-ordinator is committed to promoting progression of LCA students into further education, employment and apprenticeships, to improving student achievement and to increasing the profile of LCA in the school.
- The co-ordinator is the year head to LCA students and acts in both a pastoral and disciplinary capacity. She liaises on a regular basis with the HSCL co-ordinator in following up on student absences and reinforcing the need for students to attend school regularly. The co-ordinator also monitors students' progress in their tasks and maintains a high level of communication with teachers, students and parents.
- School management is very supportive of the LCA programme. The programme is well resourced and teachers are encouraged to attend a wide range of continuing professional development activities.
- The timetable is broad and balanced with specialisms in Science and Art. There has been a high level of change in personnel in the school over the past year and the core team of LCA teachers is in a transitional stage. As teachers become more familiar with the programme, management should establish a core planning team of teachers to include the guidance counsellor and the special educational needs (SEN) co-ordinator.
- There are very good procedures in place to select students for the programme; these involve input from parents, the guidance counsellor, SEN co-ordinator and the students themselves.

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

- A well-structured programme plan is in place. It provides details of the organisation of the programme, student achievement, records of attendance as well as programmes of study for all subjects involved. It was good to see that some subject plans included teacher reflections on the efficacy of lessons taught. This is good practice and should be more widespread in subject plans for LCA.
  - Meetings of the LCA team of teachers are held and minutes show details of agreed strategies and in particular, the anchor subjects for tasks. At the end of the year, the programme co-ordinator reviews the operation of the programme with senior management. There is scope to broaden the input to this review by including all teachers of LCA, parents and students.
  - Work experience is co-ordinated by another member of the LCA team who maintains records of workplace, liaises with the employers and monitors students' work-experience diaries. Students are encouraged to arrange their own work placement and where this is not possible the co-ordinator facilitates the process.
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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and 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; a response was not received from the board.

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