

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Programme Evaluation in TY

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	CBS Kilkenny
Seoladh na scoile / School address	James Street, Kilkenny City
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	61550G

Date of Evaluation: 29-03-2019



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

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 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 met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Programme evaluation in TY

Dates of inspection	29-03-2019 & 30-03-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with principal • Meetings with key staff • Review of relevant documents • Student focus-group interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation of teaching and learning in eight lessons • Examination of students' work • Interaction with students • Feedback to senior management team and programme co-ordinator

School context

CBS Kilkenny is a voluntary secondary school operating under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST). The school has an enrolment of 716 male students. An optional Transition Year (TY) programme is provided. There are currently 122 students in the TY programme; almost all students transfer into TY from the Junior Cycle programme.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings.

- The quality of teaching observed in TY lessons was very good overall.
- Very effective learning was achieved through the strong focus on key skill development in both the classroom activities and the assessment tasks provided for students.
- Assessment practice is very good in the TY programme.
- Provision and whole-school support for the TY programme is of a very high quality overall.
- The school's TY programme facilitates the development of students' key skills and supports the principles of the ERST ethos.
- The quality of planning, co-ordination and organisation of TY is very good; there is scope to strengthen teacher collaboration and the procedures for formal evaluation of the programme.

Recommendations

- In a very small number of subjects, the dependency on Leaving Certificate material should be further reduced and the methodologies used should ensure that content is delivered in an explorative manner.
- Senior management should provide an opportunity for all TY teachers to meet in a formal capacity to discuss the programme and a core team of teachers should be established to provide additional oversight, succession, support, and sharing of planning tasks.
- Formal reviews of the programme, that include the views of teachers, parents and work placement employers, should be conducted.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning as observed was very good overall. The quality of teaching and learning in individual lessons ranged from very good to good. Teachers encouraged students to extend and enjoy their learning through the creation of very effective learning tasks and the placing of a strong focus on key skill development in classroom activities and assessment tasks.
- The very high-quality classroom learning experiences observed were informed by a consistency in lesson structure and well planned activities. At the outset of all lessons, well-developed and clear learning intentions were shared with students. Teachers checked student progression during lessons and in the majority of lessons, teachers reviewed learning through student-targeted questions.
- In all lessons, students engaged in either group or pair work. Teachers circulated during co-operative learning activities and tendered support where required. Co-operative learning was particularly effective when the planned tasks challenged students to think critically and engage in good dialogue and when the concluding plenary ensured shared learning.
- In most lessons, the very good student-teacher discussions assisted the development of students' communication skills and provided opportunities for students to voice their opinions. In many lessons, the use of probing and higher-order questions sought to develop students' critical thinking skills. These very good practices should be extended to all lessons, where appropriate.
- Teacher use of information and communication technology was very good and included colourful and visually-enriched resources and short film clips which helped to contextualise lesson content and engage students' interest. Students were afforded good opportunities to develop their digital literacy skills through modules such as coding and GAA leadership.
- Assessment practice is very good. Students complete a good range of tasks and project-based assessments during the year. Students' selection of their key pieces of work to form an end-of-year portfolio assessment empowers them to critically assess their own work.
- The showcasing of required coursework, presentations, projects, e-portfolio and the end-of-year interview provides additional opportunities for students to enhance their communication and their digital literacy skills.
- It was evident from a sample of TY diaries that homework tasks are assigned on a regular basis. Many students had completed the sections relating to their evaluation of completed modules and work experience which serves as a good *aide memoir*.
- Outside of classroom activities, students engaged in a wide range of other learning experiences such as social and community work, sports coaching, participation in the President's award scheme, *Gaisce*, design of products, drama production, work experience and participation in enterprise, financial and scientific competitions.
- The programme is enhanced by calendar events, seminars, workshops and trips which enrich the student experience. Local resources such as Kilkenny's rich historic past and geographical environment are used to good effect in the programme.

2. PROGRAMME PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Provision and whole-school support for the TY are very good. Most staff are involved in the delivery of the programme. To support a culture of innovation and creativity teachers are encouraged to develop modules in their own areas of interest and expertise.
- The co-ordinator is in regular contact with the principal regarding the TY programme and staff are informed about TY matters on a regular basis through staff and individual meetings and electronic communication.
- The programme is structured in a manner that facilitates the development of students' key skills, academic knowledge, leadership, creativity and social and personal development. Students spoke highly of their experience of the school's TY programme.
- There is an effective student induction programme at the beginning of the school year which includes an outdoor pursuit to support student engagement in TY. Good supports such as the work placement booklet are provided by the Guidance department during TY.
- Many of the activities of TY support the principles of the ERST ethos such as the promotion of partnership between teachers and students, the creation of a caring community through modules such as global citizenship and student placement in community care organisations and, for some, as volunteers on the diocese pilgrimage trip to Lourdes. To support and inspire transformation leadership students have opportunities to lead the green school committee and be involved in organising whole-school activities such as fun runs and hurling blitzes for primary school children.
- Students engage in four weeks of work experience. The timing of work experience at the end of May should be reviewed to ensure that it facilitates a post evaluation of the work placement.
- The quality of communication with parents during TY is very good. Parents receive regular reports on students' engagement and progression, there is an annual parent-teacher meeting and parents are invited to the end-of-year celebration of students' achievements.

3. PROGRAMME PLANNING, CO-ORDINATION AND REVIEW

- Planning, co-ordination and organisation of the TY programme are of very high quality. The TY co-ordinator has ensured that the programme befits the ethos of TY and continually evolves in a sustainable manner.
- While subject departments collaborate on their TY plans, the entire TY team has not had an opportunity to meet formally. It is recommended that all TY teachers meet in a formal capacity at least once a year to discuss the programme and that a core team of teachers be established to provide additional oversight, succession, support, and sharing of planning tasks.
- Planning for the TY programme in the school is coherent and the comprehensive planning folder provides a very good overview on how the programme is organised and delivered.
- Curriculum planning for subjects and modules provided in the programme is of very high quality. A common planning template is used in almost all instances. This good practice facilitates an overview of the content of each module and how key skill development is enacted. In a very small number of subjects, the dependency on Leaving Certificate material

should be further reduced and the methodologies used should ensure that content is delivered in an explorative manner. To further enhance plans teachers could fully detail the assessment tasks, their marking schemes, the expected features of quality and success criteria.

- The programme is reviewed by the co-ordinator and students. Teachers are informally consulted about the programme. It is recommended to conduct formal reviews of the programme that include teachers, parents and work placement employers so as to enable them to contribute to the further development of TY.

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 CBS Kilkenny welcomes this report from the Department of Education and Skills in relation to the Transition Year Program.

The Board is pleased that the report affirms the work of the school in a wide range of areas, particularly in relation to the following:

- The very high quality of teaching and learning
- The broad range of learning opportunities available to students
- The high quality of planning, coordination and organisation of the program
- The very good assessment practices that are in place

The Board takes this opportunity to acknowledge the leadership and teamwork of staff in all aspects of the TY program.

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 Board of Management of CBS Kilkenny has initiated, with the principal, a series of steps to implement the recommendations of the Inspectorate.

All recommended actions will be implemented over the next academic year.

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;