An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Evaluation of The Peter McVerry Trust Carline Learning Centre
Report

REPORT

Ainm an Ionaid /Setting name	The Peter McVerry Trust Carline Learning Centre
Seoladh an Ionaid/Setting address	Lynch's Lane Lucan Co. Dublin
Uimhir rolla/ Roll number	41011K
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	03/12/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	10/03/2025

Evaluation of settings, other than recognised schools, funded by the Department of Education

There are a number of settings in the State that provide education to children and young people, who are not attending recognised primary or post-primary schools. The Inspectorate of the Department of Education has a remit to monitor the quality and effectiveness of provision in such settings. It conducts a programme of inspection activities under a bespoke evaluation model; and it reports to settings, to the Department and to the public on its findings and recommendations for improvement. This evaluation model has a particular focus on:

- the extent to which the setting identifies and meets the needs of the young people who attend it
- the quality of governance, leadership, and management of the setting
- the quality of the links between the setting and the wider community, including connections with other educational settings

How to read this report

During this inspection, the inspector(s) evaluated provision under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

1. Identifying and meeting the needs of the young people
2. The governance, leadership and management of the setting
3. Links with the community and other educational settings

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.

Actions of the setting to safeguard young people

The Peter McVerry Trust Carline Learning Centre is required to comply with the Children First Act 2015. In this regard, the Peter McVerry Trust Carline Learning Centre provided written assurances to the Department's Social Inclusion Unit that they were in compliance with the following requirements of Children First, 2015:

The Peter McVerry Trust in respect of the Carline Learning Centre has:
• carried out a risk assessment to identify where a child or young person could be at risk of harm in the centre
• developed a child safeguarding statement that outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks that have been identified in the centre
• appointed a relevant person to be the first point of contact in respect of the child safeguarding statement
• displayed the child safeguarding statement in a public place in the centre
• arrangements in place to provide children and young people, their parents/guardians, personnel and other workers with the child safeguarding statement

• arrangements in place to review the child safeguarding statement at least once every two years
The Peter McVerry Trust in respect of the Carline Learning Centre has procedures in place for:
• reporting concerns regarding child protection, which reflect the requirements of Children First 2015 and Children First National Guidance
• making the children and young people, their parents/guardians and personnel working at the centre aware of these reporting procedures
• managing allegations against personnel of the centre
• selecting and recruiting appropriate personnel to work with children and young people
• providing training to all personnel in respect of recognising and reporting the abuse or neglect of children and young people
• maintaining a list of mandated persons working within the centre
• ensuring mandated persons working within a service are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons

Evaluation of settings other than recognised schools

Date of inspection	03/12/2024
Inspection activities undertaken • Observation of teaching and learning • Focus-group meeting with young people • Interaction with young people • Focus-group meeting with parents/guardians	 • Examination of young peoples' work • Review of setting documents • Meeting with setting director and manager • Surveys administered to young people and parents/guardians • Meeting with setting personnel • Feedback to setting director and manager

Setting context

The Peter McVerry Trust (PMVT) Carline Learning Centre is in Lucan, County Dublin and operates under the patronage of the Peter McVerry Trust. The centre caters for young people in their second and third years of post-primary education who remain on their post-primary roll but are not attending the post-primary school due to a number of circumstances, including emotional, social, behavioural and educational challenges. Young people can attend the centre for a two-year period and, following their Junior Cycle examinations, the young people transition out of the centre.

Staffing in the centre comprises a centre manager, six learning practitioners four of whom had post-primary teaching qualifications, three social care workers and a part-time counsellor. The centre has capacity for thirty young people and, at the time of the evaluation, there were twenty-seven young people enrolled with a further three young people in the referral process.

The PMVT Carline Learning Centre aims to provide young people with a high-quality education programme which meets their individual learning needs and maximises their abilities to engage in continuous learning. It also aims to enable young people to recognise the positive impact education has on their future development. The centre states that its vision is one where young people prosper, have access to the education system, have further personal success and can claim a genuine stake in society.

The centre has a very impressive wood technology room and art room which celebrates the successes, achievements and creative endeavours of the young people. The facilities also include very well-maintained recreational spaces both indoors and outdoors, a kitchenette, gym, computer room and three classrooms. The centre is in the process of developing a sensory room. Garden equipment is made in the wood technology classes and a variety of collaborative projects were on display in each classroom.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- There was a high level of expertise amongst the staff to support the social, emotional and behavioural needs of young people.
- Young people were observed to be very happy and enjoying their activities in the centre.
- The centre had effective governance structures in place.
- The manager of the centre demonstrated highly effective organisational skills.
- The centre was very effective in supporting the young people who attended to recognise the positive impact education has on their future development.
- Management and staff in the centre were proactive in establishing links with the community which aligned with young people's strengths, interests and needs.
- The physical environment of the centre celebrated the successes, achievements and creativity of the young people.

Recommendations

- In order to increase the young people's attendance and punctuality, an individual attendance plan should be established for each young person where the young person, their parents/guardians and centre are directly involved in establishing targets, implementing agreed actions and monitoring their effectiveness.
- All staff members should engage in training to support them implement teaching and learning approaches tailored to the individual strengths and needs of the young people and designed to optimise their engagement and success in learning.
- The centre should place a greater emphasis on the effective use of technology to enhance learning for all young people and to support young people who present with specific learning needs in areas such as literacy and numeracy.
- Members of staff should engage with professional learning for the delivery of the Junior Cycle programme and increase the number of Junior Cycle short courses offered in the centre.
- Young people should receive greater opportunities to engage in appropriate and well-planned learning activities in Mathematics.
- Young people should be enabled to maintain a record of what they have learnt in a manner that supports their understanding, knowledge and skill development.
- Practitioners should provide written feedback more frequently to young people to ensure they know what they have done well and how to progress their learning.
- The involvement of the personnel from the post-primary school in which each young person was enrolled in planning the young people's educational programmes should be strengthened. In particular, post-primary personnel should be directly involved in ensuring optimum continuity and progression in the young person's educational provision while at the centre and in planning for their return to the post-primary school following the Junior Cycle.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Identifying and meeting the needs of young people

Referral process

- The Carline Learning Centre accepted referrals from a variety of sources including post-primary principals, Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs), Home School Community Liaison Coordinators (HSCLs), parents, guidance counsellors and social care workers. All referrals were completed on a PMVT Carline Learning Centre referral form and were formally acknowledged and processed in a timely manner. The centre engaged in a clear and transparent screening process. Young people who met the criteria for the centre completed a personal history form and the post-primary school completed a Placement Student Profile. As places were limited, the Carline Learning Centre maintained a waiting list. At the time of the evaluation, sixteen young people were on this list, three of whom were in the referral process to secure a place.
- The Carline Learning Centre did not act as a venue for the Junior Cycle examinations. Therefore, young people who transferred to the Carline Learning Centre from post-primary schools were maintained on the post-primary register. This was to facilitate the young people sitting their state examination in the school and to act as a pathway to return to the post-primary school following the Junior Cycle examinations.
- All young people engaged in a week of induction which typically took place during the month of June, prior to enrolment in September. Each young person was assigned a social care worker to support their transition into the centre. The induction period emphasised the support and relationship-building between social care workers, practitioners and young people. The counselling service was linked in with each young person during the induction period and this had led to a noticeable increase in young people utilising this service after they commence in the centre.

Meeting the needs of young people through identification of need

- The Carline Learning Centre had some measures in place to encourage and support good attendance. The importance of regular attendance was highlighted to all young people and parents/guardians during the referral and induction stages. Notwithstanding this, improving attendance and punctuality remained priority areas for the centre as a number of young people were either absent, late or left the centre unaccompanied during the evaluation.
- An individual attendance plan should be established for each young person where they, their parents/guardians and centre are directly involved in establishing targets and monitoring their effectiveness. Attendance data should be monitored carefully and any patterns of non-attendance, partial attendance or lateness should be acted upon immediately through implementing agreed actions.
- Comprehensive pre-enrolment data was captured from the young person, their post-primary school, their parents/guardians and other relevant sources. The centre administered the Non-Verbal Reasoning Test (NRIT) during the induction phase. Commendably, all information was maintained in an individual student support file which was accessible to all relevant staff on the centre's shared drive. Highly valuable information regarding the social, emotional and behavioural strengths and needs of each young person was clearly recorded and informed target-setting in these areas.
- There was a high level of expertise amongst the staff to support the social, emotional and behavioural needs of young people. The centre should review their identification of educational needs and strengths and ensure that useful information is collected to inform the identification of priority educational needs for each young person upon enrolment and during the induction period.
- While very good teaching and learning was observed in some lessons, not all staff shared an understanding of the principles of effective teaching or used teaching approaches to support positive engagement and success in learning for all young

people. Staff members should engage in training and implement teaching and learning approaches tailored to meet the individual strengths and needs of young people and designed to support their engagement and success in learning.

- Almost all student support files included professional reports which outlined learning challenges associated with diagnoses such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism. Although all staff could access individual student support files, not all staff had reviewed this information and used it to plan for teaching and learning approaches. Each student support plan should include clear targets that all practitioners can use to inform their learning and teaching approaches in all subject areas. Young people and their parents/guardians should be provided with meaningful opportunities to be involved in the setting of individualised targets in priority areas such as literacy, numeracy and in the monitoring of progression in these areas. This will cultivate young people's involvement in their learning and help them develop a sense of ownership of their learning.
- While some young people qualified for assistive technology; this technology often remained in their previous school and therefore the young people were unable to use the technology to support their learning. As all the young people remained on the roll of their post-primary school, they should continue to access their assistive technology when attending the centre.
- The centre provided laptops to some young people; however, these were predominantly used for typing exercises. To support the learning strengths and needs of young people, a greater emphasis on the use of technology to enhance learning for all young people and to support specific learning needs in literacy and numeracy should be implemented across the centre.
- All young people maintained valuable records of their learning in a variety of forms including diagrams, facts, summaries, stories and timelines. However, these records were not organised in a manner that enabled them to connect learning and did not act as a stimulus for future learning. Practitioners should review practice to ensure that records of learning are maintained in a manner that supports understanding, knowledge and skill development. This will support young people to make connections across learning in different subjects and build upon previous learning.
- In line with formative assessment approaches underpinning the Junior Cycle programme, written feedback should be provided more frequently to young people to ensure they know where they have done well and how to progress their learning. This was done very well in some lessons and this practice could be shared among all the practitioners.
- Although an oral report was provided to the next educational setting when a young person transfers from the centre, staff should ensure that a formal written record accompanies each young person as they progress onto the next stage of their educational journey.
- During a focus group discussion with young people, they reported how happy they were in the centre. They described the atmosphere as warm and caring. All young people who completed a survey as part of the evaluation reported that they felt safe, welcome and got on well with others in the centre. Parents detailed many examples of how all staff members were positive and warm towards their children and how they picked up on any changes in their child's mood and responded immediately. All parents present at the focus group meeting, agreed that the centre had benefited their child and their family. They reported very effective communication systems between the centre and home.

Meeting the needs of young people through the curriculum

- Every effort was made to offer flexibility to the young people to take subjects at the level that suits their needs best. As the Junior Cycle programme is underpinned by a flexible and inclusive framework, it is recommended that the Junior Cycle programme offerings be strengthened in the centre. This could include offering more short courses. This would benefit young people as it can be provided in a more inclusive manner. To support this, members of staff should engage with professional learning for the delivery of the Junior Cycle programme.

- Currently young people engage in the Junior Cycle for English, Mathematics, Geography, History, Religion, Wood Technology and Visual Art. Religion was added last year as a pilot for a cohort of young people and it was commendable that the centre gathered feedback from staff, young people and parents, before deciding on extending the subject for all young people.
- Provision for Mathematics is currently provided two days a week. Young people reported that Mathematics is an area they find difficult. As numeracy is a key skill in the Junior Cycle framework and a vital competence for further education and for life, young people should receive greater opportunities to engage in appropriate and well-planned learning activities in Mathematics. In some lessons such as Woodwork, mathematical skills were well integrated. Greater opportunities for integrating Mathematics with other subject areas exist.

2. The governance, leadership and management of the setting

- The governance structures were effective. The Carline Learning Centre is under the patronage of the PMVT Department of Child and Family Services. The full-time manager of the Carline Learning Centre reports to the director of the Child and Family Services department who in turn, reports to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chairperson of PMVT. A detailed monthly report from the centre's manager was provided to the board of PMVT.
- The manager of the Carline Learning Centre demonstrated highly effective organisational skills. She implemented many valuable structures and systems to support the smooth running of the centre including a robust referral process and individual student support files. She demonstrated a strong commitment to the ethos and vision of the PMVT and developed very positive relationships with the young people, staff and parents and actively seeks and respects the opinions of all members of the community. The director of the Child and Family Services reported very high levels of satisfaction with how the centre is run and managed.
- The organisational structure of the centre has ensured a very positive and respectful atmosphere. Staff were observed as being considerably kind, thoughtful and caring towards all young people and one another. This approach was mirrored by young people in their interactions with their peers, the staff and the inspection team. Young people reported that education in the Carline Learning Centre was a positive experience for them and that they held staff members in the highest regard.
- Recently, the centre successfully developed structures to support distributed leadership. Staff collaborated with one another daily when the young people finished their school day. Monthly staff meetings were held and agenda and minutes were fully documented.
- It was highly commendable that the centre had introduced a system of self-reflection which resulted in actions that have improved the experiences and opportunities for young people. It is now timely to reflect on the educational aspects of provision and to involve young people, staff and parents in identifying key areas for development. This should inform a clear action plan for improvement which will support all staff to implement consistent and effective practices across all subjects.
- All staff members engaged in ongoing professional development provided by PMVT which included First Aid and aspects of Health and Safety. Training had also been provided in trauma-based practices.

3. Links with the community and other educational settings

Transitions

- It was evident that the Carline Learning Centre was very effective in supporting the young people who attended to recognise the positive impact education has on their future development. In 2023, following their two-year period in PMVT Carline Learning Centre, half of the young people transitioned to a Youthreach programme and a small minority transitioned back to a post-primary setting, one young person entered a professional football academy and two young people began apprenticeships.
- Since 2020, eighty-three young people completed the Junior Cycle. Of these, eighteen young people (22%) returned to mainstream post-primary schools, fifty-three young people (64%) progressed to Youthreach or to other further education settings, five young people (6%) progressed to employment or apprenticeships and seven young people (8%) did not progress into another setting. The centre reported that they maintain contact with the respective Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in relation to all young people who progress

from the centre. Many past-students and their families maintain links with the PMVT Carline Learning Centre.

Links with post-primary schools

- As part of the enrolment process, post-primary schools worked collaboratively with the centre to provide important information about the young people. The involvement of the personnel from the post-primary school in which each young person was enrolled in planning the young people's educational programmes should be strengthened. In particular, post-primary personnel should be directly involved in ensuring optimum continuity and progression in the young person's educational provision while at the Centre and in planning for their return to the post-primary school following the Junior Cycle.
- The Carline Learning Centre had also developed very strong links with a small number of feeder post-primary schools in the area. This has benefitted young people in a variety of ways such as being facilitated to attend Junior Cycle examinations together and sit these state exams in a school close to the centre. It was noteworthy that a member of staff has collaborated with a neighbouring post-primary school to upskill in training for a particular achievement assessment.

Links with Tusla Education Support Service (TESS)

- The centre had very strong links with the Education Welfare Service (EWS) which operates under TESS. In many cases the relevant EWOs were instrumental in seeking and supporting the enrolment of young people into and from the centre.

Links with the community

- Management and staff in the centre were proactive in establishing links with the community aligned to young peoples' strengths, interests and needs. These links brought about a myriad of opportunities to develop interests, experience success in learning and support transitions to the world of work, further and higher education. In the past a partnership with a large company, brought about resources and training opportunities in hair and beauty for some young people in the centre.
- At the time of the evaluation *Music Generation* were working with young people in the centre. This was of great benefit to some young people in their engagement and participation in education. The centre management organised educational trips which also supported the young peoples' social and emotional wellbeing. These trips included visits to places of historical interest, such as Collins Barracks and third-level educational institutions. Such trips provided the young people with highly appropriate opportunities to learn and raised expectations for their own educational outcomes.
- As part of an emphasis on physical wellbeing, links with sporting organisations were fostered and young people were supported to use gym and other sports equipment.
- Existing and future links should be used to support young peoples' attendance and punctuality in the centre in a proactive way. It may be beneficial particularly for young people who are prone to partial attendance to investigate what further links might encourage better attendance.

The Inspectorate's Quality Continuum

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the centre 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 centre's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Examples of descriptive terms
Excellent	**Provision that is excellent** is exemplary in meeting the needs of learners. This provision provides an example for other schools and settings of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Excellent; exemplary; outstanding; exceptionally high standard; with very significant strengths
Very good	**Provision that is very good** is very effective in meeting the needs of learners and is of a very high standard. There is potential to build on existing strengths to achieve an excellent standard.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful
Good	**Provision that is good** is effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to build on existing strengths in order to address the aspects to be developed and achieve a very good standard.	Good; of good quality; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; strengths outweigh the shortcomings; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist
Requires improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard** is not sufficiently effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is good or better.	Fair; less than effective; less than sufficient; evident weaknesses that are impacting on learning; experiencing difficulty; shortcomings outweigh strengths; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard** is not meeting the needs of learners. There is immediate need for significant action to address the areas of concern.	Weak; poor; ineffective; insufficient; unacceptable; experiencing significant difficulties; serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated; requiring significant change, development and improvement to be effective

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

PMVT Learning Centre Carline particularly welcome the first evaluation from the Department of Education since the foundation of the centre.

The support and guidance received from the Department of Education during the evaluation process was much appreciated and will be the foundation of our continued service development plan for 2025.

We appreciate the findings, which acknowledged the level of expertise amongst staff to support the social, emotional and behavioural needs of the young people. This is always a priority for our centres are we support some of the most vulnerable students, who have been unable to engage in mainstream settings. It is important that our centre offers an alternative option as other settings have not provided our students with the opportunity to remain in education.

We are happy that the findings note that the centre was seen to have been very effective in supporting young people to recognise the positive impact education has on their future. We aim to provide our students with an education programme that maximises their opportunities to reach their full potential and creates pathways and opportunities for further learning, development and opportunities upon graduation.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

1. We have enhanced our student attendance improvement strategy and created an additional individual attendance plan as suggested from the evaluation feedback. The team continue to work with students and parents in the identification and development of new approaches to support the student's attendance. We will continue to implement the evaluation recommendations throughout our service development over the coming year.

2. Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training for Education setting has been completed with all staff across PMVT Learning Centres. This whole school training supports a greater understanding of supporting students in education who have an experience adverse childhood trauma. The team have enhanced their awareness and understanding of how tailor an education plan to meet the needs of our student group. Two Junior Cycle teachers have completed the Reasonable Accommodation for Certificate Exams training and have completed all RACE applications for the students in Carline. The teaching team have engaged in the Junior Cycle- Preparation for Teaching & Learning training available through Oide. During Teacher team meetings the group have reviewed and discussed the framework for Junior Cycle as suggested from the evaluation feedback. This review is continuous and is an important factor on our monthly meeting agenda.

3. We have researched alternative methods of technology which will support our students with additional learning needs. Some applications we feel would be very beneficial are:
    - Text to Speech Technology
    - Dyslexia Friendly Fonts

    We are also researching resources to support students with a diagnosis of dyscalculia. We have sought quotations for costs of assistive technology resources and a report will be presented to the director for approval once the information is obtained.

4. The teaching team have reviewed their annual CPD and are registered with Oide to complete available subject trainings. The teaching team have engaged in the Junior CyclePreparation for Teaching & Learning training available through Oide. During Teacher team meetings the group have reviewed and discussed the framework for

Junior Cycle as suggested from the evaluation feedback. This review is continuous and is an important factor on our monthly meeting agenda.
We are currently conducting an assessment on implementing the provision of short courses for the 2025-2026 academic year.

5. We requested and have been granted additional funding from the Department of Education, Social Inclusion, to enable us to increase the provision of mathematics' classes. The mathematics provision has doubled in the Learning Centre from January 2025.

6. The teaching team have developed an alternative method to maintaining accessible records of works from the student group. Currently the teachers are managing an individual subject folder system within the classroom environment whereby the students can easily access their completed works and review previously completed work. We have researched individual filling system for each class. These will be in place by the end of the month and will be reviewed at the end of the academic year with students and staff to see if any further changes or adaptations would be beneficial.

7. The teaching team have agreed that the new recording and filing system will allow for the enhancement of their current written feedback practices. The teaching team are now providing regular and often written feedback to the students on their completed works. This is monitored by the manager of the centre and feedback given to teachers to support their development and understanding of the value of this approach.

8. PMVT Learning Centre have always maintained communication with the post-primary school of original. With the support of the evaluation recommendations from the Department of Education, we are in a strengthened position to ensure the post-primary school of origin remains engaged with our centre and supports a transition back to school upon graduation. The centre manager will oversee the communication with the postprimary school of origin.
We appreciate the value of this support for each student.