



CBS Thurles

School Self-Evaluation Report

Literacy for May 2014 to May 2017

1. Introduction

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching & learning in this school was undertaken during the Autumn term of 2013 in the area of Literacy. We also considered how the teaching and learning in all subjects support the acquisition of literacy skills, especially in 1st Year.

This is a report on the findings of the evaluation

1.2 School context

We are the only all boys post-primary school in a rural town, under the trusteeship of Edmund Rice Schools Trust. There are currently 707 pupils attending students including 9 who are EAL students. Transition Year well established and 40% (approximately) of LC students take the LCVP exam. We have 30 plus feeder schools

There is a strong culture of CPD in the school and a core team has been established with representatives from a variety of subjects & disciplines.

This core team was created by requesting volunteers from the English Department and other subject groups. This was to ensure all subject areas were represented without the core group becoming prohibitively large.

It was also identified that sharing resources was essential to maximize the potential and outcome of the process. As a result, the resources and information were made available to staff members using iTunes U and Google Drive. All staff members are encouraged to share resources through this medium and it is used as a communication tool with the core team, among departments and the wider school community.

2. The Findings

Learner outcomes

The student's standardised test results and report cards from the primary school were analysed. It was noted that the STen scores for reading for the cohort are slightly above the national norms. **102** out of **123** students sat the reading test in 6th Class.

All subject departments agreed at staff meeting in August 2013 to use the PDST tool for analysing results in the Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate exams. This was done by all Departments in order to use it as an indicator of existing standards. The majority of subjects compare favourably to national norms, taking due cognisance of school context. Findings and targets are recorded in the respective subject department plans.

Following discussion during staff meeting in May 2014, there was general agreement that the area of students written work was in need of improvement. There are five mixed ability first year classes and samples of written work across the curriculum were considered by the Core

Learning experience

During the Core Group meetings an overview of good practice on page 25 of the SSE Guidelines was considered to reach a consensus on strengths, areas for improvement and priorities for action. The Core team scanned through the evaluation criteria in the SSE guidelines. Subsequently a student questionnaire on attitudes to literacy & engagement in learning for self-assessment of working with others, Students also completed a Cloze test in September/October 2013 (see appendix 1). The questionnaire and close test was administered to 124 students. By using an on-line tool results were instantly collated and analysis began immediately. Parents were also surveyed to establish literacy attitudes in the home.

Sample findings

- **78%** of students said that they enjoyed reading.
- **28%** of students said they disliked reading.
- **37%** of students said they read daily, **21%** read weekly and **21%** responded by saying they only read when in school.
- **82%** of students would like more opportunities to read more in school.
- When students were asked what book they would recommend to a friend they recommended various titles but predominantly they were titles by Michael Morpurgo. Other than that the titles that were suggested were autobiographical (**34%**) with sport (**15%**) coming as the next most common genre.

Teachers' practice

At a staff meeting in the Spring of 2013 the whole staff reflected on teaching and learning using the SSE guidelines under the three themes learner outcomes (pages 30 & 31), learning experiences (student's engagement in learning – pages 34 & 35) and teachers' practice (teaching approaches – pages 40 & 41).

After analysis of student and parent survey by the whole staff at a meeting in September 2013, an anomaly appeared in relation to the correcting of literacy errors across all subject areas, (spelling and grammar along with content). Staff also agreed that it made sense to look at the key skills communicating and working with others as they tie in very well with the current focus on literacy. Consequently as part of subject department planning, teachers agreed to audit their teaching approaches through the lens of these key skills using a template provided by PDST (see appendix 3).

Sample findings

Students currently are having difficulty in meeting the literacy demands of their subjects – written work was noted by teachers to be poor for some students often of poor standard with many just careless mistakes and subject specific language can be a challenge for many students, therefore it was decided that literacy would be the focus for the second SIP.

- In general the focus of teaching is on knowledge and skills more so than literacy/numeracy or ICT.
- There is an awareness amongst staff of the eight key skills for junior cycle.
- 80% of teachers use ICT regularly, however 47% of students stated that it was their favourite way to learn and 28% stated that they got a chance to learn using technology.
- Most of the learning outcomes for the key skills communicating and working with others are being addressed by teachers through their teaching approaches with the exception of the ICT component.

Progress made on previously identified targets identified in the current SIP

- Literacy Notice Board has been set up
- Paired reading between TY buddies and First Year Students
- Following a survey of 1st and 2nd Year students in June 2016 75% indicated that they would read for enjoyment. This is an increase of 5% from the finding of 2014.
- Increased visits to the Source Library and the local bookshop for all Junior students.
- Effective use of Literacy Posters in classrooms (simple literacy mistakes) and Blooms Taxonomy posters in classrooms.
- Effective use of iPads using Padlet App and Oxford Dictionary App.

4. Summary of school self-evaluation findings

4.1 Our school has strengths in the following areas:

- STen scores of 1st Year students for reading are above the national norms.
- Attainment in the majority of subjects at both JC & LC is above the national norms.
- 78% of students are reading fiction for enjoyment.

- There is a critical mass of teachers already using comprehension strategies.
- There is strong willingness to share good practice.
- Students are getting some opportunities to develop oral language and are confident working in pairs and small groups.

4.2 The following areas are prioritised for improvement

- Teachers to focus on the development of literacy as well as knowledge and skills.
- Increased expectations and standards in writing across the curriculum. Implementation of an editing checklist to concentrate on spelling and punctuation and grammar in year one, vocabulary and sequencing in year two and development of answers in year three.
- The development of comprehension and group-work strategies across all subject areas.
- Teachers to reflect on their practice in relation to pair/group strategies.
- While a significant number of students are taking the higher-level paper in Junior and Leaving Cert Subject there will be an emphasis to maintain the grades in certain subject areas and improve them in other areas.

4.3 The Following Legislative and regulatory requirements need to be addressed .

The School Bullying policy was reviewed in light of circular 0045/13. This was reviewed and updated and is printed in student Diary each year.

Appendix to School Self-Evaluation Report: legislative and regulatory checklist

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Valid enrolment of students	M51/93	YES	
Time in school - Length of school year (minimum of 167 days for all year groups) - Length of school week (minimum of 28 hours for all year groups)	Circular M29/95	YES YES	
Standardisation of school year	Circular 034/2011	YES	
Arrangements for parent/teacher and staff meetings	Circular M58/04	YES	
Implementation of national literacy strategy	Circular 25/12	YES	Under development
Implementation of Croke Park agreement regarding additional time requirement	Circular 025/2011	YES	
Development of school plan	Section 21 Education Act 1998	YES	
Guidance provision in secondary schools	Circular PPT12/05, Education Act 1998 (section 9(c))	YES	
Whole-school guidance plan	Section 21 Education Act 1998	YES	In progress

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular	Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Delivery of CSPE to all junior cycle classes	Circular M12/01 Circular M13/05	YES	
Exemption from the study of Irish	Circular M10/94	YES	
Implementation of revised in-school management structures	Circular M29/02, Circular 21/98, Circular 30/97, Circular 29/97	YES	
Limited alleviation on filling posts of responsibility for school year 2011/12	Circular 53/11	YES	
Parents as partners in education	Circular M27/91		
Implementation of child protection procedures	Circular 65/11 Please provide the following information in relation to child protection		YES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE 	3	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE and the school board of management informed 	3	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made 	2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this 	2		

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular		Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
	advice, no report was made and the school board of management informed			
Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate	Section 28 Education Act 1998 Please provide the following information in relation to complaints made by parents during this school year		YES	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of formal parental complaints received ▪ Number of formal complaints processed ▪ Number of formal complaints not fully processed by the end of this school year 	<p>0</p> <p>0</p> <p>0</p>		
Refusal to enrol	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year			

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular		Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school Number of cases processed at informal stage Number of cases heard Number of appeals upheld Number of appeals dismissed	0 0 0 0 0		
Suspension of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year			
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school Number of cases processed at informal stage Number of cases heard Number of appeals upheld Number of appeals dismissed	0 0 0 0 0		
Expulsion of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year			
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school Number of cases processed at informal stage Number of cases heard Number of appeals upheld Number of appeals dismissed	0 0 0 0 0		

Issue	Relevant legislation, rule or circular		Is the school fully meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation, rule or circular?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed