



**CBS Thurles**

**Rossa Street, Thurles**

**65450W**

***Interim***

# School Self-Evaluation Report

Focus on one hour classes

Evaluation period: **September 2022 – April 2023**

Report issue date:

*April 2023*

# School Self-Evaluation Report

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 The focus of the evaluation

A school self-evaluation of learning & teaching in CBS Thurles was undertaken during the period September 2022 to March 2023 focused on the pros and cons of introducing one hour classes. The focus of our evaluation is to identify and assess areas of curriculum and in particular timetabling in need of improvement thereby developing practical, implementable and effective whole-school strategies which will enhance our delivery of Specifications at Junior and Senior Level.

This is a report on the findings of the evaluation.

### 1.2 School context

CBS Thurles is a boys school with 560 students and approximately 100 hours of learning support. The school has a teaching allocation of 41 teachers and 3 SNA posts. The school continues to offer the widest curriculum possible to its students.

We have an excellent tradition of subject planning, collaboration and school development planning and have welcomed support from the PDST through the Forbairt Programme, the Inspectorate, Centre for School Leadership, NCCA and JCT to help us address the School Self Evaluation process.

We provide a varied curriculum including Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and Transition Year. The school is under the trusteeship of the Augustinian Order.

### 1.3 Looking at Our Schools (LOAS) Guidelines:

The following Standards were considered in the process;

- Manage the planning and implementation of the school curriculum.
- Foster a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of each student.
- Manage the planning and implementation of the school curriculum
- Mediate change to respond to the evolving needs of the school and to changes in education
- Teachers value and engage in professional development and professional collaboration

## 2. The findings

### BACKGROUND TO FOCUS ON TIMETABLE

1. We currently have a timetable provision of 28 hours (minimum requirement).
2. JCT in-service has promoted the consideration of 1 hour classes which complements many of the active teaching strategies being espoused at this training.
3. Potential changes to 'core' curriculum at Junior Cycle has created an opportunity for discussion around our school curriculum.

## TEACHERS' PRACTICE –RESPONSES REGARDING 1 HOUR TT PROVISION

1. In September 2022 a decision was made to evaluate our current 40 minute class period provision. This was led by the Assessment Review Committee (ARC)
  - a. Evidence was gathered from schools who had moved to 1 hour timetable provision.
  - b. Schools that operated a one hour timetable were visited and feedback was collated from teachers and management and presented to staff.
  - c. Current timetable provision was considered in light of subject department requests and observations from previous Subject Inspections.
  - d. A discussion document was prepared for staff regarding one hour timetable outlining implications on class contact.
  
2. January 2023 the ARC was asked to reconsider further the option of one hour timetables.
  - a. Sample one hour timetables were prepared based on the 2021/2022 timetable and distributed to all teachers for consideration and feedback.
  - b. A detailed spreadsheet showing impact of change on subjects was produced and distributed to teachers.
  - c. Teachers identified the positive and negative implications of a one hour timetable. See below.

Teacher Feedback	
Arguments for:	Arguments against:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ideal for applying principles of leadership for learning.</li> <li>• additional time allocation to all subjects across all your groups.</li> <li>• fits in with new junior cycle.</li> <li>• opportunity to explore material in greater depth in each class.</li> <li>• less movement and time lost as less class changes.</li> <li>• opportunity to mix up content and teaching techniques in one hour class periods.</li> <li>• provide scope for increased tasters in first year.</li> <li>• better for work project and group work.</li> <li>• opportunity for increased innovation in class.</li> <li>• increased variety of teaching methodologies.</li> <li>• benefits for all students.</li> <li>• enhance lesson planning and therefore help improve teaching practices.</li> <li>• opportunity for greater self-directed learning.</li> <li>• less books for students helping students organise themselves.</li> <li>• less subjects for homework each night.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teacher student absence has significant impact on learning last time.</li> <li>• work left for classes when absent need to be varied and sufficient to focus students over one hour.</li> <li>• some weak students may find it difficult to concentrate for the hour - but this can be offset by good planning.</li> <li>• loss of more regular class contact with groups.</li> </ul>

This feedback was used to inform further staff meeting discussions along with Student Council, Parents Council and Board of Management discussions.

### 3. LEARNER OUTCOMES – Student Focus Group Feedback

1. A broad range of students across Junior and Senior years were involved in the focus groups.

Student Feedback	
Arguments for:	Arguments against:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less time lost from movement as we are coming from different parts of the building</li> <li>• For practical subjects e.g. TG &amp; Science more time for experiments</li> <li>• Less chance of a 'rush' at the end of class where homework could be assigned 'at the bell' which means you may be late for the next class</li> <li>• Improved efficiency – more time to get to class so starting on time (no limbo period of waiting for students who are in distant parts of the building to arrive)</li> <li>• Time for teacher help with questions in class – (with the extra time work could be assigned and started in class so there would be time to deal with questions from students who may have a problem with the task)</li> <li>• More time for recuperation with 6 periods per day ... particularly if you have heavy subjects</li> <li>• Less carrying of books</li> <li>• 1 regular hour is better than odd 40 mins</li> <li>• Better for exam preparation – can do timed questions in class to assist with exam preparation and timing ... also the extra time would mean that in some subjects there could be immediate feedback on questions</li> <li>• Less moving around.</li> <li>• Less alteration for exam timetable necessary when house exams take place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For note taking in class / classes where note taking is necessary this could not go on for a full hour</li> <li>• 1 hour of a subject you don't like is harder than 40 mins of a subject you don't like</li> <li>• Class control - if there is a problem already in the 40 minute class this would prove difficult in a 1 hour class /possible discipline issues for disruptive students in a longer class ...</li> <li>• Concern about younger classes not concentrating for an hour</li> <li>• Don't want a change in routine</li> </ul>

#### **4. PARENT OUTCOMES – Parent Council Feedback**

##### **Summary of one hour feedback from parents**

###### **Positives**

- Gives teachers an opportunity to deliver in different styles and make and take on some new approaches.
- more scope for use of technology in classrooms.
- would allow students to process group work and other activities at the end of a lesson
- lighter bags.
- easier to organise time greater opportunity for groupwork.

###### **Negatives**

- student concentration levels particularly weak students.
- reduction of time allocation in some subjects may be a disadvantage.
- will it become more difficult for substitute teachers to supervise.
- Impact on language subjects with similar class contact but fewer class periods.
- completing class work/homework following teacher or student absence.

#### **5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.**

Following this consultative process a decision was made having considered all of the feedback from teachers, students and parents to move to one hour timetables from September 2023.

## 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	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
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	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Standardisation of school year	Circular 034/2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Arrangements for parent/teacher and staff meetings	Circular M58/04	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Implementation of national literacy strategy	Circular 25/12	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Implementation of Croke Park agreement regarding additional time requirement	Circular 025/2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Development of school plan	Section 21 Education Act 1998	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Guidance provision in secondary schools	Circular PPT12/05, Education Act 1998 (section 9(c))	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Whole-school guidance plan	Section 21 Education Act 1998	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Delivery of CSPE to all junior cycle classes	Circular M12/01 Circular M13/05	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Exemption from the study of Irish	Circular M10/94	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

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
Implementation of revised in-school management structures	Circular M29/02, Circular 21/98, Circular 30/97, Circular 29/97	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Limited alleviation on filling posts of responsibility for school year 2011/12	Circular 53/11	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Parents as partners in education	Circular M27/91		
Implementation of child protection procedures	<b>Circular 65/11</b> <b>Please provide the following information in relation to child protection</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· 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</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate	<b>Section 28 Education Act 1998</b> <b>Please provide the following information in relation to complaints made by parents during this school year</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Number of formal parental complaints received</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Number of formal complaints processed</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Refusal to enrol	<b>Section 29 Education Act 1998</b> <b>Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year</b>	N/A	

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 <input type="checkbox"/>  Number of cases processed at informal stage <input type="checkbox"/>  Number of cases heard <input type="checkbox"/>  Number of appeals upheld <input type="checkbox"/>  Number of appeals dismissed <input type="checkbox"/>			
Suspension of students	<b>Section 29 Education Act 1998</b>  <b>Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year</b>			
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school <input type="checkbox"/>  Number of cases processed at informal stage <input type="checkbox"/>  Number of cases heard <input type="checkbox"/>  Number of appeals upheld <input type="checkbox"/>  Number of appeals dismissed <input type="checkbox"/>			
Expulsion of students	<b>Section 29 Education Act 1998</b>  <b>Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year</b>			
	Number of section 29 cases taken against the school <input type="checkbox"/>  Number of cases processed at informal stage <input type="checkbox"/>  Number of cases heard <input type="checkbox"/>  Number of appeals upheld <input type="checkbox"/>  Number of appeals dismissed <input type="checkbox"/>			



## Appendix to School Self-Evaluation report: policy checklist

Policy	Source	Has the policy been approved by the Board of Management?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed
Enrolment policy	Section 15(2)(d) of Education Act Equal Status Acts 2000-2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Code of behaviour, including anti-bullying policy <sup>1</sup>	Circular M33/91 NEWB guidelines Section 23, Education Welfare Act 2000 Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour, 1993, Circular M33/91 Equal Status Acts 2000-2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Attendance and participation strategy <sup>2</sup>	Circular M51/93 Section 22, Education Welfare Act 2000	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Health and Safety Statement	Health and Safety Act 2005 Section 20	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Data protection	Data Protection Act 1988 Data Protection (Amendment Act) 2003	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Special education needs policy <sup>3</sup>	Education Act (1998) Equal Status Acts (2000 to 2011), Education (Welfare) Act (2000), Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (EPSEN) <sup>4</sup> (2004) Disability Act (2005))	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Social, personal and health education(SPHE)/Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy	Circulars 37/2010, 23/2010, M27/08, M11/03, M22/00, M20/96, M4/95	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Substance use policy	Department of Education and Skills Directive; guidelines issued to schools in 2002	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Internet acceptable use policy	Department of Education and Skills Directive	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Child Protection Policy	Circular 0065/2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

<sup>1</sup> Under the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) (section 23) the school's code of behaviour should conform to the specifications stated.

<sup>2</sup> Under the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) (section 22) the school's attendance strategy should conform with the provisions stipulated.

<sup>3</sup> Section 9 of the Education Act (1998) requires a school to "use its available resources" to identify and provide for the educational needs of those "with a disability or other special educational needs."

<sup>4</sup> The EPSEN Act requires that schools be inclusive of and provide an appropriate education for students with special educational needs.