



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST JUNIOR BOYS' SCHOOL

SEAFIELD ROAD,
Clontarf Dublin 3
19006Q

School Improvement Plan

Evaluation period: **September 2013 to June 2014**

Plan issue date: **June 2014**

Summary school improvement plan

1. Introduction

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

As part of our ongoing work in the School, we conducted a school self-evaluation of teaching and learning this year, focussing on numeracy (understanding and using Mathematics). For more information on how the evaluation took place, please see our School Self-Evaluation Report which is available on the school website. This 2014 School Improvement Plan will be available to the school community on the school website. An e-copy will be forwarded to our school inspector, and a copy will be sent to our Parents' Association. The Board of Management formally adopted the report at its meeting of 11th of June 2014. This school improvement plan sets out the actions that we will undertake in the School over the next three years. The main purpose of these actions is to improve our pupils' learning.

Rationale

This action plan was written as a result of a self-evaluation of the teaching and learning of Maths in our school. It forms part of our response to the National Strategy to improve Literacy and Numeracy among children and young people 2011-2020. All teaching staff, Parents and children were involved in the process and the Board of Management was also consulted.

Aims

We want every child in our school to enjoy Maths and to engage with Maths in a practical way. We want Maths lessons to be positive experiences that will allow the children to gain confidence and competence in fundamental Mathematical skills and in recalling number facts. We want the children to develop problem solving abilities that can be applied to everyday life.

Background & History of this plan

The school received information about the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategy in 2011. We made initial changes in response to this by increasing the amount of time devoted to numeracy and literacy in our classrooms. This year we decided to focus on numeracy as an area for self-evaluation. Some staff members had attended a C.P.D. course on Maths over the Summer and had found it helpful. During the year, we paid special attention to planning for Maths with a view to improving the outcome for the children.

In drawing up an action plan for improving standards in Mathematics,

- We began a review of our Whole School Plan for Maths.
- We gathered quantitative data, through formal and informal tests with a view to addressing learning needs.
- We identified those who needed further attention and included further differentiation in our planning.
- We discussed the timing of administering standardised tests.
- We discussed the choice of standardised tests.
- We decided to do in-depth analysis of test results next year. This would make it easier to identify the strands where children score well or not. This information would inform planning in a clearer way.
- We introduced Aistear into the Infant classes and included a variety of playful numeracy activities.
- We introduced Aistear-recommended unit wooden blocks for 3D construction activities.

- We bought new Maths manipulatives and teaching resources for 1st and 2nd classes, to encourage ‘hands – on’ work in Maths.
- We assembled a bank of useful I.C.T. resources.
- We sourced and printed a wide range of Mathematical templates and visual aids.
- Recognising the important role of Parents in their child’s education, we consulted with all of them through a questionnaire. This provided qualitative feedback from another perspective. (see appendix for questionnaire)
- Samples of Maths work were sent home also, so that Parents and children could look over and discuss their work.
- Children were asked to answer questions about their attitude towards Maths. They did this with the help of their Parents.

2. Summary of school self-evaluation findings

2.1 Our school has **strengths** in the following areas:

Strengths

- Teaching approaches: There is a strong emphasis on ‘hands-on’ learning, especially in the area of Maths.
- Preparation for teaching: We have identified and organised a wide range of suitable ‘hands-on’ Mathematical materials for use in each class.
- Teaching approaches: We make good use of interactive Maths resources.
- Teaching approaches: We play Maths games regularly.
- Numeracy / Pupils’ engagement in learning: We carry out extra Numeracy activities during Aistear sessions.
- Numeracy / Pupils’ engagement in learning: We participate in Maths Week annually during Maths Week Ireland.
- Learning environment: We carry out Maths trails in the school.
- Learning environment: We strive to make the school environment ‘Maths – rich’.
- Reporting / Communicating with Parents: We present homework meetings for Parents at the beginning of the school year.
- Reporting / Communicating with Parents: We send home report cards that are in line with the standard report cards as outlined by the N.C.C.A.
- Pupils’ engagement with learning: The children show a very strong liking for Maths and also feel very confident in Maths.

We know this because we consulted with pupils, parents and teachers, and examined test results and activities in the school.

2.2 Our school has decided to prioritise the following **areas of development**:

Areas for development

- Support parents in their role as partners in education: Keep parents informed by sending home the N.C.C.A. parental information and tips about Maths development for their child’s class level. Increase the amount of feedback and information for Parents regarding their child’s work in Maths and introduce a numeracy link on the school website.
- Attainment of curricular objectives in relation to attitudes: Send home Maths

games to promote positive attitude to Maths through enjoyment of games.

- Teaching approach: Maintain a balance between hands-on Maths, interactive Maths and the recording of Maths.
- Teaching approach: Keep up standards of correct number formation and the presentation of Maths work.
- Teaching approach / Learning to learn: Reinforce the problem-solving approaches as outlined in the Whole-School Plan:
R.O.S.E.: Read, Organise, Solve, Evaluate. (1st and 2nd classes)
R.U.D.E.: Read, Underline, Draw, Estimate. (1st and 2nd classes)
- Teaching approach: Ask Mental Maths problems on a regular basis.
- Assessment: Review assessment procedures.

We have decided to prioritise these areas because

- Parents expressed a wish for more information and feedback.
- Maths games played at home provide enjoyable opportunities for applying and reinforcing mathematical skills.
- We notice that the recording of Maths, e.g. number formation, can suffer if the children don't keep up practice.
- Children benefit from being trained in how to approach mathematical problems.
- Regular Mental Maths practice helps to keep skills sharp and helps in the development of Mathematical language and problem solving.
- Assessment procedures are due for review.

2.3 Our school has set the following **targets for improvement** which are related to pupils' achievement and has identified the following **actions** which will help in achieving those targets over the next three years.

Targets for Improvement	Action
Communication	<p>Numeracy link to be set up on school website. This link will provide information for parents about good Maths websites, interactive Maths games, and N.C.C.A. guidelines for Maths at each class level.</p> <p>Maths workbooks will be sent home more regularly in Junior and Senior Infants so that parents can keep better track of their children's progress.</p>
Reinforcement activities	<p>Maths games will be sent home on a regular basis. These games will consist of printed templates of board games, shape games and number games.</p>
Assessment review	<p>The choice and timing of standardised tests will be reviewed.</p> <p>Assessment results will be analysed closely with a view to informing teaching and</p>

learning.

As a parent you can help us by

- Showing an interest in any completed Maths work that your child brings home
- Discussing his work and encouraging him for his efforts
- Finding opportunities to use Maths in everyday situations
- Playing Maths games with your child
- Helping younger children with number formation

2.4 We know we will have achieved our targets when

- Parents give positive feedback that they find the numeracy information helpful.
- Parents give positive feedback that the children are enjoying the Maths games and are becoming more engaged in numeracy.
- Assessment results are easier to track.