



St. John the Baptist Junior Boys' School
Seafield Road, Clontarf, Dublin 3
19006Q

Literacy

School Improvement Plan

Evaluation period: May 2014 to May 2015

Plan issue date: May 2015

Summary school improvement plan

1. Introduction

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

As part of our on-going work in the School, we conducted a school self-evaluation of teaching and learning this year, focussing on Literacy and the introduction of the Guided Reading approach. For more information on how the evaluation took place, please see our School Self-Evaluation Report which is available on the school website. This 2014-2015 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 May 19, 2015 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 Literacy 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, some Parents and children were involved in the process and the Board of Management was also consulted.

Aims

We endorse the aims and broad objectives of the English curriculum as outlined below.

- Promote positive attitudes and develop an appreciation of the value of language – spoken, read and written
- Create, foster and maintain the child's interest in expression and communication
- Develop the child's ability to engage appropriately in listener-speaker relationships.
- Develop confidence and competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Develop cognitive ability and the capacity to clarify thinking through oral language, reading and writing
- Enable the child to read and write independently
- Enhance emotional, imaginative and aesthetic development through oral, reading and writing experiences

We also wish to respond to the National Strategy to improve Literacy and Numeracy among children and young people, by developing new strategies in our approaches to the teaching and learning of Literacy.

Background & History of this plan

- Literacy/Attainment of curriculum objectives: 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 Literacy as an area for self-evaluation.
- Literacy/Attainment of curriculum objectives: We have already increased our time allocation for the teaching of English in accordance with the Departmental circular 0056 / 2011.
- Literacy/Attainment of curriculum objectives: As a result of the National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy, teachers had been trying to develop various Literacy initiatives in their classrooms. We decided to co-ordinate these initiatives into our Whole School Plan for English.
- Preparation for teaching: In May 2014, the staff discussed rewriting the English Plan.

At this point the N.C.C.A. (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment) uploaded a draft Integrated Language Curriculum aimed at replacing the 1999 English Curriculum. It was then decided that the staff would focus on updating what was happening in the school re literacy in this document as they would be faced with writing a new plan based on the New Integrated Language Curriculum in a year/2 years time.

- Preparation for teaching: We began to amend our English Whole School Plan taking into account any needs that have been identified this year.
- Preparation for teaching: We have revised our short-term planning templates.
- Teaching approaches / Pupils' engagement with learning: We have introduced Aistear integrated play activities into the Infant classrooms. These activities include Literacy activities, and should provide context for Reading, Writing and Oral Language development.
- Teaching approaches / Pupils' engagement with learning: In-class support has been given, on a trial basis, in a number of classrooms and across all class levels.
- Preparation for teaching: A representative group of teachers attended a seminar on Guided Reading and shared their knowledge with the rest of the Staff.
- Preparation for teaching: In May 2014, Staff made a decision to adopt the Guided Reading approach in our school.
- Preparation for teaching: We arranged for further consultation and advice from a representative of P.D.S.T. (Professional Development Service for Teachers).
- Preparation for teaching: Following consultation with P.D.S.T., there was a staff decision to have Senior Infants as a pilot group. Other class groups would introduce Guided Reading in a more gradual way throughout the year.
- Preparation for teaching: We applied for the Book Rental Grant and introduced a book rental scheme for the 2014-2015 school year, to replace the annual purchase of class readers.
- Preparation for teaching: We identified and organised PM Reading resources suitable for Senior Infants, to enable the introduction of Guided Reading in our school. It was planned to organise PM Reading resources for other year groups on a phased basis later in the year.
- Preparation for teaching: We set up a Literacy Committee with representatives from every year group and from The Learning Support team.
- Literacy/Attainment of curriculum objectives: Staff held a special planning meeting to make Whole school decisions re approaches to Literacy.

2. Summary of school self-evaluation findings

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

Strengths

- Preparation for teaching: There is a willingness among staff to adopt new strategies in the teaching of Literacy.
- Preparation for teaching: There is readiness among staff to co-operate and share ideas about improving Literacy in our school.
- Preparation for teaching: We have a new Literacy Committee in place.
- Preparation for teaching: There is strong support from the Board of Management in the area of curriculum development.
- Teaching approaches: We make good use of interactive Literacy resources.
- Learning environment: We have a well resourced library.

- Learning environment: We strive to make the school environment 'Print-rich'.
- Learning environment: Visitors/Parents are invited into our classrooms for 'show and tell'.
- Learning Environment / Literacy / Pupils' engagement in learning: The broad curriculum which is advocated in our school provides a rich source of stimulus for Literacy development.
- Literacy / Pupils' engagement in learning: We carry out extra Literacy activities during Aistear sessions.
- Literacy / Pupils' engagement in learning: The buddy reading system has been in place for a number of years and we have recently introduced D.E.A.R. (Drop Everything and Read) reading sessions across the school.
- Literacy / Pupils' engagement in learning: We place strong emphasis on Oral homework.
- 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 Guided Reading and feel very confident about reading.

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

- Teaching approach: Implement the Guided Reading programme throughout the whole school.
- Assessment: Make further decisions, about the timing of PM testing, for next year.
- Preparation for teaching: Continue to classify the wide range of supplementary readers already available in our school, using recommended guidelines.
- Preparation for teaching: Teachers teaching at the same class level to have planning meetings to share ideas/resources and to discuss what is working well for their classes in the implementation of Guided Reading
- Preparation for teaching: Learning Support Team to continue to monitor in-class provision across all class levels to see where and when it may be most useful in relation to Guided Reading
- Preparation for teaching: Staff to source and collect a range of suitable templates/frameworks/resources that will be helpful in implementing the new approaches to Guided Reading, Writing Genres and Comprehension Strategies
- Preparation for teaching: Literacy committee to co-ordinate whole-school planning for Literacy teaching and learning
- Preparation for teaching: Literacy committee to continue to monitor the progress of new initiatives in Literacy teaching and learning
- Attainment of curricular objectives in relation to attitudes: World Book day to be celebrated annually
- Attainment of curricular objectives in relation to attitudes: Children's written work to be displayed regularly
- 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 Literacy

development for their child's class level.

- Support Parents in their role as partners in education: Keep Parents informed by sending home further information about Guided Reading.
- Support Parents in their role as partners in education: Introduce a Literacy link on the school website.
- Assessment: Review assessment procedures.

We have decided to prioritise these areas because:

- The development of new strategies needs a co-ordinated whole-school approach
- Parents expressed a wish for more information and feedback.
- 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
Whole school planning	Teachers to take a more co-ordinated approach to the development of Reading, Writing and Oral Language. These approaches to include strategies for Guided reading, Comprehension, Writing Genres, Listening and Speaking skills, punctuation, grammar and sight words.
Communication	Literacy link to be set up on school website. This link will provide information for Parents. e.g., information about Guided Reading and links to good Literacy websites. (N.C.C.A. is currently preparing an information page for Parents, on Language and Literacy. We will include this information in the Literacy Link as soon as it is available.)
Assessment review	The choice and timing of standardised tests will be reviewed. Assessment results will be analysed closely with a view to tracking pupils' achievement and informing planning.

As a Parent you can help us by

- Finding opportunities to use Reading and Writing in everyday situations
- Sharing the reading of Library books, fun books and Guided reading books with your child and chatting about what has been read
- Making sure that he returns books on the correct days and he has his reading folder in his bag every day.
- Where necessary, signing to show that your son has completed a homework task
- Showing an interest in any completed work that your child brings home
- Discussing his work and encouraging him for his efforts

- Helping younger children with letter formation

2.4 We know we will have achieved our targets when

- Teachers find the co-ordinated whole-school approach easier to manage.
- Parents give positive feedback that they find the Literacy information helpful.
- Parents give positive feedback that the children are enjoying the Guided Reading and are becoming more engaged in Literacy.
- Assessment results are easier to track.