



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

Literacy School Self-Evaluation Report

Evaluation period: May 2014 to May 2015

Report issue date: May 2015

School Self-Evaluation Report

1. Introduction

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in St. John the Baptist Junior Boys' School was undertaken during the period May 2014 to May 2015. During this period, we examined how the teaching and learning of Literacy was being carried out in our school with a particular emphasis on the introduction of Guided Reading. Teachers reviewed their teaching approaches in an effort to follow best practice in the teaching of Literacy. As part of this process, we consulted with a discussion group of Parents. The discussion group included representative Parents from each class level and a group of teachers. We took Parents' comments into consideration as part of our self-evaluation process. Children were asked to complete a questionnaire that would reflect their responses to Guided Reading. This report is an account of our self-evaluation.

1.2 School context

This is an all-boys' Junior Primary School. The school's main catchment area comprises the three Catholic parishes of Clontarf. The school's population is relatively stable. The school has recently begun to participate in the Aistear programme.

- In the school year of 2014-2015 we have 336 students.
- We have 18 teachers, 12 class teachers, 1 administrative principal, 5 Learning Support / Resource teachers (3 full-time; 1 shared; 1 part-time).
- We have 5 S.N.A.s (4 full-time and 1 part-time).
- We carry out teacher-designed tests / assessments regularly in Junior Infants and Senior Infants.
- We administer the M.I.S.T. test in the 2nd term of Senior Infants
- We administer the Micra-T Reading test in September of 1st Class.
- We administer the Drumcondra Level 1 test in September of 2nd Class
- We administer the Drumcondra Level 2 test in May of 2nd Class.
- PM testing has been introduced in Senior Infants, First Classes and Junior Infants this year.

2. The findings

- Attainment of curriculum objectives / Pupils' engagement in learning: As described already, we gathered both qualitative and quantitative data throughout the year. We used both informal and formal assessments to see how the children were performing and used pupil questionnaires to gather evidence about their attitudes to Literacy.
- Assessment: Over the past two years, pupils in our school achieved an average Sten of 6.5 in the Micra-T test in 1st Class (administered September 2013 and September 2014), and an average STen of 7.4 in the Drumcondra Level 2 test in 2nd Class (administered May 2014 and May 2015). The reason for administering an additional Drumcondra test in the first week of 2nd Class is to identify those children who present as needing a timely boost at the beginning of the new school year, in preparation for the more difficult 2nd Class English programme. Reviewing our testing instrument will form part of our plan.
- Pupils' engagement in learning: Pupil questionnaires were given to all children in Senior Infants and First Class, and completed at school.
- 157 children completed questionnaires.
- 90 % said that they like reading and 10% said that they do not.
- 64% said that they would like to spend more time reading and 36% said that they would not.
- 89% said that they find reading easy and 11% said that they do not.
- 94% felt that they are good at reading and 6% felt that they are not.
- 85% said that they read on the Interactive Whiteboard and 15% said that they do not.
- We gathered information about their preferred PM readers and also their favourite guided reading activity. Teachers took note of these preferences.

- Children in Senior Infants and First Classes said that class library reading and free writing are their favourite Guided Reading activities.
- Among the most popular books in Senior Infants were 'Baby Bear's Hiding Place', 'The Swan Family' and 'Swimming Across the Pool'.
- In First Classes the most popular books were 'Teamwork', 'Baby Bear Climbs' and 'Baby Panda'.
- Attainment of curricular objectives in relation to attitudes: Pupil questionnaire responses indicated very positive attitudes towards the teaching and learning of Guided Reading.
- Reporting / Communicating with Parents: As mentioned earlier, teachers met with a discussion group of Parents. Parents were generally very positive about their children liking Guided Reading. However they expressed a wish for further information about the programme. They also expressed an interest in having more information about how they could help their children with Guided Reading and Literacy in general. Some Parents requested that the children would have the Guided Reading book for longer each week. Teachers will have to weigh up this possibility with the practical management issues involved in Guided Reading. The topic of handwriting was discussed. Following consultation with P.D.S.T. on 6th of May 2015, staff decided to continue with Script for Infants and to do Pre-Cursive style in 1st and 2nd Classes for the next year. This decision was made in the interest of clarity and consistency, as schools will be receiving guidelines on a new curricular approach towards handwriting later on in the next school year.

3. Progress made on previously-identified improvement targets

- 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 among Children and Young People 2011-2020, 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.

4. Summary of school self-evaluation findings

4.1 Our school has strengths in the following areas:

- 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.

4.2 We prioritise the following areas for improvement

- Teaching approach: Implement the Guided Reading programme throughout the whole school.
- Preparation for teaching: Continue to classify the wide range of supplementary readers already available in our school, using recommended guidelines.
- Preparation for teaching: Make further decisions about testing for next year.
- 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.

4.3 The following legislative and regulatory requirements have been addressed:

- We have increased our time allocation for the teaching of Literacy by 1 hour per week in accordance with the Departmental circular 0056 / 2011.
- We administer 2nd Class standardised tests in the month of May, in line with reporting requirements.
- We send the results of these 2nd Class standardised tests to the Department of Education and Skills each year. We also attach these results to the 2nd Class yearly school reports, as is required by legislation.

Appendix:

Parents in the Literacy Discussion Group (February 2015):

Róisín Dooley, Clíona Hurley, Kevin Carroll, Emily Swift, Janice Moore, Mary Beth Porter, Orla Shouldice, Anita Murray, Fiona Beamish, Elizabeth Harvey, Daniela Tropea, Carmel Jordan

**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
Time in school - Length of school year - minimum of 183 days - Length of school day 4 hours 40 minutes (infants); 5 hour 40 minutes (1 st -6 th classes)	Circular 11/95	School year Yes School day Yes	
Arrangements for parent/ teacher and staff meetings	Circular 14/04	Yes	
Implementation of national agreement regarding additional time requirement	Circular 0008/2011	Yes	
Standardisation of school year	Circular 0034/2011	Yes	
Valid enrolment of pupils	Section 9(1), 15(2) and 23 Education Act 1998 Sections 20 and 21, Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Rules 55, 64, 108 and 123, Rules for National Schools Circular P24/02 Staffing arrangements for the 2013/14 school year Circular 13/2013	Yes	
Pupils repeating a school year	Rule 64 Rules for National Schools, Circular 11/01 Circular 32/03	Yes	
Annual returns to the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB)	Education and Welfare Act 2000	Yes	
Development of school plan	Section 21, Education Act 1998	Yes	
Engagement with SSE process	Circular 39/2012	Yes	
Appointments to posts of responsibility	Circular 16/73, Circular 07/03, Circular 053/2011	Yes	
Time for literacy and numeracy - assessing and reporting literacy and numeracy achievement	Circular 0056/11, Circular 0066/2011, Circular 0018/2012	Yes	

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
Exemption from Irish	Circular 12/96	Yes	
Implementation of child protection procedures	Circular 0065/2011 Please record the following 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 _____ ▪ 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 _____ ▪ Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made _____ ▪ Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made and the school board of management informed _____ 		
Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate	Complaints Procedures, Section 28 Education Act Primary Boards of Management Information Manual November 2007 Please record the following in relation to complaints	Yes	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of formal parental complaints received _____0_____ ▪ Number of formal complaints processed _____0_____ ▪ Number of formal complaints not fully processed by the end of this school year _____0_____ 		
Refusal to enrol	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please record 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	2		
	Number of cases processed at informal stage	0		
	Number of cases heard	2		
	Number of appeals upheld	0		
	Number of appeals dismissed	2		
Suspension of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please record the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year		0	
	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	Section 29 Education Act 1998 Please record the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year		0	
	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 policy been approved by the board of management?	If no, indicate aspects to be developed.
Enrolment policy	Section (15)(2)(d) Education Act 1998	Yes	
Code of behaviour ¹ including anti-bullying policy	Circular 20/90 NEWB <i>Guidelines</i> Section 23, Education Welfare Act 2000 <i>Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-primary schools</i> 2013, and Circular 45/13	Yes	
Attendance and participation strategy ²	Section 22 Education Welfare Act 2000 Equal Status Acts 2000-2011	No	
Health and safety statement	Section 20 Health and Safety Act 2005	Yes	
Data protection	Data Protection Act 1988 Data Protection (Amendment Act) 2003	Yes	
Internet acceptable use policy	National Council for Technology in Education (NCTE) Guidelines, 2012 at www.webwise.ie	Yes	
Special educational needs policy ³	Education Act 1998 Equal Status Acts 2000- 2011 Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) ⁴ 2004 Disability Act 2005	Yes	
Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy	Relationships and Sexuality Education: Policy Guidelines (1997)	No (in draft)	
Substance use policy	National Drugs Strategy and Department of Education and Skills Guidelines	Yes	
Child protection policy	Circular 0065/2011	Yes	
Parents as partners	Circular 24/91	No	
Public service agreement – special needs assistants	Circular 71/11	Yes	
Other		Separated Parents Admin. of medicines Assessment Healthy lunch Gifted Children (in draft) First aid (in draft)	