2016 - 2018

ST COLUMBA’S COLLEGE SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION REPORT AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

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# St Columba’s College

# Our Self-Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan

# 1. Introduction

# Focus of the Evaluation: Teaching and Learning

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in St Columba’s College is currently in progress for the period September 2016 to May 2018. During the evaluation, the school is focusing on the following four strands of teaching and learning:

* + Literacy:
  + Numeracy:
  + Homework
  + Attendance

**School Context:**

St Columba’s College is a rural, mixed post primary school under the trusteeship of C.E.I.S.T. There are currently 876 pupils enrolled in the school, and 66 members of the teaching staff. A number of students have special education needs and are allocated extra tuition hours based on these needs. Assistants cater for the needs of these pupils also. There is strong parental support for teaching and learning, a factor that is acknowledged as having a positive effect on pupil attainment levels and on pupils’ attitudes to learning.

**1.1 Working groups**

The Self Evaluation process is being progressed with assistance from the following committees:

* Literacy Strategy team
* Numeracy Strategy team
* Homework Committee
* Assistant Principals Team

# 2. Current Status

**2.1 What is working well in our school?**

* Attainment levels in literacy and numeracy and are level with or above national norms.
* Most pupils display positive attitudes towards all aspects of literacy and numeracy.
* Experienced and enthusiastic teaching staff focused on improving standards.
* Pupils use their literacy skills competently in their learning in all curriculum areas.
* Teachers check pupil understanding of numerical concepts.
* Children are competent in numerical work.
* Most students in each year have a good attendance record.
* Homework is valued by the school as an important aide to teaching and learning.
* Teachers regularly point out the value and benefit of doing homework and studying for revision.

**2.2. How we know**

* First year survey (Oct 2015) on student attitudes towards reading and writing
* School Report on the results for our school PISA (2015)
* First year Numeracy attitudes survey (Feb 2016)
* Results of first year maths setting test (Sept 2016)
* First year results in Drumcondra Testing in Reading and Numeracy (Oct 2016)
* First year results in CAT 4 (Jan 2017)
* First year results in CAT 4 (Jan 2018)
* Teacher feedback on their understanding of, and focus on, numeracy.
* 1st Year ‘New Group Reading Test’ (NGRT) (Jan 2018)
* 2nd Year ‘New Group Reading Test’(NGRT) (Feb 2018)
* First Year Survey (April 2018) on student reading habits
* First Year Survey (April 2018) on student attitudes towards homework.
* E Portal, VSware and Anseo attendance reports (ongoing)

**2.3** **This is what we are going to focus on to improve our practice further**

* Improve understanding of what numeracy is about.
* An overall improvement in pupil's writing skills
* Increase overall numeracy scores for the lower quartile of Drumcondra Test pupils/CAT 4 results
* Increase overall reading comprehension scores for the lower quartile of Drumcondra Test pupils/NGRT
* Improve student engagement with various forms of literature
* Improve overall school attendance, particularly for those with high absence rate.
* Achieve a more accurate record of pupil attendance.
* Instil a better appreciation of the value of homework in the students
* Improve the quality of student homework assignments.
* Numeracy and literacy to be developed as part of the teaching and learning in all classes.
* Achieve a measureable improvement in teaching and learning in all subject areas.

**Appendix to School Self-Evaluation report: Legislative and regulatory checklist.**

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| **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 | Yes |  |
| Code of behaviour, including anti- bullying policy | 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 | Yes |  |
| Attendance and participation strategy | Circular M51/93  Section 22, Education Welfare Act 2000 | Yes | Review  Sept 2018 |
| Health and Safety Statement | Health and Safety Act 2005  Section 20 | Yes |  |
| Data protection | Data Protection Act 1988  Data Protection (Amendment Act) 2003 | Yes |  |
| Special education needs policy | Education Act (1998)  Equal Status Acts (2000 to 2011),  Education (Welfare) Act (2000),  Education for Persons with Special  Education Needs Act (EPSEN) (2004)  Disability Act (2005) | Yes | Review  Sept 2018 |
| Social, personal and health education(SPHE)Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy | Circulars 23/2010, M27/08, M11/03, M22/00, M20/96, M4/95 | Yes | Under review |
| Substance use policy | Department of Education and Skills  Directive; guidelines issued to schools in 2002 | Yes |  |
| Internet acceptable use policy | Department of Education and Skills Directive | Yes |  |

# 3. Our improvement plan

On the following pages we have recorded, for each strand:

* The **targets** for improvement we have set
* The **actions** we will implement to achieve these
* **Who is responsible** for implementing, monitoring and reviewing our improvement plan
* How we will measure **progress** and check **outcomes** (criteria for success)

As we implement our improvement plan we will record:

* The **progress** made, and **adjustments** made, and **when adjustments took place.**
* **Achievement of targets** (original and modified), and **when they were achieved.**

# Our Improvement Plan

**Timeframe of this improvement plan is from Sept 2016 to May 2018**

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| **LITERACY**  **Targets:** | The school has good scores overall in reading. Aim to maintain this standard.  To improve the number of children who like writing by 5% per year  Tracker children will show good improvement in literacy skills after three years |
| **Actions/Strategies** | * The DEAR initiative to continue on a twice per term basis. * Introduce a library cabinet to the study hall so that teachers can give out books to students who have a free class. Ask students/teachers to donate books they are not reading. * Develop the library resource in classrooms. * Readathon to coincide with the MS Readathon in Sept. * Key Words List and Read Wall in classrooms. * Vocabulary Notebook for all 1st Yr pupils * School visit by a poet. * Allow book reviews on the school Facebook page. * Teachers to bring classes to the Stranorlar library. * Hold a book fair in the school with assistance from Universal Books in Letterkenny. * Buddy Reading programme where students visit the local primary school to help pupils with their reading. |
| **Persons / groups responsible** | * Principal and Literacy Group * English Dept. * Ms G white (Co-ordination) * Learning Support Teachers (Reading Programme) * Woodwork teachers and students |
| **Criteria for success** | Teachers report good reading practice among students. |
| **Progress and adjustments** | **TBC** |
| **Targets achieved** | **TBC** |

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| **NUMERACY:**  **Targets** | Students and teachers to have a better understanding of what numeracy is ie. *“Numeracy is the ability to use mathematics to solve problems and meet the demands of day to day living*”. Numeracy to be more visible to the school community.  Improve the numeracy scores of first year pupils during their first three years. |
| **Actions/Strategies** | * Survey all teachers on their experience of numeracy in their own subject. (Include explanation of numeracy) * Create posters with distances (m) from various locations to another. * Add a Numeracy Board near the photocopying room on which a weekly question or problem could be displayed. * Design print and laminate posters for teacher’s rooms that show how to find percentage score in class tests. |
| **Persons / groups responsible** | * Mr John Sweeney. (Surveys) * Members of the Numeracy Group. * Mr Pat Brennan and Mr Mark Cannon (Board and Signs) |
| **Criteria for success** | Students have a better understanding of numeracy. Students engage with the numeracy board and the distance signs.  Scores improved in numeracy tests. |
| **Progress and adjustments** | **TBC** |
| **Targets achieved** | **TBC** |

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| **ATTENDANCE:**  **Targets** | Revise the existing school attendance policy.  Improve general student attendance.  Raise the current attendance level by 4% |
| **Actions/Strategies** | * Draw up the new school attendance policy for ratification in November. * Make effective use of the new student attendance record-keeping facilities in VSware. * Recognition of very good attendance at assemblies. * Year heads interact with students showing poor attendance level. * Meeting with parents of students with poor attendance at parent meetings. * Advisory letter to parents where a high number of days absent has been recorded * Interventions by the student welfare officer and the school completion co-ordinator. * On-going school completion programme in the school. |
| **Persons / groups responsible** | * Mr P Brennan and Mr T Rowan * Year Heads and Deputy Principals * School Completion Co-ordinator * Subject Teachers * Office staff |
| **Criteria for success** | Improved attendance being reported by year heads for all classes.  Achievement of above 92% overall attendance. |
| **Progress and adjustments** |  |
| **Targets achieved** | **TBC** |

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| **HOMEWORK:**  **Targets** | Increase teacher satisfaction with quality of homework assignments produced on time by students.  Students are well informed about the value of homework to teaching and learning.  Students engage with homework exercises and can complete it comfortably.  Create a better framework for monitoring patterns of no homework.  Better connection with parents/Guardians regarding homework assigned. |
| **Actions** | * 1. Redesign the journal to better allow for comments regarding homework on a weekly basis. * 2. Design a new Homework Policy based on the findings of the strategy group and seek staff and management approval. * 3. Explore the use of the ‘Behaviour’ column in VSware to note persistent non-production of homework. * 4. Whole school strategies document with rationale for homework and guidelines to be followed. |
| **Persons / groups responsible** | * 1. Ms Ann Marie Wade and Ms Lisa Culkin (Journal) * 2. Ms D Robertson, Ms G white, Mr B Mc Crea and Mr Pat Brennan (Policy) * 3. Mr Brian Mc Crea and Mr Pat Brennan (VSware) * 4. Committee * 5. Subject Teachers |
| **Criteria for success** | An increase in positive attitude toward homework assignments. Teachers reporting better quality of homework and fewer instances of non-production of homework. Students and parents are positive about the amount |
| **Progress and adjustments** |  |
| **Targets achieved** |  |