

St. Columba's College Stranorlar



School Self Evaluation Report And School Improvement Plan

September 2019 to June 2022



St Columba's College

Our Self-Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan

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 2019 to June 2022. During the evaluation, the school is focusing on the following five strands of teaching and learning:

- 1. Literacy:**
- 2. Numeracy:**
- 3. Homework**
- 4. Attendance**
- 5. Wellbeing**

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 889 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
- Homework Committee
- Wellbeing Committee
- Step Up Teachers Group

Our School Improvement Plan

On the following pages we have recorded, for each of the five strands:

- 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**.

St Columba's College School Improvement Plan

Timeframe of this improvement plan is from Sept 2019 - June 2022

<p>1. LITERACY</p> <p>Targets:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Literacy includes the capacity to read, understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication including spoken language, printed text, broadcast media, and digital media.</i> • The school has good scores overall in reading. Aim to maintain this standard. • To improve the number of children who like reading/writing by 5%. • To continue to encourage reading within students by promoting the “Book in the Bag” and “DEAR” initiatives within the school community, • “Book in the Bag” and DEAR continue to be promoted within the school to encourage reading. • Set up a student literacy focus group with Transition Year students to promote and support reading with Junior Year groups. • Improve student grammar through the “Word of the Week” strategy.
<p>Actions/Strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DEAR initiative will continue on a twice per term basis. • A Book shelf was set up in the study hall where students and teachers can rent a book for free and donate books to the school book shelf. Book shelves were also set up in classrooms throughout the school. • School Book Club at lunchtime (Run by Ms K Diver) • “Word of the week” was announced over the intercom and displayed on the virtual notice boards throughout the school and in the classrooms. • School visit by a poet. • Book reviews by students and teachers were shared on the school Facebook page. • Visits to the local Library will continue and students will be given the opportunity to become library members. • A book fair was held in the school with assistance from Universal Books in Letterkenny. • Transition Year students created a literacy notice board in the school canteen and shared weekly news articles for students to read. • A literacy noticeboard was set up in school where teachers and students shared the novels they were reading. • Writing competitions were held termly among Junior Students to encourage creativity and improve grammar and writing skills.
<p>Persons / groups responsible</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal • Deputy Principal • Literacy Committee • English Dept. • Learning Support Teachers (Reading Programme) • Read DL

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Teaching Staff • SNA'S
Criteria for success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers noticed a positive improvement in reading habits within students. • The reading gap for students improved particularly amongst students who were initially below their reading ages. These results were reflected in the National Reading Group Tests (NGRT).
Progress and adjustments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Literacy Committee and Teachers have recognised that DEAR classes should continue once a month as it promotes positive reading habits in students. • The NGRT tests have a positive impact in recognising the students who's reading levels have improved and the students that require extra help through Learning Support hours. • Teachers will continue to visit the local library with their students in order to promote further reading. • Transition Year students will continue to set up a student literacy reading group with Junior students.
Targets achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an improvement in the reading scores of 2nd year students. Dec 2020 • Out of a random selection of 20 students who sat both literacy tests in 1st and 2nd year, 6 students increased above the targeted reading age for 2nd year students to over 14 years and 3 months. • 6 students increased their reading ages within the second year age bracket. • 8 students decreased in reading ages from 1st year to 2nd year.

2. NUMERACY: Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Numeracy is the ability to use mathematics to solve problems and meet the demands of day to day living”.</i> • To encourage Numeracy within the school community and to make our numeracy strategies visible throughout. • Develop a strategy similar to “DEAR” and name it “SYNC” (Set Your Numeracy Classroom) a simple everyday classroom activity to encourage numeracy in the classroom. (number seats/ tables sequencing activities etc.)
Actions/Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Survey new first year pupils about their understanding of, and attitude toward, numeracy. • New focus in subject areas to bring an aspect of numeracy into the T & L of all subjects. • Folder in the shared drive for planning documents highlighting numeracy initiatives in each of the subjects. • Subject Departments to use numeracy notice board to highlight numeracy within specific subjects.
Persons / groups responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal • Deputy Principals • Members of the Numeracy Group (New per subject focus). • School Teaching Staff (Board and Signs) • Subject Coordinators (to ensure that the numeracy strand is included in subject plans) • SNA’S
Criteria for success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have a better understanding of numeracy. Students engage with the numeracy board and the distance signs. • Scores improved in numeracy tests. • Majority of subjects incorporated numeracy strategies into their subject plans and schemes of work.
Progress and adjustments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maths Week within the school has focused on numeracy and has been very successful. • The Numeracy board to be used more with possibly a monthly maths competition. • To create numeracy posters within each subject department where students are highlighting the use of numeracy in that subject. • To evaluate student’s attitudes to numeracy in their learning. • To set up a numeracy committee with Transition Year students, where they will be given the opportunity to teach an interactive lesson to the Junior Classes on numeracy in the classroom

Targets achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of subjects have incorporated numeracy strategies into their subject plans and schemes of work and uploaded these to the One Drive for all staff to access. • Numeracy surveys highlighted that the various numeracy strategies introduced into lessons improved student performance in their understanding of numeracy in their subjects. • Due to COVID restrictions “SYNC” in the classroom was difficult to achieve due to students assigned to a base classroom and seating plan.
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3. ATTENDANCE: Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the existing school attendance policy. • Improve general student attendance. • We aim to improve our current attendance levels. (deleted %)
Actions/Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make effective use of the new student attendance record-keeping facilities in VSware. • Students swipe in every morning and after lunch- this is beneficial in recording attendance. • 1st, 2nd and 3rd year classes meet with their Tutor every morning from 9:00am-9:05am to take the roll, ensure students have swiped in, • Tutors and Year Heads will collect absence notes from students where they are required to outline the reasons for being absent. This is followed up by the Year Heads if students fail to bring in a note. • Recognition of very good attendance at assemblies. Post Covid each year group attends assembly on their assigned morning at 9:00am. • Year Heads track and monitor attendance. • Depending on circumstances Year Heads notify Parents about their son/daughters attendance by letter after a certain number of days. • Year Heads interact with students directly particularly those who have poor attendance levels in order to establish the reason for this. Where a Year Head is concerned about a student's attendance they refer the student to the school Guidance Counsellor. • Meeting with parents of students with poor attendance at parent meetings. • Interventions by the student welfare officer and the school completion co-ordinator. • On-going school completion programme in the school. • Parents have access to the VSware portal so that they can see the pattern of their own child's attendance.
Persons / groups responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Principal • Year Heads and Deputy Principals • School Completion Co-ordinator • Attendance committee • Subject Teachers • Special Needs Assistances • Office staff
Criteria for success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved attendance being reported by year heads for all classes. • Deputy Principals and Year Heads noted that contacting Parents about their son/daughter's attendance was successful.

Progress and adjustments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While attendance of specific students has improved, the targets had to be adjusted due to the impact of Covid and online learning. It was noted that when school reopened the attendance levels decreased due to student's self-isolating and therefore unable to attend school. This was notable from Halloween-Christmas 2020. • Year Heads are working to improve the poor attendance of specific students in each year.
Targets achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General school attendance improved. • However, some targets were difficult to achieve due to Covid and as a result the overall attendance targets had to be adjusted for the 2020-2021 school year due to students self-isolating. • We did acknowledge the excellence attendance of students for the terms Sept-Dec and Dec-May 2020/2021 at our Leaving Cert Prizegiving Ceremony and our year group assemblies. Students were awarded for full term attendance and excellent attendance where they only missed 3 days or less throughout the whole school year.

4. HOMEWORK: Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase teacher satisfaction with quality of homework assignments produced on time by students. • Both Teachers and Students surveyed through Google Docs to assess attitudes to homework. • 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. • Design a separate diary for both Junior and Senior Cycle classes.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to the journal to better allow for comments regarding homework on a weekly basis. • Developed a new Homework Policy based on the findings of the strategy group and seek staff and management approval. • Information to parents of 1st and 2nd Year students explaining the uses of the journal and promoting its use. • Design the journal into a more user friendly layout and create two separate journals for both Junior and Senior Cycle years. • Spot check journals during tutor time to ensure each student has their journal to school.
Persons / groups responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal • Deputy Principal • Year Heads • Class Tutors • Homework Committee • Subject Teachers • SNA's
Criteria for success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 and quality of homework. • Due to Covid 19, homework tasks proved more difficult to assign due to home-schooling.
Progress and adjustments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework policy reviewed and shared on the school website. • Junior Cycle tutors inspecting journals and reporting that good use is being made. • Two separate journals for both Junior and Senior Cycle classes have been introduced.
Targets achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A separate journal was introduced for both Junior and Senior cycle classes. • Journals were inspected by class Tutors.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Due to Covid 19 a Remote Learning Policy for online teaching and learning was developed as homework became an important strategy to online learning and home-schooling.• Covid 19 posed a number of difficulties- Diaries were not signed, it became more difficult to monitor homework through online teaching, during online teaching school work became homework.• Teachers reported students who were not engaging to their assigned Deputy Principal and this was positive as students became more engaged.
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5. WELLBEING: Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide an improved atmosphere of security, enjoyment and care in the school. • To make all members of the school community more aware of their personal well-being through the curriculum, themed days or weeks, and a variety of activities. • To join the One Good School Initiative. • Distribute a Wellbeing Survey to all students, teachers and parents in conjunction with the One Good School Initiative.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a Wellbeing Noticeboard in the student canteen to inform students of wellbeing events and other information. • Produce Wellbeing 'Calendars' for teachers of first year to display in their rooms. • Run Mindfulness and meditation sessions on a regular basis. • Have a quiet room at lunchtime for pupils to come and read or relax. • Positive Focus days with classes on an ongoing basis. • Student and parents focus groups to discuss the wellbeing requirements of the school.
Persons / groups responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal and Deputy Principals • Wellbeing Committee • Teachers of P.E., SPHE, RE, and other subjects.
Criteria for success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students report a heightened sense of general happiness and contentment. The school is seen as a healthier and more caring place in which to learn and enjoy life. • Due to the impact of Covid 19 some students struggled to adjust into the classroom setting and therefore felt unsettled.
Progress and adjustments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through joining the One Good School Initiative it provides an opportunity to look at the needs of wellbeing in the school and to determine the necessary strategies that must be put in place to improve overall student wellbeing.
Targets achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The One Good School Initiative was introduced in the school. • The Student Council organised wellbeing activities in the school throughout the year for students to enjoy.