



Loreto College Mullingar

School Self Evaluation Report (SSER)

2013 - 2016



School Self-Evaluation Report

Literacy for September 2013 to May 2016

1. Introduction

1.1 The focus of the evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching & learning in this school was undertaken during the Autumn term of 2013. Literacy in L1 English and how the teaching and learning in all other subjects support the acquisition of literacy skills were reviewed in 1st Year.

This is a report on the findings of the evaluation

1.2 School context

We are the only all girls post-primary school in an urban area, under the trusteeship of Loreto Education Trust. There are currently 719 students including 70 who are EAL students. TY is well established and LCVP was recently introduced. There is a strong culture of CPD and a core team has been established with representatives from a variety of subjects & disciplines.

This core team was created by requesting a volunteer to represent each of the following subject groupings: a) Science & Maths, b) English, c) Languages, d) Business subjects e) History & Geography, f) Practical subjects – Art, Home Economics, Music, g) RE, CSPE, SPHE, Careers h) Learning support. This was to ensure all subject areas were represented without the core group becoming prohibitively large.

Each volunteer agreed to act as the liaison person for the development of literacy (and subsequent areas for SSE focus) in their area.

It was also identified that sharing resources was essential to maximize the potential and outcome of the process. As a result, members of this team trained the whole staff in the use of Google Drive. All staff members are encouraged to share resources through this medium and it is used as a communication tool with the core team, among departments and the wider school community. In addition, it is used to develop hyperlinked department plans.

We have twenty feeder schools in our catchment area.

2. The Findings

Learner outcomes

- The student's standardised test results and report cards from the primary school were analysed by the career guidance counsellor. It was noted that the STen scores for reading for the cohort are slightly above the national norms. (See table 1)
- All subject departments used the PDST tool for analysing results in the Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate exams. This was done in order to use it as an indicator of existing standards. The majority of subjects compare favourably to national norms, taking due cognisance of school context. Findings and targets are recorded in the respective subject department plans.
- Following the staff reflection on the overview of good practice, there was general agreement that the area of students written work was in need of improvement. There are five mixed ability first year classes and samples of written work across the curriculum were gathered and an error analysis was conducted under the following headings: spelling, punctuation and grammar, use of subject specific vocabulary, sequencing and development of answers (See table 2).

TABLE 1 - SUMMARY OF STen SCORES FOR READING

STen score	1 - 3	4	5-6	7	8-10
	Very low	Low average	Average	High average	Very high
School	12%	11%	35%	16%	25%
National	17%	17%	33%	17%	17%

144 out of 147 students sat their reading test in 6th class. The 3 who did not complete the standardised test are immigrant students. 23 students avail of learning support in English and 10 students are in receipt of resource hours and have IEPs.

TABLE 2 - SUMMARY OF ERROR ANALYSIS OF SAMPLE OF WRITTEN WORK ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

	Spelling	Punctuation & Grammar	Vocabulary	Sequencing	Development
Satisfactory	63%	48%	56%	44%	37%
Not satisfactory	37%	52%	44%	56%	63%

Learning experience

At a staff meeting, the whole staff used the overview of good practice on page 25 of the SSE Guidelines to reach a consensus on strengths, areas for improvement and priorities for action. All teachers scanned through the evaluation criteria in the SSE guidelines. Subsequently the SSE core group designed a student questionnaire on attitudes to literacy & engagement in learning and a rubric for self-assessment of working with others (see appendix 1). The on-line questionnaire was designed using google forms and was administered to 126 students taking three class periods in total. By using an on-line tool results were instantly collated and analysis began immediately. Parents were also surveyed to establish literacy attitudes in the home.

Sample findings

- 79% of students read for more than one hour per week for enjoyment.
- There is a good attitude to reading for enjoyment amongst the First Year cohort.
- The most popular reading materials are magazines/comics & fiction.
- 41% of students believe that their writing is legible and 18% of students edit their own work.
- 29% of students like making their own notes. For 27% it is their favourite way to learn.
- 91% of students stated that they could recall the main points of what someone says always or sometimes.
- 89% of students feel most comfortable sharing their ideas in pairs/small groups but only 52% state this was their favorite way to learn and 57% of students stated that they got a chance to learn this way.

Teachers' practice

- At a staff meeting in August 2013 the whole staff reflected on teaching and learning using the SSE guidelines under the three themes learner outcomes (pages 30 & 31), learning experiences (student's engagement in learning – pages 34 & 35) and teachers' practice (teaching approaches – pages 40 & 41). The whole staff then used the overview of good practice on page 25 to reach a consensus on strengths, areas for improvement and priorities for action and recorded this on the staff reflection sheet on page 84 of the SSE guidelines. Based on this feedback, the core team designed a survey on teaching approaches and this was administered on-line using google forms (see appendix 2). After analysis of both the teacher & student survey by the whole staff at a meeting in September 2013, an anomaly appeared in relation to pair/group work, so all staff agreed to use a rubric designed by the core team for self-assessment of their teacher practice in relation to group work. Staff also agreed that it made sense to look at the key skills communicating and working with others as they tie in very well with the current focus on literacy. Consequently as part of subject department planning, teachers agreed to audit their teaching approaches through the lens of these key skills using a template provided by PDST (see appendix 3).

Sample findings

- Students cannot meet the literacy or numeracy demands of their subjects – written work is of a poor standard with many careless mistakes and subject specific language can be a challenge for many students, therefore the staff decided that literacy would be the focus for the first SIP.
- In general the focus of teaching is on knowledge and skills more so than literacy/numeracy or ICT.
- There is an awareness amongst staff of the eight key skills for junior cycle.
- 86% of teachers stated that they provided opportunities for pair/group work, however only 52% of students said it was their favorite way to learn and 57% said that they got a chance to learn this way.
- 82% of teachers use comprehension strategies in their teaching.
- 36% of teachers use editing checklists or issue their own set of criteria for writing.
- 29% of teachers use ICT regularly, however 47% of students stated that it was their favorite way to learn and 28% stated that they got a chance to learn using technology.
- Most of the learning outcomes for the key skills communicating and working with others are being addressed by teachers through their teaching approaches with the exception of the ICT component.

Progress made on previously identified targets identified in the current SIP

N/A for year one as SIP not in place yet.

4. Summary of school self-evaluation findings

4.1 Our school has strengths in the following areas:

- STen scores of 1st Year students for reading are above the national norms.
- Attainment in the majority of subjects at both JC & LC is above the national norms.
- 77% of students are reading fiction for enjoyment.
- There is a **critical mass** of teachers already using comprehension strategies.
- There is willingness to share good practice.
- Students are getting some opportunities to develop oral language and are confident working in pairs and small groups.

4.2 The following areas are prioritised for improvement

- Teachers to focus on the development of literacy as well as knowledge and skills.
- Increased expectations and standards in writing across the curriculum. Implementation of an editing checklist to concentrate on spelling and punctuation and grammar in year one, vocabulary and sequencing in year two and development of answers in year three.
- The development of comprehension and group-work strategies across **all** subject areas.
- Teachers to reflect on their practice in relation to pair/group work using a rubric designed by the core team.
- Students to self-assess how they work in pairs/groups using a rubric designed by the core team.
- Increase the number of students taking higher level in certain subjects for both junior certificate and leaving certificate.

4.3 The following legislative and regulatory requirements need to be addressed.

- The School Anti-bullying Policy will be reviewed in light of circular 0045/13 http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0045_2013.pdf

For legislative and regulatory checklist see Appendix 4

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 to be developed
Valid enrolment of students	M51/93	Yes	
Time in school - Length of school year (minimum of 167 days for all year groups) - Length of school week (minimum of 28 hours for all year groups)	Circular M29/95	Yes	
Standardisation of school year	Circular 034/2011	Yes	
Arrangements for parent/teacher and staff meetings	Circular M58/04	Yes	
Implementation of national literacy strategy	Circular 25/12	Yes	
Implementation of Croke Park agreement regarding additional time requirement	Circular 025/2011	Yes	
Development of school plan	Section 21 Education Act 1998	Yes	
Guidance provision in secondary schools	Circular PPT12/05, Education Act 1998 (section 9(c))	Yes	
Whole-school guidance plan	Section 21 Education Act 1998	Yes	
Delivery of CSPE to all junior cycle classes	Circular M12/01 Circular M13/05	Yes	
Exemption from the study of Irish	Circular M1 0/94	Yes	

Implementation of revised in-school management structures	Circular M29/02, Circular 21/98, Circular 30/97, Circular 29/97	Yes	
Limited alleviation on filling posts of responsibility for school year 2011/12	Circular 53/11	Yes	
Public service (Croke Park) agreement - special needs assistants	Circular 71/11	Yes	
Parents as partners in education	Circular M27/91	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
Implementation of child protection procedures	Circular 65/11		
	Please provide the following information in relation to child protection	Yes	
	• Number of cases where a report involving a child in the school was submitted by the DLP to the HSE	0	
	• 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	0	
	• Number of cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report was made	2	
	• 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	2	
Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate	Section 28 Education Act 1998	Yes	
	Please provide the following information in relation to complaints made by parents during this school year		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of formal parental complaints received • Number of formal complaints processed • Number of formal complaints not fully processed by the end of this school year 		
Refusal to enrol	Section 29 Education Act 1998	0	
	Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with		

	Section 29 against the school during this school year		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of section 29 cases taken against the school 	0	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of cases processed at informal stage • Number of cases heard • Number of appeals upheld • Number of appeals dismissed 		
Suspension of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998	0	
	Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year N/A		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of section 29 cases taken against the school • Number of cases processed at informal stage • Number of cases heard • Number of appeals upheld • Number of appeals dismissed 		
Expulsion of students	Section 29 Education Act 1998	0	
	Please provide the following information in relation to appeals taken in accordance with Section 29 against the school during this school year		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of section 29 cases taken against the school • Number of cases processed at informal stage • Number of cases heard • Number of appeals upheld Number of appeals dismissed		

