# Our Lady's Secondary School

## School Self- Evaluation Report: Executive Summary

### Assessment for Learning Framework- 2016/2017

1. **Introduction**

**1.1 The focus of the evaluation**

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning to support literacy has been ongoing in Our Lady's Secondary School from the period of November 2013 to October 2016. At a staff meeting the staff scanned through the evaluation criteria in the SSE guidelines. The SSE core group designed a student questionnaire on attitudes to Assessment for Learning and how it was implemented in the classroom. This was conducted as an on-line questionnaire using Google forms and administered to 45 teachers during a whole staff meeting. By using an on-line tool the results were instantly collated and analysis began immediately.

**Assessment for Learning**
- To increase the range of AFL approaches to evaluate students understanding, progress and achievement.
- Create a deeper awareness of Formative assessment and the learning and teaching benefits for students.
- To implement and highlight the importance of sharing the learning outcomes with students.
- Subject teachers in 1st & 2nd Yr to agree on a common test and common marking scheme that incorporates one alternative assessment method other than written form.
- To update subject plans using the recommended template to incorporate literacy, numeracy and assessment for learning target.

**This is a report on the findings of the evaluation.**

**1.2 School context**

Our Lady's Secondary School is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School operating according to the traditions of the Sisters of Mercy, under the trusteeship of CEIST. There are currently 708 students, including approximately 45 in receipt of learning or resource support and 28 students in the special class. There are approximately 60 teaching staff and 6 SNA's. As well as the traditional Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate our school also offers the following programmes: JCSP, LCVP, LCA and TY. There is a strong culture of CPD and core teams have been established in the areas of Assessment for Learning, Literacy & Numeracy and Junior Certificate short course development. In addition to this our school has joined the TL21 initiative which supports teaching and learning in our school and many of the initiatives contained in this report. The SSE core team managed the analyzing, interpreting and identifying of surveys and assessment results and highlighted the areas of strength and development. This information was presented to the whole staff during staff meetings. As a result of this collaboration, our targets and strategies were established and implemented across the curriculum. All staff members are encouraged to share resources through the medium of the school server to maximize the implementation of the various initiatives impacting on teaching and learning. All teachers have access to an iPad or

laptop, there are data projectors in all classrooms, Apple TV's in 20 classrooms, interactive boards in 4/5 classrooms and Promethean Boards in 5 classrooms.

## 2. The Findings

### 2.1 Assessment for Learning

- The students, teachers and parents surveyed to gather data in the key areas of teaching and learning styles, attitudes to homework and effective feedback.
- Students tested for prefer learning styles and reported back to staff for planning purposes.
- Core group meetings to analyse, review and set targets based on the survey's and preferred learning styles.
- A cohort of teachers, Principal, Deputy Principal embarked on the TL21 initiative in August 2013 for 4 years.
- Teaching & Learning evident at every staff and subject meeting
- Teaching & Learning lunchtime workshops, teachers' magazine and shared folders on google drive supported and provided CPD.
- Following staff reflection, there was a general agreement that shared learning intentions, formative assessment and success criteria would form the Assessment for Learning targets.

### 2.2 Sample Findings for Assessment for Learning

**Teacher practice**

- All subjects have a yearly subject plan, with learning outcomes stated.
- Approximately 5-8% of teachers do not implement learning intentions into practice at the start or end of each lesson.
- A variety of assessment, written and non- written, is incorporated into subject plans.
- 55% have homework and tests included, 15% not included and 18% at present working in this area.
- At present 65% of teachers give a comment & mark for feedback, 10% give mark or percent only, 8% give oral feedback and 18% use other forms of assessment.
- In general, differentiation is an area in which we would like to target improvement for students performing above and below the average.
- At present, 8% do not differentiate 45 % differentiate some days and 18% differentiate most days or all of the time.
- Tests are more frequent with the focus on keywords to promote the importance of learning homework.
- AFL is included in plans (both written and non-written form to develop literacy skills and alternative assessment)

## 2.3 Teaching Approaches- Student as Learner

- A variety of teaching styles are incorporated into the class; textbook, note taking, ICT(power point, interactive textbooks), whole class teaching, peer teaching, group work, hot seating and questioning by teacher and student.
- Students have a positive outlook on ICT in the classroom; with 94.1% recognising ICT helps them to concentrate more on what they are learning in class. 94.7% reported ICT helped further understanding the learning experience in class.
- Student feedback on learning is predominantly from teachers using a mark and comment. There has been a decrease from 65% to 55.9% (from mark & comment) over 2 years, with an increase of oral feedback from 8% to 9.9%.
- 69.1% of students reported this feedback gave direction on how to improve their grade.
- 64.9% students feel teachers help them achieve a good grade by orally explaining in class and 31.8% through written feedback.
- Oral Presentations: 61.2% indicated they had no opportunity to for individual presentations in class and 68.4% indicated there was no opportunity for group presentations in class.
- 79% of students stated they would feel confident in engaging in group work and 59.7% willing to present.
- Presentation skills and confidence needs to be developed by the experience of group presentation as 65.1% students stated they lacked confidence in presenting individually.

## 3. Progress made on previously-identified targets improvement targets met:

- Independent learning, taking notes, less use of text books, teacher led questions, whole class teaching and teacher led activities are the dominant ways in which students are enabled to learn.
- The biggest cohort of students in the average range which is above the national norms.
- Students have the opportunity to develop their oral language as part of the final summative result in house exams.
- Access to ICT & the Internet is very high.
- A significant number of students read for enjoyment.
- All teachers incorporate the use of ICT in to their teaching practice.
- All teachers allow time to incorporate homework assessment as part of the student learning experience during class time.
- Sharing of resources between subject areas\teachers particularly on School Server
- Progress in Verbal, Numerical & Non Verbal Reasoning during the course of 1st year for the majority of students.

4. **Methodologies used in the progress of Assessment of Learning**

- Teachers, learners & parents surveyed annually
- Core Group Meetings- analyse, review and set targets based on STen CAT & Examination results.
- Team Teaching has been experienced by all departments over the last three years
- Team Teaching addresses the reviewed area of needs identified by core teams- Maths/ English Ordinary level, LCA, etc.
- TL21 introduced in August 2013 and undertaken for three years,
- AP post for SSE ( Literacy & Numeracy Co-ordinator) appointed in 2014
- Teaching & Learning included on every staff and department agenda
- Curriculum Planning core groups established for reflective practice and continuous CPD to assist with the embedding AfL strategies into everyday learning and teaching.
- Shared resources on server have been improved and the introduction of Teaching & Learning folder completed in June 2015.
- Implementation of Edmodo throughout the school as a learning platform between teacher and learner.
- Implementation of Google Docs/ Google Drive to staff. CPD given during Curriculum Planning and lunchtime workshops.
- Introduction of Teaching & learning magazine with a focus on AfL
- First, second and third years comleted Learning Styles questionnaires & information imputed on eportal.
- Peer observations undertaken by 66% of staff
- Video of lesson observations shared with colleague at staff and department meetings to allow for reflection and collaborative review
- Common tests & marking schemes in departments

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

- Three identified areas; Literacy, Numeracy & AfL are all incorporated into each subject plan and are embedded in practice.
- Common tests and marking schemes have been implemented in each subject at Junior Cycle.
- Each subject incorporates an alternative form of assessment, other than written, and the grade achieved by student forms part of the final percentage for their Christmas and summer exam.
- To assist and develop learning beyond the classroom 76% of our staff use Edmodo or Google Drive as a shared platform with students.
- Each Department has a shared Google drive to encourage collegiality of resources amongst staff.
- There is now an A Post to assist the consolidation of ICT in the teaching and learning environment, assisting with the use of ICT to enhance the learners' experience.

- Monitoring and assessing of students summative assessment against a baseline to highlight, support and examine progression in the area of literacy and numeracy

**Summary of main areas requiring improvement as identified in SSE 2016**

- Subjects departments should continue to include teaching and learning at all department meetings.
- Subject departments should continue to update plans including AfL.
- Teachers to continue to engage in Peer Observation to encourage best practice,
- Developing the practice of formative feedback to encourage a focus on teachers' comment rather than grade to improve the learner
- To continue providing CPD in the areas of Af, team teaching and peer observation.
- Continued use of AfL strategies in the classroom: group/pair work, success criteria, formative feedback, non-written assessment element in summative assessment, peer/self-assessment and reflective practice.