Our Lady's Secondary School

School Self- Evaluation Report: Executive Summary

The Literacy 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. The focus of the evaluation is on literacy and the promotion of literacy across the whole school. 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 literacy and how it was implemented in the classroom. This was conducted as an on-line questionnaire using Google forms and administered to 100 students taking three class periods in total. By using an on-line tool the results were instantly collated and analysis began immediately.

Literacy
- Increase in attainment at subject level
- Development of literacy skills; reading, spelling, writing and oral language skills
- Teaching & learning strategies in the area of literacy

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 Literacy

- The students standardised test scores and Sten results from the primary schools were analysed by the SEN coordinator and the Career Guidance Counsellor.
- CAT 3 Standardised Tests were administered to students prior to the start of First Year and again at the end of First Year.
- The Deputy Principal used the PDST tool to analyse results in the Junior and Leaving Certificate exams. It was noted that all subjects compared favourably to the national norm. All results were given to the subject departments who were recommended to analyse them and include them in their department plans.
- Students and teacher surveys indicated the need to promote literacy and numeracy as well as other areas which teachers needed support to implement these strategies effectively and realistically.
- Following staff reflection, there was a general agreement that the first years would be our focus group to improve literacy and numeracy skills.

Summary of Sten results for Reading

Class	STen 1 - 3 (Well Below Average)			STen 4 (Low Average)	STen 5 (Average)	STen 6 (Average)	STen 7 (High Average)	STen 8 - 10 (Well Above Average)			Number of pupils		Total enrolment
	STen 1	STen 2	STen 3	STen 4	STen 5	STen 6	STen 7	STen 8	STen 9	STen 10	excluded	absent	
Sixth Class	2	1	3	12	18	15	27	6	8	5	22	0	119
% Total	2.1%	1.0%	3.1%	12.4%	18.6%	15.5%	27.8%	6.2%	8.2%	5.2%	18.5%	0.0%	
% Total (Norm)	2.1%	4.1%		30.9%		43.3%		14.4%		5.2%			

Summary CAT3 Scores for Reading

CAT3 Score	<73	74-88	89-103	104-118	119>127
	Very Low	Low Average	Average	High Average	Very High
School	0%	9.4-12.5%	25-19.8%	18.8-10.4%	3.1-1%
National	4%	7-12%	17-20%	17-12%	7-4%

Summary of Analysis of Key Words Across the Curriculum

	<10-20	20-39%	40-59%	60-79%	>80%
	Very Low	**Low Average**	**Average**	**High Average**	**Very High**
Pupils	3	9	39	35	10
Percentage	3%	9.40%	41%	37%	10.50%

Sample Findings for Literacy

- 75% of First Year students are reading fiction for enjoyment, with a majority reading as frequent as 2-3 times a week or more regular.
- 61% of students are engaging in reading a variety of novels.
- Students have a positive self confidence in all areas of literacy. Spelling is the identified area where 44% of students feel they would like to improve upon.
- 97% of students have access to the internet & 84% are engaged on social network sites.
- Students feel they are getting opportunities to develop all areas of literacy and enjoy the area of writing stories.
- 51% of students preferred learning experience is group work.
- Students have the opportunity to develop their oral language. Their preferred sharing of responses is through whole class discussion, small group work or paired reading. Although 13% reported they prefer writing their responses into their copies.

57% of parents are reading for enjoyment.

2.4 Teaching Approaches

- Teachers to implement spelling as a part of the students' assessment for learning.
- To improve students' self-confidence and skill in the area of oral literacy teachers need to incorporate group or paired work within the learning environment.
- AFL, (class tests and homework) to be included into subject plans. This will encourage the development of differentiation and the awareness of student preferred learning styles. This practice will reflect an increase in literacy and subject attainment levels.
- Homework & reports need to include one constructive comment. In relation to this, negative comments including, satisfactory, could work harder, needs to be discouraged.
- To improve the area of oral literacy, subjects must develop assessment criteria which incorporate a constructive comment for improvement and/or a grade.

- To encourage active learning for everyone, team teaching needs to be implemented and resourced further. This will enable teachers time and management to use a variety of teaching pedagogy, i.e. group work, hot seating, etc
- Teachers to focus on all areas of improving literacy;

>through keywords tested weekly, end of chapter and recorded.
>use of variety plenary activities to encourage critical and evaluative thinking

- **Progress made on previously-identified targets improvement targets met:**

- Independent learning, taking notes, 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.
- Print rich environment in classrooms
- Key word boards to highlight and develop the learning of subject key words
- Students have a positive self confidence in all areas of literacy.
- 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. Summary of school self-evaluation findings

4.1: **Our school has strengths in the following areas**
- 2016: Significant increase in teachers utilising the local library with the junior classes incorporating reading time during class time.
- 2016: House exams include an alternative form of assessment to develop oral language.
- 2016: 72% of teachers use constructive feedback to scaffold the students learning (2Stars and a wish, colour marking, success criteria)
- 81% of subject plans include a variety of formative assessment of students' non written work.
- Use of CAT, WRAT & Access to effectively track and identify students with literacy difficulties and relevant supports implemented.

Summary of main areas requiring improvement as identified in SSE 2016

- Subjects departments should continue to display relevant key words in all classrooms and devise key word lists, copy for students to ensure best practice.
- Subject departments should continue to update plans including and highlighting keywords.
- Classrooms to display key words and students work to encourage a literacy rich environment.
- Developing subject based initiatives to promote literacy (Keyword quiz, station teaching, key word copies,etc)
- Accelerated Reading Programme to be introduced in 2018 primarily for SEN students. CPD attended by 2 staff members and trial completed.
- Oral presentation work encouraged through group work, presentation, blogs, etc for the purpose of assessment in line with the new Junior Cycle Reform.
- Literacy Initiatives are incorporated into the school academic year. These include Spelling Bee, DEAR (Drop Everything and Read), World Book Day events and JCSP initiatives; Who Wants to be Millionaire.