

School Self-evaluation Report

1. Introduction

1.1 The Focus of the Evaluation

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in literacy, with an emphasis on comprehension, was undertaken during the period 1/09/2012 to 31/5/2013.

This is a report on the finding of the evaluation

1.2 School Context

- This is a vertical co-educational primary school
- There are currently 574 pupils on roll
- There are twenty-nine teachers including an administrative principal

2. The Findings

- Standardised test scores in English reading show that in the school year 2012-2013, 90% of pupils scored in the average to very superior range, with just 7% scoring a standard score of <89. Approximately 40% of pupils scored in the ss. 90-109 range and this is almost the same as the national distribution.
- Analysis of standardised test data over the last four years shows that the scores in English reading have remained almost static.
- Analysis of this year's results (2012-2013) showed that there were thirty-seven pupils whose standard scores in vocabulary were 15 standard score points higher than their comprehension scores. The Assessment Guidelines, (NCCA) suggest that a "real difference in achievement is possible" where such variation exists.
- Analysis of reading comprehension tests carried out in all classes showed that the following comprehension skills: *make a prediction, create images, make connections, ask a question, and skim and scan* were always or sometimes observed in the pupils. Skills such as *monitor comprehension/seek clarification, infer and syntheses* were sometimes or rarely observed in the children.
- Responses from a survey of parents show that the majority of parents agree that their child likes and is good at reading. However, 19% strongly disagreed or disagreed that they get good information about how their child was doing in Literacy. 89% of parents were happy with how literacy is taught in the school. Some parents suggested that comprehension work could be more challenging and varied. More could be done to develop a love of reading, such as book clubs and a school library. Parents would like their children to be exposed to broader variety of genre in all areas of literacy. Some parents also felt that the school should place an emphasis on public speaking, in particular at senior level. There were also comments regarding the condition of books available as part of the school rent a book scheme.
- Focus groups showed that across all classes' students have positive attitudes towards reading, writing and spelling. They liked writing stories and poems, DEAR time, doing comprehension activities crosswords and word searches. They noted that activities such as

grammar and dictionary work could be difficult. They felt that working in pairs or groups, games, more creative writing and more reading would make English lessons more interesting for them.

- Teachers' surveys showed that teachers' Literacy lessons incorporate a variety of teaching methodologies, including talk and discussion, teacher questioning and co-operative/collaborative learning. The survey suggests that teachers would like to use more guided activity and discovery learning, higher order thinking and problem based learning, as well as play and environment based learning in their lessons. 75% of teachers always or often differentiated their students work so that it is neither too difficult nor too easy. 48% of teachers reported that pupils are 'sometimes' given opportunities to work in pairs or groups, while 48% stated that students are 'often or always' given such opportunities. 81% of teachers said that their Literacy lessons are led by the needs of the students and the curriculum rather than by textbooks, with 19% stating this happened 'sometimes'.

3. 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:

- Children's results in Standardised tests for English reading are well above the national average
- Children report liking and enjoying reading and writing and feel they are good at it.
- 77% of parents surveyed reported that their child likes reading and 93% reported that their child is doing well at reading. This was also reflected in the pupil focus group
- 96% of parents are able to help their child with their English homework
- 89% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that they were happy with how Literacy was taught
- 80% of parents felt they got good information about how their child was doing in Literacy
- Teachers report that they use a variety of teaching approaches including teacher questioning, co-operative/collaborative learning and talk and discussion

4.2 The following areas are prioritised for improvement:

- Performance on Drumcondra Reading Test for those pupils where a "real difference in achievement is possible". This will be achieved through the use of discovery and guided learning approaches
- Parent-teacher communication