

# SCHOOL SELF EVALUATION POBALSCOIL NEASÁIN

Pobalscoil Neasáin

SCHOOL SELF EVALUATION Report 2015

and

School Improvement Plan 2015/2016



1.

1.1 School self-evaluation was undertaken in 2014/2015. Literacy had been chosen as the theme for this year. Attitudes to reading, oracy, writing, teaching and learning and preferred learning experiences had been surveyed for 1<sup>st</sup> first years and staff. A SIP based on this data was drafted and implemented. In May 2015 the plan was reviewed and refocused for 2015/2016. The second theme for 15/16 is Numeracy.

## 1.2 *School Context*

Pobalscoil Neasáin is a co-educational school with approximately 670 students under the trust of County Dublin ETB, the Irish Christian Brothers and the Irish Sisters of Charity. The school is in an urban setting with approximately 67% boys and 33% girls. The school offers Junior and Leaving Certificate programmes, T.Y and LCA.

Pobalscoil Neasáin has students attending from 18-20 primary feeder schools and has an annual first year intake of between 100 to 130 students. First year students are divided into 4/5 classes. One of these is a resource enriched class which is limited and the remaining classes are mixed ability.

A core school self-evaluation team was formed with the literacy/numeracy link teacher and with representatives from each of the following subject areas (1) Maths & Science (2) English (3) History & Geography (4) Practical Subjects (5) RE, CSPE, SPHE (6) Careers & Learning Support.

Each volunteer agreed to act as the liaison person for the development of literacy/numeracy and in the future for SSE focus in their own subject area.

A common shared area on the school network/cloud was established for each subject department. All members of the staff were encouraged to develop and share resources through this.

## 2. ***The Findings***

### 2.1 **Learner Outcomes**

The students standardised entrance assessment results (CAT), report cards from primary schools (Sten reading scores) and STAR reading scores from the accelerated reading programme were analysed (Table 1, 2, & 3). Each of the tests showed scores in the high/very high range to be below national norms. Scores in the below average/low average range were found to be higher than national norms.

All subject departments used the PDST tool for analysing results in the Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate exams. A breakdown of grades across all subjects at both Leaving and Junior Certificate is presented and considered by the Board of Management.

### 2.2 **Learning Experience (Surveys) First Years May 2015 Literacy and Numeracy**

Literacy:

The Literacy plan for 14/15 was based on data taken from 1<sup>st</sup> yr students in October of their first year. In 15/16 the survey was conducted at the end of the first year. The data therefore was not comparable and made it difficult to assess the efficacy of the interventions. Moving forward it is intended to survey the same cohort at the beginning of October and the beginning of May to provide a data set that can be validly compared. The data is presented in Appendix 2.

The survey shows a high percentage of students who have maintained (46%) or increased (37%) the amount of time spent reading. The accelerated reading programme was enjoyed by 68% of the first year students with 74% of students expressing positive attitudes to reading. With regards to presentation and checking of work 23% of students surveyed said that they check their work and 18% would consider their handwriting neat and easy to read. This is something that teachers agree with!

The results show a reduction in the percentage of students (19%) who never feel comfortable sharing ideas in class and an increase (to 19%) in those who feel comfortable speaking/sharing ideas in front of the whole class.

Working in pairs/small groups was expressed by 53% of students as their favourite way to learn with 46% of students saying they have the opportunity to learn in this way during classes.

Numeracy

A numeracy survey was administered to 1<sup>st</sup> Yr students in May 2015.

A high percentage (81%) of students said that they liked maths as a subject with 66% hoping to do H.L. maths at Junior Cert. However only 18% thought that maths would be important after school and only 20% thought that their teachers liked maths. 73% of students check their answers when doing maths.

A maths competency test identified the following competencies in the lower ranges:

- a. Units of measure
- b. Fractions
- c. Percentages

The data was used to formulate a numeracy plan for 2015/2016. (Appendix 4)

### 2.3 **Teachers Practice**

At a staff meeting in January 2014 the whole teaching staff completed a survey on classroom practice and teaching and learning was conducted.

The staff were presented with a summary of the findings at a further staff meeting together with a summary of the findings of the student survey. A consensus on strengths, areas for improvement and priorities were identified.

In general the focus on teaching is on knowledge and skills rather than specifically on literacy.

Independent learning, listening to the teacher and note taking are the dominant ways in which students are enabled to learn.

Sample findings:

The dominant form of learning opportunity was listening to teacher and taking down notes.

57% of staff provided opportunities for students to give oral presentations.

Key words were a focus in 68% of classes and displayed in 50% of classrooms.

38% of staff get students to write keywords into the journal

Interactive Whiteboard was used by 53% of teachers.

55% of staff used "shared" resources

73% of staff correct/highlight spelling; punctuation etc. but only 50% highlight the importance of this aspect of work.

33% of staff believe that the writing of 1<sup>st</sup> years is neat and easy to understand.

In 14/15 the English and science departments made extensive use of Schoology as an online platform. In 15/16 Microsoft 365 will be rolled out for all staff and students to use. This will facilitate further collaboration among staff with regard to sharing resources and also allow

student access to notes, resources etc. Training for staff has begun and will continue through 15/16 facilitated by an outside agency.

### 3. **Progress made on previously identified improvement targets**

The literacy plan for 14/16 was reviewed in May 2015 at its midway point (Appendix 3). The main observation was that far too much was attempted. Too many targets and actions were listed which diluted the focus. As a result for 15/16 fewer targets and actions will be prioritised. The revised plan for 15/16 focuses on four main literacy targets with more measurable outcomes .

### 4. **Summary of School Self-Evaluation Findings**

#### 4.1 **Strengths**

High percentage of students like reading and maths

High number of students expressed an aspiration to take H.L. maths

The percentage of students who enjoyed their first year in school was 92%

Willingness of staff to collaborate

#### 4.2 **Areas for Improvement**

The following areas are prioritised for improvement for 15/16:

##### **Literacy/Oracy**

Maintain and increase a high level of interest in reading

Increase number of students expressing confidence speaking in front of whole class

Increase awareness and usage of editing checklist

##### **Numeracy**

Raise student awareness of the importance of maths after school

Change the perception that teachers do not like maths

Improve the ability of students to explain maths problems and answers in their own words

Increase competency scores in three areas (i) units of measure (ii) fractions (iii) percentages

### ICT

Develop staff and students' skills in ICT. During 15/16 Microsoft 365 will be used for all staff to create and share resources. Students will have access to this online platform to access resources and submit work. Training will be provided to all staff and their work supported through the year.

#### 4.3 Legislative and Regulatory requirements to be addressed

New Junior Cycle in English

Review of School Improvement Plan 2014/16 - Literacy		
<p>Following the implementation of the actions detailed in the SIP 2014/15 the success criteria were reviewed in May 2015.</p> <p>The main observation at the end of the year was that we attempted far too much. We had too many targets and actions, which meant that the focus was too broad. It would have been more realistic and achievable to have focused on three or four main targets.</p> <p>Another observation was regarding the methodology. Data needs to be consistent so in 2015/16 1st year students will be surveyed in September and again in May.</p> <p>With regard to the specific targets the following can be said:</p>		
Target	Actions	Evaluation of success criteria – staff survey
Maintain and stimulate high levels of interest in reading	Book in bag ✓  Reading period timetabled for all 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Yr classes ✓	A very successful outcome when students did have the books – particularly in free classes. But this requires <b>constant reminding and reinforcement.</b>

	Accelerated programme introduced for 1 <sup>st</sup> years.✓	Students and teachers found this a very positive and enjoyable experience.  Data attached
Raise profile of literacy around the school	Print rich environment✓  Drop everything & Read✓	There was a noticeable improvement in the visual displays in classrooms. Lots of Key Word posters etc. However students did not attach a high importance to visual environment!
Reinforce staff awareness and skills	CPD opportunities✓	A half-day session with Paul Ginnis was organised in collaboration with North side Partnership. Staff found it stimulating and thought provoking – if a little long!!
Increase level of satisfactory written work	Editing checklist✓	This was included in journal and attached to all Christmas exams and an increased number reported checking their work.  But it needs to be reinforced more re homework and posters in bases during exams would also help.
Oracy/Presentation skills	Oracy component to be introduced to the Christmas & Summer exams for 1 <sup>st</sup> Years.✓	We have yet to survey students on this but teachers report that it was a worthwhile endeavour.  More students (19%) reported feeling confident speaking publicly to the class.  49% reported feeling comfortable sharing ideas in groups.

Questioning	Teachers to give attention to the fluency/oracy of answers as well as content.  Use of varied questioning techniques – ‘Pose, pause, bounce’ & Say it again’	Difficult to assess without observing teachers’ practice in the classroom.
To increase and develop effective use of ICT by students	Timetable Digital Literacy as a subject for 1 <sup>st</sup> Years. ✓	This was done and teachers and students both reported a mostly positive experience.  The only issue was continuity – <b>hardware issues</b> were a problem. Failure to log in a common issue with Windows 7.  A new server is currently being tendered for and should solve this.
To increase and develop effective use of ICT by staff	To provide ICT support and CPD for staff	Office 365 is being introduced. H2 Learning working to enhance staff capabilities. One in-service has already taken place and more will happen during 2015/16.

<b>Numeracy Improvement Plan 2015/16</b>	
Summary of main strengths as identified:	<p>81% of 1<sup>st</sup> Years like Maths as a subject</p> <p>65% feel that they will do the H.L. Maths course for J.C. (In the context of entrance exam scores we are happy with this)</p> <p>73% of students check their answers when doing Maths. This is good practice which we hope to improve upon.</p>
Summary of main areas requiring improvement:	<u>Attitudinal:</u>

	<p>15% believe that Maths is important after school.</p> <p>Only 20% of students believe that their teachers like Maths.</p> <p><u>Skills:</u></p> <p>Only 38% of students feel confident in explain answers in their own words.</p> <p>46% feel that they regularly work in pairs.</p> <p><u>Knowledge:</u></p> <p>In 1<sup>st</sup> Year Maths competency test the following competencies were identified as the lowest scoring;</p> <p>Units of measure – average score 56%</p> <p>Fractions – average score 54%</p> <p>Percentages – average score 58%</p>	
Improvement targets:	<p>Five targets – one attitudinal, one skill and three knowledge-based</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase percentage who realise that Maths is necessary after school to above 50%.</li> <li>2. Increase the level of confidence in explaining Maths problems/answers in their own words to above 50%</li> <li>3. Increase the scores in the areas in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• units of measure – from 56% to 65%</li> <li>• fractions – 54% to 65%</li> <li>• percentages – 58% to 70%</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	
Target: to increase percentage who realise that Maths is necessary after school to above 50%.	<p><b>Required actions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explicitly tell 1<sup>st</sup> years that Maths is important.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Persons responsible for implementation</b></p> <p>Introduction to Maths - Maths teachers.</p> <p>Use of Maths Eyes during Maths Week – numeracy team</p> <p>New page in Homework Matters – parents involved</p>

	<p>2. Involve their parents (only 50% think their parents enjoyed Maths)</p> <p>3. Raise teacher awareness that their attitude to Maths is perceived as negative. If this could be changed it may positively impact on students.</p>	<p>here as well – highlighting the importance of maths in the world. – DP</p> <p>New award ‘Most Improved Mathematician’ at end of each term.</p> <p>Highlight to teachers in September the importance of a positive attitude to Maths. – Numeracy team</p>
<p>Target: to increase the level of confidence in explaining Maths problems/answers in their own words, to above 50%</p>	<p>Encourage them to talk about their Maths - what I will do, what I’m doing and what I did.</p> <p>Think, pair, share in class</p>	<p>Maths Department/Science department teachers</p>
<p>Target: to Increase the scores in the areas of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>units of measure – from 56% to 65%</li> </ul>	<p>Raise visual awareness of what units of measure look like in context</p> <p>Consistent teaching methodology, increased class</p>	<p>All instruments of measure to be visible and actively used where possible - teachers</p> <p>Units of measure marked out in school – e.g. a square metre taped out, height walls, and sign-posts of distance – Numeracy team</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fractions – 54% to 65%</li> <li>percentages – 58% to 70%</li> </ul>	<p>time given to teaching fractions. Increased focus on importance of Fractions and a formal fractions test at end of teaching unit in first term</p> <p>Building on the success of the above the teaching of percentages would follow, using a whole-school approach</p>	<p>Focus &amp; methodology – Maths Dept.</p> <p>Fractions test – parents and students made aware of this early – Maths Dept.</p> <p>All teachers to highlight where percentages impact on their subject.</p>
<p>Timeframe for action</p>	<p>One school year</p>	
<p>Success criteria/measurable outcomes</p>	<p>Assuming that the profile of the incoming First Years (2015/16) is similar to the group surveyed (First Years 2014/15) we will survey them in May 2016 and would hope to see that the actions taken will have improved the outcomes to the extent that we achieve the success criteria detailed above.</p>	<p>Maths department</p>
<p>Review date:</p>	<p>May 2016</p> <p>Also we will survey new 1<sup>st</sup> years at 2 points – September 2015 and May 2016 – to gauge changes.</p>	<p>Numeracy team</p>