

## **Pobalscoil Neasáin**

### **SCHOOL SELF EVALUATION 2013/2014**

#### Report for Literacy

1.

1.1 A school self evaluation was undertaken in 2013/2014 during Term 3. Literacy was chosen as the theme as the school had previously explored literacy in in-service and school based initiatives. Attitudes to reading, oracy, writing, teaching and learning and preferred learning experiences were surveyed for 1<sup>st</sup> first years. Staff were also surveyed.

This is a report of the findings of the evaluation.

1.2 ***School Context***

Pobalscoil Neasáin is a co-educational school with approximately 650 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 to 15 students and the remaining classes are mixed ability.

A core school self-evaluation team was formed with the literacy 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 and in the future for SSE focus in their own subject area.

A common shared area on the school network was established for each subject department and also for literacy. 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.

**TABLE 1 ENTRANCE Assessment**

**Analysis of CAT standardised scores**

<b>Score</b>	<b>127-130</b>	<b>119-126</b>	<b>112-118</b>	<b>104-111</b>	<b>97-103</b>	<b>89-96</b>	<b>82-88</b>	<b>74-81</b>	<b>73 and below</b>
	Very high	Above average	Above average	Average	Average	Average	Below average	Below average	Below average
<b>National Average</b>	4%	7%	12%	17%	20%	17%	12%	7%	4%
<b>Cohort 2013 (120)</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>(15)</b>	<b>(29)</b>	<b>(30)</b>	<b>(23)</b>	<b>(7)</b>	<b>(3)</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>24.3%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>

**TABLE 2 STen Reading Scores from Primary school report cards**

**READING AGE**

<b>Score</b>	<b>8-10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5-6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1-3</b>
	Well above average	High average	Average	Low average	Well below average
National norm	16%	16%	33%	16%	16%
Cohort on entry	<b>9% (11)</b>	<b>13% (15)</b>	<b>41% (49)</b>	<b>24% (28)</b>	<b>13% (16)</b>

**TABLE 3      Reading age First Years 2013**  
**(Test Dates: 30/9/2013 to 3/10/2013 STAR Reading)**

**READING AGE**

<b>Age Range</b>	<b>8-9</b>	<b>9-10</b>	<b>10-11</b>	<b>11-12</b>	<b>12-13</b>	<b>13-14</b>	<b>14-15</b>	<b>15-16</b>	<b>16+</b>
<b>No.</b>	11	18	26	22	15	9	8	10	5
<b>%</b>	8.9%	14.5%	21.0%	17.8%	12.1%	7.3%	6.5%	8.1%	4.0%
<b>Mean Age</b>	11.75								

**By Class**

<b>Class</b>	<b>1A (27)</b>	<b>1E (28)</b>	<b>1L (14)</b>	<b>1O (27)</b>	<b>1S (28)</b>
<b>Mean RA</b>	11.9	11.7	11.1	12.5	11.8
<b>Intervention</b>	1	2	6	1	1
<b>On Watch</b>	10	7	5	6	9
<b>Above Benchmark</b>	16	19	3	20	18

**2.2      Learning Experience (Survey) First Years 12/10/2013**

**Attitudes to Reading:**

59% of students read more since starting in PSN

83% of students like reading but.....15% of students do not read at all for enjoyment

43% of students read more than one hour per week for enjoyment

Magazines/Fiction and Non-fiction are the most commonly read form.

Online media is read by only by 17% of students and only 8% read newspapers.

**Attitudes to writing Writing:**

27% enjoy writing eg diary, letter, short story

32% of students like making their own notes from the textbook

Only 29% of students believe that their writing is neat and easy for others to read and understand

A low percentage of students, 20%, always check their writing for mistakes or self edit

46% prefer to text than call

**Students' Favourite ways to learn:**

On own 42%

In pairs/small groups 43%

Listening to teacher/taking down notes 39%

Using Technology 48%

Students' perception of what opportunities they have to learn in school:

On own 53%

In Pairs/small groups 43%

Listening to teacher 62%

Making own notes 24%

Using Technology 19%

Sharing ideas /Speaking out in class:

Only 13% of students felt comfortable sharing ideas in a whole class presentation

25% of students never felt comfortable speaking/sharing ideas in class

Internet:

98% of students had access to internet at home

### 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, the need for increased level of ICT training for staff was highlighted in the responses.

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.

10% of staff allow students a "wait" time after asking a question.

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

N/A

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

#### 4.1 **Strengths**

Strong interest in reading among 1<sup>st</sup> Years and this has increased since joining PSN.

Students are getting some opportunities to working in pairs/small groups and to develop oral language/presentation skills.

There is a willingness and openness among staff to share practice and a desire to further develop ICT competencies.

There is a critical mass of teachers using the interactive whiteboard regularly.

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

Teachers to focus on development of literacy skills as well as knowledge and skills.

##### **Oracy**

Increase percentage of staff regularly allowing “wait time” when questioning during class.

Develop strategies to improve student willingness to answer questions and oral fluency.

Develop students’ confidence and abilities in oral presentations.

##### **Reading**

Maintain high levels of interest in reading. A reading period using the accelerated reading programme to be timetabled in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and Transition Year. Monitor and improve reading age profile through Accelerated Reading Programmes.

##### **Writing**

Increase expectations and standards in writing across the curriculum.

Implementation of an editing checklist to focus on spelling, punctuation and grammar in First Year.

##### **ICT**

Develop staff usage of Schoology as an online learning platform

Increase level of staff confidence in the use of ICT

Develop students’ skills in ICT.

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

New Junior Cycle from September 2014 in English