



ST. MARY'S SECONDARY SCHOOL NEWPORT



School Self Evaluation and School Improvement Plan
2018 - 2021

St Mary's Secondary School Newport

Our Self-Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan

1. Introduction

This document records the outcomes of our last improvement plan, the findings of this cycle of school self-evaluation, and our current improvement plan, including targets and the actions we will implement to meet those targets.

A school self-evaluation of teaching and learning in St. Mary's Secondary School Newport was undertaken during the period May 2017 to May 2018. During the evaluation, teaching and learning in the following areas were evaluated:

- Teachers' collective/collaborative practice
- Learner Experiences
- Teachers' Individual Practice

The *Looking at Our School 2016: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools* document was a resource which our school used as a guide to this whole evaluation process. Similarly, with the continuing implementation of the new Junior Cycle programme taking place nationally, we felt as a school that this should have a significant input also into how we approached this process and the formulation of targets for improvement and sustained progress in our improvement plan. The recommendations and findings of recent departmental inspections also contributed to the work in this evaluation process as well as the annual analysis of the state examination results.

The evaluation was carried out by liaising with all stakeholders in the school community.

The students were involved throughout the process in the completion of various surveys on preferred learning methods in class and also a comprehensive anti-bullying survey was completed in order to better inform school planning around the topic of bullying. Students also completed a survey on what helps them to learn and examples of activities that help them to learn best in the various subjects. This survey was taken from the PDST website under the SSE resources section and the examples are attached in the appendix to this document. The Student Council also were consulted with as part of the process of examining areas to improve our schools proactive approach to bullying. A number of focus groups shall also be established to monitor the impact of the actions agreed upon for the duration of this evaluation cycle.

First Year parents completed a comprehensive survey in the Summer Term of 2018 which covered a wide area of questions about their experience of the school and how they felt their child was progressing. The results of this evaluation was shared and discussed with all staff in our first staff meeting of the academic year 2018 – 2019. The parental responses were overwhelmingly positive as you can see from the attached analysis of the results in appendix 5 of this document.

The staff have also completed a number of surveys on areas to do with how we implement the curricular changes to deal with student wellbeing in Junior Cycle. Staff also indicated a wish to have more training in the area of teaching methodologies to best prepare for the implementation of the new Junior Cycle.

The Teaching and Learning Committee contributed hugely to the formulation of the report and the completion of the evaluation process. A number of evaluation and review assessments will take place throughout the course of the current and next two academic years to assess the impact of the actions taken as a result of this evaluation process as well as assisting in the establishment of the success of the actions taken. As an example, students in First, Second and Third year will complete a survey on peer assessment to ascertain the impact of our work in this area and also to establish how we as a school are adjusting to the new Junior Cycle curriculum and the implementation of the various teaching and learning methodologies needed in the delivery of this new programme. The results of this survey will form the basis of a focus group discussion with a sample of our Junior Cycle students to inform future planning in this area.

Outcomes of our last improvement plan from 2012 to 2016

To put this work in perspective, here are some of the actions which have been taken as a follow on from our past Whole School Departmental inspection in 2012 and our previous SSE cycle, which was completed in 2016;

- A student mentoring programme for First Years is now in place. There has been a very positive uptake in numbers applying for the role of mentor and a good gender balance is also in evidence. The mentors have been provided with the requisite training and the effectiveness of the programme will be reviewed going forward.
- AFL has been incorporated more into lessons and this is evidenced by the inspectorate who said in their report on the subject inspection for Business Studies in 2014 that "Very good progress in

developing systems for providing formative feedback to students as part of the whole-school approach to assessment for learning(AFL)" had been made.

- Variety of teaching approaches and differentiated methodologies is an ongoing aim for our school. Planning for more opportunities for differentiated learning outcomes and differentiated instruction was part of the rationale behind selecting planning of group activities as an area to focus on for this cycle of SSE.
- The establishment of a formal Student Support Team has been completed. They consist of Learning Support Co-Ordinator, Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal and Principal and meet on a weekly basis.
- A systematic and consultative self-evaluation process has been initiated and the Board have overseen and been briefed on the progress of the evaluation process by the Deputy Principal in June 2018.

1.2 The focus of this evaluation

We undertook self-evaluation of teaching and learning during the period *May 2017* to *May 2018*. We evaluated the following aspect(s) of teaching and learning:

- **Teachers' collective/collaborative practice; *Professional Peer Learning initiative*** to be undertaken by a pilot group of teachers in the school who will observe each other's lessons and share ideas on teaching methodologies and learning techniques in the classroom. This collaborative work will be shared with the staff as a whole so as to diversify teaching methodologies.
- **Learner Experiences; *Group Activities in class***. There shall be an emphasis on the effective planning of group activities in class and also a focus on having more opportunities for student interaction in the classroom.
- **Teachers' Individual Practice; *Peer Assessment***. The new Junior Cycle necessitates a prevalence of AFL opportunities in the classroom. As students do not learn in a social vacuum, more opportunities to assess each other's work is planned over the course of this evaluation cycle.

2. Findings

2.1 This is effective / very effective practice in our school

List the main strengths of the school in teaching and learning.

- There is a positive and supportive learning environment in our school.
- Students make good academic progress in our school
- Skilful questioning, effective teacher feedback and an emphasis on understanding key words underpins the good standards of teaching and learning in the school

2.2. This is how we know

List the evidence sources. Refer to students' dispositions, attainment, knowledge and skills.

- **Both students and parents indicate this in survey feedback. The Inspectorate also report this in the previous MLL inspection in our school as well as two subject inspections namely Business and English.**
- **96% of First Year parents feel happy with their child's academic progress. Parental survey 2018. Higher level uptake for Leaving Cert English is over 10% above the National Average in 2018. Finally, 44% of students achieved 400 points or more in leaving class of 2018. This is 7% above the national average.**
- **Numerous departmental inspections illustrate that students make good academic progress in our school.**

2.3 This is what we are going to focus on to improve our practice further

These are the aspects of teaching and learning the school has identified and prioritised for further improvement.

- **Teachers' collective/collaborative practice; *Professional Peer Learning initiative*** to be undertaken by a pilot group of teachers in the school who will observe each other's lessons and share ideas on teaching methodologies and learning techniques in the classroom. This collaborative work will be shared with the staff as a whole.
- **Learner Experience; *Group Activities in class***. There shall be an emphasis on the effective planning of group activities in class and also a focus on having more opportunities for student interaction in the classroom.

- **Teachers' Individual Practice; Peer Assessment.** The new Junior Cycle necessitates a prevalence of AFL opportunities in the classroom. As students do not learn in a social vacuum, more opportunities to assess each other's work is planned over the course of this evaluation cycle.

3. Our improvement plan

On the next page we have recorded:

- The **targets** for improvement we have set
- The **actions** we will implement to achieve these
- **Who is responsible** for implementing, monitoring and reviewing our improvement plan
- How we will measure **progress** and check **outcomes** (criteria for success)

As we implement our improvement plan we will record:

- The **progress** made, and **adjustments** made, and **when**
- **Achievement of targets** (original and modified), and **when**

Appendix Documents

1. Board of Management Presentation June 2018
2. Teaching and Learning Committee meeting Minutes March 2018
3. Teaching and Learning Committee Briefing for staff February 2018
4. Document outlining observations and findings of previous Departmental Inspections
5. Parental Survey analysis 2018
6. Students surveys on learning and assessment
7. Staff survey on Wellbeing August 2017
8. Parental Survey Form/Sample Starter Activities document which was put together throughout the academic year of 2015 – 2016
9. Student Survey on Bullying August 2018.
10. Staff reflection sheet on teaching and learning in our school, taken in early 2017
11. Results of staff survey on Teaching and Learning in our school 2017

Targets	Actions	Persons / groups responsible	Criteria for success	Progress and adjustments	Targets achieved
<p>1. <u>Teachers' collective/collaborative practice.</u> Teachers contribute to building whole-staff capacity by sharing their expertise.</p> <p>2. <u>Learner Experiences.</u> Students engage purposefully in meaningful learning activities.</p> <p>3. <u>Teachers' Individual Practice.</u> The teacher selects and uses teaching approaches appropriate to the learning intentions and to students' needs.</p>	<p>1. <u>Professional Peer Learning.</u> Pilot group of teachers to observe each other's lessons and feedback on methodologies and learning techniques seen. <i>A log of these techniques and methodologies to be kept and shared with the staff as a whole in order to build expertise.</i></p> <p>2. Embedding <u>group activities</u> further into teaching methodologies across the school. <i>A log to be kept of effective group activity planning mechanisms and this information to be shared with the staff.</i></p> <p>3. <u>Peer Assessment.</u> This practice to be further embedded across the school in order to meet the requirements of the new Junior Cycle.</p> <p>4. Staff to feedback in staff meetings on relevant CPD training to share good practice.</p>	All staff	<p>Departmental Inspections</p> <p>Staff meeting discussions</p> <p>Parental feedback</p> <p>Student feedback</p> <p>State Exam Results</p> <p>Results Analysis and comparisons with national averages.</p> <p>Subject levels for exam entry.</p>	<p>Students to be surveyed on impact of new Junior Cycle on methods in the classroom.</p> <p>Students to complete survey on group activities and feedback to be used to inform further planning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers value their role within a professional learning organisation and as a matter of course share their expertise with other teachers in the school. Teachers engage regularly in a collaborative review of teaching and learning practices and use it to identify and build on effective approaches. Teachers are proactive in building collective expertise in the skills and approaches necessary to facilitate student learning for the future. <p>- Students contribute their own opinions and experiences to class discussion with confidence. They are respectful of and interested in the opinions and experiences of their classmates.</p> <p>- Students are able to work both independently and collaboratively in a purposeful and productive manner.</p> <p>➤ Teachers share and co-create success criteria with students so that they can access their own learning through self-assessment and peer assessment , and identify areas for improvement and strategies for improvement.</p>

Appendix 1
Presentation to the Board of Management



Appendix 2

TEACHING & LEARNING COMMITTEE MEETING 15-03-18

11.20 Deputy Principal's Office

Minutes

AOR, JL, KC, HF & DOC present. JC & GC apologies.

1. The circular 0040/2016 on the sse process was circulated to all members. We discussed where we were as a group and looked at the areas we needed to complete.
2. The second and third objectives for our areas to improve were agreed. Peer assessment and group activities would be objectives for improvement. Implementation of the New Junior Cycle is a high priority and meeting the AFL requirements in the classroom is a significant reason behind HF said he would put together a detailed presentation for the next staff meeting to take place later in March. We looked at the relevant excerpts from the 'Looking at our School's' document when agreeing upon objectives two and three.
3. In our next meeting it was agreed that we would finalise the characteristics of strength of our school. DOC to then complete the report and it will be ratified in staff meeting early in next academic year.

Appendix 3

Teaching and Learning Committee update 21-02-18

The Teaching and Learning Committee are due to meet next week to plan for the next steps of our School Self Evaluation process. Amongst the items for discussion shall be;

- Agreeing on a second and third objective for our School Self Evaluation Report under the domain of Teaching and Learning.
- Discussion of the Inspectorate's report on the National School Self Evaluation process thus far.
- The results of the student survey on group work shall be shared and discussed. This survey evidence shall form the basis of working towards a plan for the continued improvement and implementation of differing formative assessment techniques which shall meet the curricular needs of the new Junior Cycle but also towards.
- Discussing feedback on the progress of our first objective which was peer professional learning which would facilitate teachers in the committee to observe each other's classes and feedback to each other on their observations and what positive ideas they could take from the lesson and implement in their own teaching.

Appendix 4

Comments from the Inspectorate during recent inspection reports.

1. "A good standard of teaching and learning observed in most lessons".
2. "Very good facilities and resources provided."
3. "The subject team should reflect on classroom practice and gather, share and record effective approaches."
4. "There was a positive and supportive learning environment in the lessons observed."
5. "Students indicate very high levels of satisfaction with how the students of the school get on with each other and with progress in their school work."
6. "Parents indicate high levels of satisfaction with how the school is run and with how their children are progressing."
7. "Good or very good teaching was observed in almost all lessons."
8. "Good or very good teaching was observed in almost all lessons, with some examples of exceptionally good practices noted."
9. "Classes were very well managed, with positive interactions between students and teachers and seating arrangements that promoted a good gender mix of students."
10. "Good or very good learning was observed in the majority of lessons. Some good supports were provided to student learning where teachers pre-identified and pre-taught keywords, followed by the setting of tasks specifically designed to consolidate them."
11. "Best practices observed included skilful questioning, very good teacher feedback to students during activities, and differentiated tasks being assigned to students working on different learning outcomes."
12. *"Effective strategies for promoting collaborative learning should be shared."*
13. "Teacher's awareness of the need to accommodate the range of students' learning styles and abilities in lessons is very good."
14. "Individual lesson preparation was very good."
15. "Group work was used effectively in some lessons."
16. "Effective use of ICT in teaching was observed."
17. "Attractive displays create a stimulating language-learning environment."
18. "Significant effort is being invested in promoting students' interest in personal reading and this is commended."
19. "Subject department planning would be enhanced by regular, planned teacher sharing of effective teaching methods."
20. **"The subject department has made very good progress in developing systems for providing formative feedback to students as part of the whole school approach to AFL."**

Appendix 5



